

THE SPIRIT OF REGENERATION AND THE BAPTISM OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

When we are saved we receive the Spirit of regeneration to enable us to grow to spiritual maturity. The Baptism of the Holy Spirit is a further infilling that empowers us to minister to the needs of others.

This is a study of two forms of infilling of the Holy Spirit

1. The Spirit of Regeneration or Being Born Again

The first impartation of the Spirit is called the spirit of regeneration or being born again at salvation, heralding the start of a new life where the kingdom of Jesus grows in us till it fills our whole being. The Holy Spirit indwells us and is our personal guide and teacher, leading us into fulfilment in our knowledge and experience of the Lord. Jesus figuratively described the nature of this impartation of the Spirit as follows:

"Whoever drinks of this water will thirst again, but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst. But the water [a symbol of the Holy Spirit] that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life." John 4:13-14. This speaks of personal indwelling and spiritual growth by the ministry of the Holy Spirit.

2. The Baptism of the Holy Spirit

The second impartation of the Spirit usually occurs after salvation and baptism, and it is an empowerment of the Holy Spirit to enable us to minister to others. This is usually referred to as the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Jesus' figurative description of this impartation of the Spirit differs from the first, in that the Spirit is depicted as flowing out from a person, as when he is ministering to others.

"If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water." But this He spoke concerning the Spirit, whom those believing in Him would receive; for the Holy Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified." John 7:37-39.

Salvation and the Spirit of Regeneration

Jesus had this conversation with Nicodemus, and because it was spiritual truth and not literal truth, it left Nicodemus bewildered.

"Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." Nicodemus said to Him, "How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born?"

Jesus answered, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water [a symbol of the word] and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Do not marvel that I said to you, 'You must be born again.'" John 3:3-7.

Even to us, statements like "born of water," and "born of the Spirit," needs to be enlightened to us by the Spirit. This extract from Paul's letter to Titus provides some insights.

"For we ourselves were also once foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving various lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful and hating one another. But when the kindness and the love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit, whom He poured out on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour, that having been justified by His grace we should become heirs according to the hope of eternal life." Titus 3:3-7.

The important part of the reading is "*He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit.*" We will examine each part in detail.

“He saved us, through” – Jesus saved us through or by means of the following:

“the washing” – Water and washing is often associated with the WORD because of the washing cleansing effect of the word. E.g. **“...that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word...”** Eph 5:26. The word is an essential ingredient of salvation. **“And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher?... So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the WORD of God.”** Rom 10:14 & 17. Even baptism has no relevance when it is separated from the word, or the truth of its spiritual meaning.

“of regeneration” – Literally, regeneration means a new birth, or renewal, or as Christ said, to be born again. It means the start of a new life. We are baptised into Christ, and so Paul was able to say to the Corinthians, **“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.”** 2 Cor 5:17.

“and renewing of the Holy Spirit” – The cleansing of the new believer from the power of sin, and his regeneration and renewal is entirely dependant on the ministry of the Holy Spirit. That is why Christ said, **“unless one is born of water [the word] and the Spirit,”** he cannot be saved and enter into the kingdom of God. Both the word and the Spirit are necessary to bring about our salvation.

The Holy Spirit’s Role in Salvation and Renewal

When talking to His disciples just before His departure from earth, Jesus said, **“And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever -- the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells WITH YOU and will be IN YOU.”** John 14:16-18

Jesus said that the Holy Spirit was already WITH the disciples, but after His ascension to the Father, the Holy Spirit would be IN them. Receiving the Holy Spirit depended on Him going to the Father. **“Nevertheless I tell you the truth. It is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I depart, I will send Him to you.”** John 16:7-8. In the spiritual realm, the salvation of mankind was consummated when Jesus appeared before God in heaven, and His blood placed on the altar of the temple in heaven by the Holy Spirit.

“For if the blood of bulls and goats and the ashes of a heifer, sprinkling the unclean, sanctifies for the purifying of the flesh, how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?” Heb 9:13-14.

After mankind’s salvation was consummated in heaven, all those on earth who believed and confessed Jesus Christ were eternally saved. Their sins were blotted out, and from a spiritual point of view, they became **“holy and blameless.”**
The Holy Spirit could now dwell IN them.

Our Relationship with the Holy Spirit before Salvation

Without the Holy Spirit ministering to us it would be impossible to be saved, because spiritual truths are imparted by the Holy Spirit, and discerned by our own spirits. But there has to be openness in our hearts to receive spiritual truth. The carnal man turns his back on spiritual things because they appear foolish.

“These things we also speak, not in words which man’s wisdom teaches but which the Holy Spirit teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual. But the natural man [controlled by the carnal nature and not open to the Spirit] does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.” [1 Cor 2:13-15].

When the Holy Spirit discerns openness, He quickens our spirits to understand our own sin, and the righteousness that is of God.

“And when He has come, He will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: of sin, because they do not believe in Me; of righteousness, because I go to My Father and you see Me no more; of judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged.” [John 16:8-11].

At this point we are as the disciples – the Holy Spirit is with us but not in us. However He continues to lead us into saving truth, and when we are ready to make a decision, He imparts the faith we need to receive. Even the faith for salvation is a gift of grace from God, imparted by the Spirit. ***“For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves...”*** [Eph 2:8].

When we have made our confession of faith in the merit of the sacrificial death of Jesus on the cross, and believe in our hearts that it applies to us personally, we are spiritually holy and righteous and eternally saved. The Holy Spirit can now dwell in us and minister the blessings of Christ to us forever. ***“I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever.”***

The Holy Spirit was with us, He is now IN US. Jesus outlined the essential ministry of the Holy Spirit to His disciples: ***“However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come. He will glorify Me, for He will take of what is Mine and declare it to you.”*** [John 16:13-15].

When did the Disciples receive the Spirit of Regeneration?

After Jesus ascended into heaven and consummated our salvation, the first thing He did when He returned to earth and met the disciples in the upper room was to impart the Holy Spirit to them – the spirit of regeneration.

“So Jesus said to them again, “Peace to you! As the Father has sent Me, I also send you.” And when He had said this, He breathed on them, and said to them, “Receive the Holy Spirit.”” Jn 20:21-22.

Because the disciples now had regenerated spirits, before He left them for the last time Jesus was able to open their understanding of the Scriptures. He then told them to wait in Jerusalem for a further empowering for ministry to others, so that ***“repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name to all nations.”***

“Then He said to them, “These are the words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms concerning Me.” And He opened their understanding, that they might comprehend the Scriptures.”

Then He said to them, “Thus it is written, and thus it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day, and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. And you are witnesses of these things. Behold, I send the Promise of My Father upon you; but tarry in the city of Jerusalem until you are endued with power from on high [receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit].” [Luke 24:44-49].

An Important Role of the Holy Spirit to Regenerated Christians

When Nicodemus first asked Jesus about being born again, Jesus replied, ***“Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.”*** Jesus’ reply brings to light a most important purpose of the spirit of regeneration. It is the role of the Holy Spirit to bring about the establishing of the kingdom of God in us. The ‘kingdom of God’ is where God’s reign exists, and because His reign exists in ‘the kingdom of Christ,’ and ‘the kingdom of heaven,’ the three terms are synonymous. In speaking about the

kingdom of God, Jesus said, ***“the kingdom of God is within you.”*** [Luke 17:21]. It is where God reigns in us through Jesus Christ. The Holy Spirit has a lifelong role of replacing the kingdom of SELF in us, with the kingdom of Jesus Christ.

Jesus said, ***“Most assuredly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it produces much grain. He who loves his life will lose it, and he who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life.”*** [John 12:24-25]. When we are prepared to put off the ‘old man,’ or carnal fleshly nature, reckoning it crucified in Christ, the Holy Spirit is able to put it to death and replace it with the nature and reign of Jesus Christ. ***“For if you live according to the flesh you will die; but if by the Spirit you [invoke the power of the Spirit in prayer] put to death the deeds of the body, you will live.”*** [Rom 8:13].

When describing the kingdom of God, Jesus used the analogy of a grain of mustard seed. ***“To what shall we liken the kingdom of God? Or with what parable shall we picture it? It is like a mustard seed which, when it is sown on the ground, is smaller than all the seeds on earth; but when it is sown, it grows up and becomes greater than all herbs, and shoots out large branches, so that the birds of the air may nest under its shade.”*** [Mark 4:30-32].

When we are born again, the kingdom reign of Jesus Christ in us is as a mustard seed in size, but has the capacity to grow into a large tree that attracts those in need, to nurture in its ‘branches.’ Unfortunately there are many Christians who live their whole Christian lives with the kingdom reign of Jesus Christ remaining as the size of a mustard seed.

The kingdom or reign of Jesus Christ should not be confused with the life of Jesus indwelling us. Jesus said He came to give us life, and that that life might be abundant. There is no limitation to the fullness of the life of Jesus in us, and that is available to us, even when we are first born again.

The Baptism with the Holy Spirit

The first baptism of the Holy Spirit occurred at Pentecost. After receiving the spirit of regeneration, the disciples waited in Jerusalem in obedience to Christ’s command:

“And being assembled together with them, He commanded them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the Promise of the Father, “which,” He said, “you have heard from Me; for John truly baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.” [Acts 1:4-6].

About one hundred and twenty followers of Jesus waited expectantly in Jerusalem for forty days, and ***“when the Day of Pentecost had fully come, they were all with one accord in one place.”*** Being ***“with one accord in one place”*** stresses the need for obedience and patience, and deference for one another in coming to one mind and heart in waiting on the Lord.

“And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. Then there appeared to them divided tongues, as of fire, and one sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.” [Acts 2:1-4].

The spectacular signs of ***“a rushing mighty wind,”*** and the ***“divided tongues, as of fire”*** that accompanied the first baptism of the Spirit, heralded the spiritual empowerment of the new Church, and were an appropriate signal that the power of God had entered the Church. Of course subsequent occurrences have been more subdued, being accompanied in some cases by ***‘prophesying,’*** or ***‘speaking in tongues.’***

The Nature of the Gift of Tongues

“And when this sound occurred, the multitude came together, and were confused, because everyone heard them speak in his own language. Then they were all amazed and marvelled, saying to one another, “Look, are not all these who speak Galileans? And how is it that we

hear, each in our own language in which we were born? ... we hear them speaking in our own tongues the wonderful works of God. [Acts 2:6-9, & 11].

In studying these accounts of the operation of the gift of tongues, these things come to our notice.

- They received the gift of tongues “***as the Spirit gave them utterance.***” They did not produce the language themselves. It was manifested in them by the Spirit. Their part was to cooperate by allowing the Holy Spirit to speak through them.
- Foreigners heard them speak in their own language. Certainly in this case, it was a known language.
- The subject of the language was praise and worship in which they declared “***the wonderful works of God.***”
- Paul added a further insight into the benefit of the gift of tongues when he said, “***he who speaks in a tongue edifies [strengthens] himself.***” [1 Cor 14:4]. What Paul meant by ‘*edifies himself,*’ is that speaking in tongues strengthens or recharges our spirits. This is important when one is confronted with an attack by Satan, as for instance, being wrongly accused of having a terminal illness.

Receiving the Baptism of the Holy Spirit in Samaria

Two Experiences -- Spirit of Regeneration and the Baptism of the Spirit

The Scriptural example of the Samaritans receiving the Holy Spirit again illustrates that there are two separate experiences.

“Then Philip went down to the city of Samaria and preached Christ to them. And the multitudes with one accord heeded the things spoken by Philip, hearing and seeing the miracles which he did. For unclean spirits, crying with a loud voice, came out of many who were possessed; and many who were paralysed and lame were healed. And there was great joy in that city... But when they believed Philip as he preached the things concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, both men and women were baptized.” [Acts 8:5-8, & 12].

First Philip the evangelist presented the gospel word. The Samaritans received and believed the word, and were baptised in water. This meant that they had received the spirit of regeneration, or were ‘born again.’ But they did not receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

“Now when the apostles who were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent Peter and John to them, who, when they had come down, prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit. For as yet He had fallen upon none of them. They had only been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. Then they laid hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit [the baptism of the Holy Spirit]. [Acts 8:14-17].

Imparting the Baptism of the Spirit by Laying on of Hands is a Gift

Not everyone has the authority or capacity to impart the baptism of the Spirit by the laying on of hands. It is a gift given by the Lord to those entrusted to wait on His initiation.

“And when Simon saw that through the laying on of the apostles’ hands the Holy Spirit was given, he offered them money, saying, ‘Give me this power also, that anyone on whom I lay hands may receive the Holy Spirit.’

“But Peter said to him, ‘Your money perish with you, because you thought that the gift of God could be purchased with money!’” [Acts 8:18-21].

It is important not to allow ‘just anyone’ to lay hands on you, but to know the guidance and peace of the Spirit before accepting the ministry.

Imparting the Baptism of the Spirit to the Gentiles

The Gentiles received the baptism of the Holy Spirit in reverse order, that is, before being baptised with water. This happened because the Jews had to be shown by God that He would

receive converts from the Gentiles as well as the Jews. They had thought that they were God's chosen nation and that salvation was restricted to them. God had prepared Peter through a vision that Gentiles were to be accepted by Him, and that He was sending a delegation of Gentiles to him. He was instructed to go with them and do what they wanted of him. When he arrived, Cornelius, a well respected Gentile, was waiting for him, and told him why he had sent for him.

“So Cornelius said, “Four days ago I was fasting until this hour; and at the ninth hour I prayed in my house, and behold, a man stood before me in bright clothing, and said, ‘Cornelius, your prayer has been heard, and your alms are remembered in the sight of God. Send therefore to Joppa and call Simon here, whose surname is Peter. He is lodging in the house of Simon, a tanner, by the sea. When he comes, he will speak to you.’ So I sent to you immediately, and you have done well to come. Now therefore, we are all present before God, to hear all the things commanded you by God.” [Acts 10:30-34].

“Then Peter opened his mouth and said: “In truth I perceive that God shows no partiality. But in every nation whoever fears Him and works righteousness is accepted by Him.” Acts 10:30-35].

Peter then proceeded to preach the gospel message to them.

“While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit fell upon all those who heard the word. And those of the circumcision [the Jews] who believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out on the Gentiles also. For they heard them speak with tongues and magnify God.” [Acts 10:44-46].

In replying to the astonishment of the Jews, Peter spoke as follows.

“Then Peter answered, “Can anyone forbid water, that these should not be baptized who have received the Holy Spirit just as we have?” And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord. Then they asked him to stay a few days.” Acts 10:47-48].

There is no set Formula for being baptised with the Spirit

The way the Gentiles received the Holy Spirit demonstrates that there is no set formula or arbitrary rules. Circumstances vary with each person, and whilst the Scriptures provide us with guide lines, they are not rules. Before baptism or after baptism; receiving with or without the laying on of hands; by prayer alone; the necessity of speaking with tongues as a sign – these things may or may not occur as the Spirit wills, according to each person's circumstances.

“But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually as He wills.” [1 Cor 12:11].

Only one thing is necessary, that we receive by faith as Jesus taught us. ***“Therefore I say to you, whatever things you ask when you pray, believe that you receive them, and you WILL [not necessarily immediately] have them.” [Mark 11:24].***

Why do we need to be baptised with the Spirit?

The baptism with the Spirit is a spiritual empowerment that enables us to minister to one another. Apart from the responsibility of procuring the salvation of mankind, Jesus was sent forth by the Father with a pastoral commission to minister to those in need. Jesus outlined that commission in Luke's gospel.

“So He came to Nazareth, where He had been brought up. And as His custom was, He went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and stood up to read. And He was handed the book of the prophet Isaiah. And when He had opened the book, He found the place (Isa 61:1-3) where it was written:

***“The Spirit of the LORD is upon Me,
Because He has anointed Me
To preach the gospel to the poor;
He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted,
To proclaim liberty to the captives***

***And recovery of sight to the blind,
To set at liberty those who are oppressed;
To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD."***

Then He closed the book, and gave it back to the attendant and sat down. And the eyes of all who were in the synagogue were fixed on Him. And He began to say to them, "Today this Scripture is fulfilled in your hearing." [Luke 4:16-21].

Before leaving His disciples, Jesus said to them, ***"As the Father has sent Me, I also send you."*** [John 20:21]. As God sent Jesus to earth with this commission, so Jesus passes His commission on to us – ***"heal the broken hearted," "proclaim liberty to the captives," recovery of sight to the blind," "to set at liberty those who are oppressed,"*** and to ***"proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD."*** Although ***"the acceptable year of the LORD,"*** is taken from the ***"day of Jubilee"*** when all Jews had their inheritance returned to them, its direct application to us is to proclaim the acceptable time for our salvation, a question answered by Paul: ***"Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation."*** [2 Cor 6:2].

In answer to the question as to why we need the baptism or empowering of the Holy Spirit – it is to enable us to carry on the Lord's commission in ministering to His church.

Delivering those held Captive by the Power of Satan

As with Christ, an important aspect of our ministry is to set free those who have been oppressed by Satan, ***"the ruler of this world."*** Unfortunately this ministry is just as valid in the Church as it is to those in the world. Speaking of the Israelites, a type of the church, Isaiah described their situation in this manner:

***"But this is a people robbed and plundered;
All of them are snared in holes,
And they are hidden in prison houses;
They are for prey, and no one delivers;
For plunder, and no one says, "Restore!" [Isa 42:22].***

It is no less applicable to the modern church.

Isaiah presents a picture of people who haven't fallen prey to Satan and are blinded to reality, and as a result are plundered and held captive. Why does this happen unnoticed? Christians live in physical reality, and often have no concept of the unseen spiritual conflict in their midst, where Satan and his hordes of demon spirits war against the kingdom of God, endeavouring to gain control over areas of people's lives, to weaken their commitment to Christ, and to sabotage their Christian ministry.

After each stage of the earth's creation, ***"God saw that it was good."*** [Gen 1:10]. God created a perfect world, but after the fall every part of it came under the influence of Satan and his demon spirits. The apostle John made this summation: ***"We know that we are of God, and the whole world lies under the sway of the wicked one."*** [1 John 5:19]. By the influence of his demon spirits, Satan has been able to convert things that were created for our blessing, into a reflection of his character. For instance, the cinema, the internet, art, music, and drugs, are mediums that are used by Satan's spirits to glorify things like, rape, homosexuality, incest, murder, paedophilia, pornography, power mongering, explicit sex and graphic violence, until these things are accepted as normal occurrences.

On a personal level, demons attack our point of weakness, and try to bring areas of their lives under bondage to their control. They have the capacity to entice us to cater to the desires of the flesh, until we fall under bondage to things like gluttony, alcoholism, sexual fantasy, vanity, covetousness, idolatry, envy, making money, keeping money, electronic technologies like mobile phones and computers, jealousy, hatred, judgment, unforgiveness, to name a few. When we have reached the stage of consistently embracing rather than resisting temptations, Satan has a

legal right to impart a demon spirit of the thing that we have embraced – like a spirit of greed that eventually coerces us into bondage to gluttony. Even Paul saw the necessity to be free from bondage. He said, ***“All things are lawful for me, but all things are not helpful. All things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power [bondage] of any.”*** [1 Cor 6:12].

A large part of Jesus’ ministry was devoted to casting out demon spirits, and overcoming the damaging effects they had caused on people’s lives. Unfortunately most Christians think that because Jesus defeated Satan at Calvary, demons have no power to inflict or dwell in a Christian. But because God’s throne is based on justice and righteousness, He allows Satan the right to impose his control on any part of a life given over to him. However, God does not leave us defenceless, granting us gifts of the Spirit like ***“discerning of spirits,”*** to overcome.

The Gifts of the Holy Spirit

The gifts of the Holy Spirit are associated with receiving the Baptism of the Spirit, being an empowerment in certain areas to assist us in our care for one another. They take these forms:

- Empowerments to help us minister to the needs of others.
- Gifts of the Spirit empower us to overcome in warfare.
- Supplementary gifts to enhance a ministry like evangelism.

The gifts of the Spirit are particularly important in spiritual warfare in negating the assaults of Satan’s demon spirits. They are akin to weapons and armaments given to soldiers before entering battle. Without them we are an easy prey to the enemy, but with them we are enabled to overcome to victory.

“For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ, and being ready to punish all disobedience when your obedience is fulfilled.” [2 Cor 10:4-6].

The nine basic gifts of the Spirit are outlined in this reading. ***“There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. There are differences of ministries, but the same Lord. And there are diversities of activities, but it is the same God who works all in all. But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for the profit of all: for to one is given the word of wisdom through the Spirit, to another the word of knowledge through the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healings by the same Spirit, to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another discerning of spirits, to another different kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues. But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually as He wills.”*** [1 Cor 12:4-11].

Notice first of all that the whole Godhead is involved in imparting the baptism with the Spirit.

The Holy Spirit: ***“There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit... distributing to each one individually as He wills.”***

The Lord Jesus Christ: ***“There are differences of ministries, but the same Lord.”*** In the fourth chapter of Ephesians we read that Christ led captivity captive, ***“and gave gifts to men.”*** Further on we read that the gifts He gave were ministries that He presents to His Church. ***“And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ...”***[Eph 4:11-12]. In preparing people for these ministries, Christ empowers them with the extra gifts needed for them to carry out His work.

Almighty God: ***“it is the same God who works all in all.”*** God oversees all ministries and manifestations of the Spirit, determining their breadth and power. E.g. ***“Now God worked unusual miracles by the hands of Paul, so that even handkerchiefs or aprons were brought from his body to the sick, and the diseases left them and the evil spirits went out of them.”***

[Acts 19:11-13]. It is God who determines the place and breadth of all spiritual revivals, as in the Welsh Revival at the turn of the Twentieth Century.

Description of the Gifts of the Spirit

Before describing the gifts individually, it must be emphasised that these gifts are not natural talents, but supernatural spiritual empowerments to enable us to meet the needs of those needing spiritual help. Secondly, although the gifts are imparted to us, they are not manifested until a situation arises requiring their use, and then the initiation is by the Spirit, as He wills.

“The word of wisdom”

The Holy Spirit grants us a word of wisdom that brings absolute light and truth to a situation. Again, it should be pointed out that this is not a word of wisdom from our own intellect, but a word of wisdom given to us by the Spirit. The following are two examples where Jesus used a word of wisdom. When the Jews tried to entrap Him into confessing disloyalty to Caesar, He responded with a word of wisdom. ***“Tell us, therefore, what do You think? Is it lawful to pay taxes to Caesar, or not?” But Jesus perceived their wickedness, and said, “Why do you test Me, you hypocrites? Show Me the tax money.” So they brought Him a denarius. And He said to them, “Whose image and inscription is this?” They said to Him, “Caesar’s.” Jesus countered them with this word of wisdom. “And He said to them, “Render therefore to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s, and to God the things that are God’s.”*** [Matt 22:17-22].

And when they tried to make Him condone stoning and adulteress, He replied with this word of wisdom: ***“He who is without sin among you, let him throw a stone at her first.”*** [Jn 8:7]

“The word of knowledge”

Again, this is not from our own intellect, but knowledge imparted by the Spirit. It is the revelation of a truth beyond the power of our intellect to conceive. For instance, Jesus said to the Samaritan woman, ***“you have had five husbands, and the one whom you now have is not your husband; in that you spoke truly.”*** [Jn 4:18]

In our ministry a word of knowledge may be something like, ‘She is harbouring unforgiveness.’ This would give us the spiritual insight needed to minister to that person. A word of knowledge may be presented in different ways. E.g. As a ‘still small voice’ in our spirits, intuitive knowledge, or a sudden light of understanding.

“to another faith”

This is not the measure of faith granted to everyone who is ‘born again.’ ***“God has dealt to each one a measure of faith.”*** [Rom 12:3-4]. It is a special impartation of faith such as was granted to George Mueller, who established a number of orphanages without personal financial resources.

“gifts of healings”

This is a gift enabling us to accomplish miraculous healings of different types of diseases.

“the working of miracles”

As it says, it is the gift that enables you to be used by the Lord to bring about a miracle. Probably the first to come to mind is raising the dead. To 99% of Christians this is deemed to be impossible, and so there are very few available to the Lord if He wants to perform this miracle. However unlikely it may seem, we should have an openness and availability to the Lord. Jesus’ command to the disciples he sent out to minister was, ***“Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out demons. Freely you have received, freely give.”*** [Matt 10:8-9]. Our position should be to avoid presumption and self works, but to not limit the Lord in anything.

“different kinds of tongues, and the interpretation of tongues”

This is different to the gift of tongues that everyone may receive having been baptised with the Spirit. These two gifts are prophetic in nature, and work in pairs. A person who has

been shown to have received the “different kinds of tongues,” may speak in tongues in a fellowship meeting. A person with the gift of “interpretation of tongues” should then present the interpretation of the prophetic message of the utterance of tongues to the whole congregation.

Other Gifts of the Spirit

Apart from the nine basic gifts of the Spirit, Paul extends the list in this reading. *“For as we have many members in one body, but all the members do not have the same function, so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and individually members of one another. Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, let us use them: if prophecy [prophetic utterance], let us prophesy in proportion to our faith; or ministry [a ministerial gift as in an evangelist], let us use it in our ministering; he who teaches, in teaching; he who exhorts [as in preaching], in exhortation; he who gives, with liberality; he who leads, with diligence; he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness.” [Rom 12:4-8].*

In 1 Corinthians 12:28, Paul adds, *“helps,”* and *“administrations.”*

Evidence that the Apostles had received the Baptism with the Spirit

A dramatic change occurred in the ministry of the apostles after they had received the baptism with the Spirit. Miraculous signs and wonders were done through them, and multitudes of converts were added to their number. *“Then fear came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were done through the apostles.” [Acts 2:43-44]. “And believers were increasingly added to the Lord, multitudes of both men and women, so that they brought the sick out into the streets and laid them on beds and couches, that at least the shadow of Peter passing by might fall on some of them. Also a multitude gathered from the surrounding cities to Jerusalem, bringing sick people and those who were tormented by unclean spirits, and they were all healed.” [Acts 5:14-16].*

How do we receive the Baptism with the Holy Spirit?

Jesus presented us with this formula for receiving all spiritual blessings. *“Therefore I say to you, whatever things you ask when you pray, believe that you receive them, and you will have them.”* [Mark 11:24].

Many people do not receive because they look within themselves to see if anything has happened. This is not receiving. Did you look within yourself when you received your salvation to see if there was anything different? You believed that you had been saved and embraced your salvation. The same applies in receiving the baptism with the Holy Spirit. You believe that you have received it and you shall have it. Notice that *“you will have”* is in the future tense. It may or may not happen immediately. The gift of speaking in tongues may appear later when there is less pressure of anticipation, and the manifestation of the other gifts of the Spirit will not appear unless there is a need when ministering to others. Our position once believing we have received is to be quietly available, like arrows in the Lord’s quiver, waiting till He takes us out and uses us.

*“In the shadow of His hand He has hidden Me,
And made Me a polished shaft;
In His quiver He has hidden Me.”* [Isa 49:2].

The Baptism with the Spirit may be Repeated

We should not consider the baptism with the Spirit as a once a lifetime experience, but one that can be repeated as the need arises. After their miraculous ministry threatened the Jewish religion, the apostles experienced threats and physical abuse, and so they prayed for a further baptism of the Spirit.

“Now, Lord, look on their threats, and grant to Your servants that with all boldness they may speak Your word, by stretching out Your hand to heal, and that signs and wonders may be done through the name of Your holy Servant Jesus.” And when they had prayed, the place

where they were assembled together was shaken; and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they spoke the word of God with boldness. [Acts 4:29-31].

Deterrents to Receiving the Baptism with the Spirit

Fear -- People are so stayed in the physical realm, that venturing into spiritual experience engenders a fear of the unknown, and a reluctance to take that step of faith of entering in.

Not embracing it as “having received” -- True faith receives as “having received,” and does not wait for some confirming sign.

There must be a desire to serve the Lord -- Jesus said that a person wishing to be His disciple and serve Him, must be prepared to be as a grain of wheat and fall into the ground and die. This means to be prepared to forsake our present lives that are so full of activities, and to be always available to Him to be used in a ministry. He said that if we cling to our lives we will lose them – that is to lose the fulfillment that comes by doing what we were created for.

You cannot serve two masters -- The baptism of the Spirit is an empowerment for service to the Lord in ministering to His body. Jesus said, ***“No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon.”*** [Matt 6:24]. You cannot be bound to the pursuit of money. Nor can you afford to be in occultist bondage to anything where demons are your masters. You must forsake one master to serve the other.

Demonic Oppressions -- Some other demonic oppressions control areas in people’s lives, and prevent Jesus being LORD. Demonic oppressions like rebellion, witchcraft, unforgiveness, and selfishness, are a deterrent receiving the baptism with the Holy Spirit.

Neglecting the Ministry entrusted to us -- The baptism with the Spirit is a spiritual empowerment to enhance our capability to serve others. In the parable of talents, it was said to those who had been faithful, ***“Well done good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a few things. I will make you ruler over many things.”*** But the one who did not use his talent, but hid it in the ground, was scolded. ***“You wicked and lazy servant...take the talent from him, and give it to him who has ten talents.”*** [Matt 25:21 & 28]. If we have been neglectful in our ministry to the Lord, we can hardly expect a further empowerment.

Receive God’s Forgiveness for our Sins

Before praying for the baptism with the Holy Spirit, we should pray for forgiveness for any sins that may deter us from receiving, knowing God’s promise, ***“If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”*** [1 John 1:9-10].