

## LESSON 17

# BLESSINGS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

**Reading** : 1 Cor. 12, 14

**Memory verses** : Eph. 4:1-16, 1 Cor. 12:1-3

**Theme** : *To experience the blessings of the Holy Spirit in full.*

**Introduction:** We have till now been learning about the Holy Spirit and His activities. It is necessary for us to experience His blessings continually in order to grow spiritually. So let us consider the topics such as the baptism of the Holy Spirit, the anointment of the Holy Spirit, the filling of the Holy Spirit and the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

### **BAPTISM OF THE HOLY SPIRIT:**

When a child of God comes totally under the control of the Holy Spirit and the Spirit comes upon him, that experience is called the baptism of the Holy Spirit. This experience was promised by Lord Jesus Christ to His disciples. He told His disciples just before His ascension: "John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit" (Acts 1:5). This promise was fulfilled initially in the upper room in Jerusalem. It continued in the days of the apostles and is continuing even today.

**The baptizer:** It is our Lord Jesus Christ Himself who gives the baptism of the Holy Spirit. He is described as the baptizer in all the four gospels (Matt. 3:11, Mark 1:8, Luke 3:16, John 1:33).

Baptism of the Holy Spirit is an experience which a person has to receive by waiting in prayer after he is saved.

Holy Spirit leads a sinner to rebirth by the Word of God (John 3:5-6, Cor. 12:3). Thus he receives Holy Spirit by salvation through faith by grace (Rom. 8:16, John 14:17). But the baptism of the Holy Spirit is a separate experience. Those who heard the Word and received salvation in the house of Cornelius were also baptized by the Holy Spirit at the

same time. They were two different experiences (Acts 11:11-18 Salvation, Baptism of the Holy Spirit). Let us also see other evidences:

1. Peter and other apostles were saved and baptized people and were followers of Christ (Matt. 16:16, 19, 27-28). Holy Spirit was dwelling in them (John 14:16-17). But they were baptized by the Holy Spirit as promised by Christ and received power (Acts 1:5, 2:1-4).
2. Philip went to Samaria and preached the gospel. Many believed and took baptism (Acts 8:5-12). Later Peter and John visited Samaria and laid their hands upon the believers and prayed and they received the Holy Spirit (Acts 8:14-18). Salvation, baptism in water and baptism of the Holy Spirit are described as three separate experiences.
3. The disciples in Ephesus believed in Jesus Christ when Apollos preached to them and were baptized. Later, Paul prayed for them and they received the Holy Spirit (Acts 19:1-7).

**The visible sign of the baptism of the Holy Spirit is speaking in other tongues.**

1. The group of 120 people including the 12 apostles were waiting in prayer for the baptism of the Holy Spirit. "They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them (Acts 2:3-4).
2. Peter was speaking in the house of Cornelius. Holy Spirit came upon all those who heard the Word. They spoke in other tongues and praised God (Acts 10:44-46).
3. When Paul laid hands upon the disciples in Ephesus and prayed for them, Holy Spirit came on them. They spoke in other tongues and prophesied (Acts 19:6).
4. When the apostles prayed for the believers in Samaria, they received Holy Spirit (Acts 8:17-18). Others could see and hear what was happening.

It can thus be seen from all these passages that the baptism of the Holy Spirit was an experience visible to others and the evidence was clearly the speaking in other tongues. Have you been baptized in the Holy Spirit? If not, will you pray for that experience with intense desire?

## HOW TO RECEIVE THE BAPTISM OF THE HOLY SPIRIT?

### ***1. Believe that the Holy Spirit is a gift of God:***

One obstacle standing in the way of receiving the baptism of the Holy Spirit is our thinking that we have not become worthy for the experience. But the Word of God says that the Holy Spirit is a gift of God (Acts 2:38, 8:20, Eph. 4:7-8). Gift is not given on the basis of the competence of the receiver, but the love and greatness of the giver. So let us stop all our own efforts and submit ourselves before God to receive His free gift with the hands of faith.

### ***2. Fulfill the conditions (Acts 5:32):***

Although the Holy Spirit is a gift from God, we must position ourselves to receive the same. Peter closes his words on the Day of Pentecost thus: "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit" (Acts 2:38). Peter makes forgiveness of sins as a condition.

### ***3. Pray with thirst, faith and submission:***

The disciples who were waiting in prayer after the ascension of Jesus Christ received the baptism of the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:4, 14). Jesus Christ will baptize us in the Holy Spirit if we pray in faith and with a sense of need. The Lord describes the great need of prayer in Luke 11:8-13.

## WHY SPEAK IN OTHER TONGUES?

### ***1. As a visible evidence:***

(a) Speaking in other tongues is an evidence of a person's baptism of the Holy Spirit. In the house of Cornelius, Jewish believers were convinced that the Gentiles received the Holy Spirit because of the visible evidence (Acts 10:45-46).

(b) Speaking in other tongues is a sign for the unbelievers (1 Cor. 14:22). On the Day of Pentecost many people believed in Jesus Christ because they saw the speaking in other tongues as a manifestation of the power of God (Acts 2:11-12).

## **2. A person speaking in other tongues edifies himself.**

He speaks to God (1 Cor. 14:2, 4). "If I pray in a tongue, my spirit prays" (1 Cor. 14:14-15): "We do not know what ought to pray for, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express" (Rom 8:26). Praying in spirit is more edifying spiritually for a person than praying with mind. God desires that we pray in the spirit (John 4:24, Eph. 6:18).

## **3. It edifies the church:**

If speaking in other tongues is accompanied by interpretation, it will be an opportunity for the church to know the mysteries of God and be spiritually edified. If there is no interpretation, then those who speak in other tongues should commune silently with God (1 Cor. 14:13, 28).

It is thus necessary for a believer to be filled with the Holy Spirit and speak in other tongues. Paul has declared that he spoke in tongues more than anybody else (1 Cor. 14:18). He also desired that all the believers should speak in other tongues (1 Cor. 14:15).

## **ANOINTING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT:**

Anointing of the Holy Spirit is one of the activities of the Holy Spirit. In the Old Testament time, prophets, priests and kings used to be anointed for their ministry by pouring oil on their head (Exo. 29:7, Lev. 8:12, 1 Sam. 10:1, 16:13, 1Kings 19:16-17). Similarly God separates His people for His ministry. Anointing is done for separating the people of God called for specific ministries.

## **FILLING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT:**

Filling of the Holy Spirit is an experience that should happen again and again in a child of God (Acts 4:31, 6:8). Filling of the Holy Spirit is required for a fruitful ministry, a victorious Christian life and spiritual happiness (Eph. 5:8).

## **GIFTS OF THE SPIRIT:**

The gifts which the Holy Spirit gives to believers are through the grace of God. Hence they are also called the gifts of grace. Let us look at the important gifts mentioned in the Bible.

1. Cor. 12:4-11: Nine gifts are mentioned: Message of wisdom, message of knowledge, faith, gifts of healing, miraculous powers,

prophecy, distinguishing between spirits, speaking in different tongues, interpretation of gongues. The gifts are given for the common good. We must eagerly desire these greater gifts (1 Cor. 12:31).

### **FRUITS OF THE SPIRIT:**

After discussing about the gifts of the Spirit, Paul turns his attention to a "most excellent way". the way of love. Love is first in the list of 9 fruits of the Spirit mentioned in Gal. 5:22-23: Love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self control. Even if a man has many spiritual gifts, if he does not have love, he is of no use to anybody (1 Cor. 13:1-3). Spiritual gifts in a man should make him a witness of the love of Christ to others.

### **MINISTERS OF THE CHURCH ARE APPOINTED BY THE HOLY SPIRIT:**

Holy Spirit appoints officers for the church (1 Cor. 12:28, Eph. 4:7-13). They are appointed for the spiritual edification of the church which is the Body of Christ. They can be divided into four categories:

1. Apostles, 2) Prophets 3) Evangelists 4) Pastors and teachers (Pastors have also been called elders in 1 Pet. 5:1-3).

The blessings gifts and commandments that the Holy Spirit gives to believers are very precious. We must use them for the general benefit of others. And we must also endeavour not to grieve the Holy Spirit who has been so graciously given to us by God (Eph. 4:30).

### **Questions**

1. What is meant by the baptism of the Holy Spirit? Prove that it is the promise of Jesus Christ.
2. Prove that the baptism of the Holy Spirit is not an automatic experience at the time of salvation.
3. Quote references to show that speaking in other tongues is the visible sign of the baptism of the Holy Spirit.
4. Explain how baptism of the Holy Spirit is received.
5. What are the benefits of speaking in other tongues?
6. Explain the terms: Anointing of the Holy Spirit and filling of the Holy Spirit.

7. Which are the gifts of the Holy Spirit? Why are they given to believers?
8. Which is the most excellent way described by Apostle Paul?
9. Who are the ministers of the church appointed by the Holy Spirit?
10. List the fruits of the Spirit. Give reference.

