

# GOD JUST TOUCHED ME - WHAT'S IT ALL ABOUT

## Chapter 15 - BAPTISM WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT

### Foretold

Jesus began His earthly ministry when John baptized Him (Matthew 3:13-17). The Jews had a baptism called "Baptism of Proselytes" which was a symbolic washing away of the past life for Gentiles that wanted to start anew and serve the true God. John was telling the Jews that the life they were living was no better than a Gentile's, and they needed to repent and undergo that baptism. Jesus gave that baptism a new meaning. John knew who Jesus was, and said that Jesus would bring a different kind of baptism (Matthew 3:11, John 1:29-34). It is likely that most of the people at that time did not understand what John was talking about. It is also likely true that most people today, even if they have heard about the Baptism with the Holy Spirit, don't really understand what it is.

### Inspired Preaching, Miracles, and Wonders

Once Jesus selected His disciples and began His public ministry, they traveled with Him and witnessed what He said and did. They listened to sermons (Matthew 5:1-12) by the most inspirational Spirit filled evangelist ever to walk the earth (John 3:34). If we could hear Jesus preach in person we *know* we would be changed forever. They witnessed an astounding work of power (Matthew 8:25-27). They saw 5000 fed with a small handful of food (Matthew 14:15-21). They were frightened out of their wits seeing Jesus walk across the lake (Matthew 14:23-27). Then they saw 4000 fed with a small amount of food (Matthew 15:32-38). If we could witness God's power in action in person we *know* for sure we would be changed forever. It didn't do that for the stalwart twelve. They just didn't get it. When Jesus tried to warn them about the practices of the Pharisees, they thought He was worried because they didn't bring food with them (Matthew 16:6-12).

As if that was not sufficient, they also saw Jesus transfigured (Matthew 17:1-8). They were in fear and Peter could not even speak rationally. They watched Jesus raise Lazarus from the dead (John 11:43&44). There have been other people that have raised the dead, but not after four days in the grave when the body already started to rot. That would be enough to make a macho-man run away. Peter was even moved to acknowledge Jesus as the Messiah and Son of God (Matthew 16:13-16). *Surely* we would be moved and changed by all that. The twelve still didn't get it though. After all that had happened, while on the road the future church board was doing what many church boards do today, argue about position and authority (Mark 9:33&34).

The disciples were quite ordinary folks, and when their leader died they were bewildered. Jesus did come back (John 20:1-9) but they were still frightened and hiding (John 20:19&20). Jesus even appeared to them in the upper room. They, and many others, witnessed numerous signs and works of power by the risen Jesus (John 20:30&31). After three years of constant companionship with Jesus and all that had happened, our spiritual heroes, the apostles, returned to their life as it was before Jesus called them (John 21:2&3). It was as if none of life with Jesus had ever happened. Finally, Jesus had to order them to wait in the city for the Baptism with the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:4&5). The city was where the people hostile to Jesus were located, and that frightened the disciples. They were not sure what "The Power" was that they were to await. They still didn't get it, but they did obey Jesus (Acts 1:12-14). They were simply a group of frightened Galileans, and their lives were pretty much unchanged by all the preaching and spiritual fireworks. Then came Pentecost and the first Baptism with the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:1-4). That was a defining moment in the life of the church.

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### **Baptism**

What happened at Pentecost was something totally unfamiliar to the disciples. It has to do with baptism. The words used in the Bible, baptize and baptism, come from a root word that means to cover wholly with fluid, to stain, to immerse. It refers to what happens when a piece of cloth is immersed in dye, or a sponge is immersed in water, or a piece of bread is used to sop up gravy (John 13:26). It does not just get wet on the outside, but becomes totally exposed to whatever it is baptized with. When you are saved you have the Holy Spirit. When Jesus baptizes you with the Holy Spirit, the Holy Spirit has you, all of you. You are filled with power from an indwelling God (1 Corinthians 3:16). Those frightened apostles suddenly became bold (Acts 2:14-21). They no longer feared men. Though they were the Jewish equivalent of hillbillies, their speaking became effective (Acts 2:37&38). They did many works of power (Acts 3:1-10, Acts 5:12-16, Acts 9:32-35, Acts 14:8-10). Their lives were driven and focused. The change was drastic. The power of the Holy Spirit burned within them with such passion that they could never consider returning to their old ways. Demons probably thought the disciples were spiritual clones of Jesus (Acts 19:11-15). The disciples were relentless in doing the work our Lord gave to them and would never tolerate any compromise with the world's ways. There were, however, still individuals in their midst that even then did not get it (Acts 5:1-10, Acts 8:18-23).

### **Pentecost Today**

The scriptures tell us that what happened at Pentecost, the Baptism with the Holy Spirit, is for all Christians for all times (Acts 2:39). Many Christians today talk about renewal and revival, and call for revival meetings. To renew means to make new, to make different, and renewal refers to a moral adjustment. To revive means to flourish or blossom, to live again, to regain life. If you have never had the power-working life-changing Spirit-filled life described in the Book of Acts, you cannot revive it. It has to have been there at some time. If you are looking for an experience like that in the Book of Acts, you are looking for a renewal, bringing in something you want but still do not have. The fact is that Pentecost is still happening all over this world. Our missionaries from Argentina tell of the Holy Spirit coming in power with signs and miracles. Thousands are cut to the heart and are turning to Jesus. Healings are happening all over. It happened at the Brownsville Church in Pensacola Florida with people that even got close to the church building falling down under the power of the Holy Spirit. Thousands are coming to Jesus and miracles are happening. It is happening in Africa and Asia, where millions are turning to Jesus and works of power take place. One such event made world news when the Tsunami hit Sri Lanka. In the presence of flabbergasted witnesses one pastor saw the tidal wave coming towards his group of orphans. He cried out to God to hold it back until he could get his orphans to safety. It stopped, and the story went around the world as the miracle in Sri Lanka.

### **Seeking**

If Pentecost is for everyone, and Pentecost isn't happening where you are, there is a reason. It is the same reason so many of Jesus' followers turned away from Him. After all they witnessed, they still wanted more signs and wonders (Matthew 16:1-4, Luke 11:29). People are still looking for a spiritual amusement park, something to awe them and get their adrenalin flowing. They are looking for the thrills, and will go from church to church to find them. Jesus said they would not get them. They are focused on the gifts, and the gifts are not what it is all about. The gifts are tools, not toys, and they are for this life on earth. They will have no use in eternity. What it is all about is changed lives, powerful Spirit driven pursuit of God. The fruit of the Spirit is what can follow you into eternity.

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What our God wants from us is that we seek Him, not signs (Matthew 6:33). If we do that, the rest will come. No one would go to an auto dealer to buy a bunch of fancy accessories but no car. If you buy the car, the accessories come with it. We are to seek the face of God (2 Chronicles 7:14). The Jews were told to seek Him with all their heart (Deuteronomy 4:29). God is looking for people who seek Him (Psalm 53:2) and He will never forsake them (Psalm 9:10). God loves those who seek Him (Proverbs 8:17) and we will find Him when He is our top priority (Jeremiah 29:11-13). God set things up so that we would seek Him (Acts 17:26-27) and He will reward those who seek Him (Hebrews 11:6). Now is the time to Seek the Lord, because there will be a time when He cannot be found (Isaiah 55:6). That time is known as the tribulation. Be careful what you are seeking, because if you find it, and it is not our Creator and Redeemer, you might end up in a disaster. His commandment is that we are to love Him with **ALL** our hearts and **ALL** our souls and **ALL** our minds (Matthew 22:37, Deuteronomy 6:5), not just love Him with ~~all~~ our hearts and ~~all~~ our souls and ~~all~~ our minds. When everyone is seeking **ONLY** God, and loving God with **ALL** the love they have, Pentecost will come.

If the apostles, who lived daily with Jesus for three years, needed the power from on high, we definitely need the power from on high.