

The Baptism in the holy Spirit

# Watchman Nee: Receiving the Holy Spirit

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[CBN.com](http://CBN.com) – Excerpt from [The Normal Christian Life](#) Chapter 8: The Holy Spirit.

We have spoken of the eternal purpose of God as the motive and explanation of all His dealings with us. Now, before we return to our study of the phases of Christian experience as set forth in Romans, we must digress yet again in order to consider something which lies at the heart of all our experience as the vitalizing power of effective life and service. I refer to the personal presence and ministry of the Holy Spirit of God.

And here, too, let us take as our starting-point two verses from Romans, one from each of our sections.

The love of God hath been shed abroad in our hearts through the Holy Ghost which was given unto us (Romans 5:5).

If any man hath not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of us (Romans 8:9).

God does not give His gifts at random, nor dispense them in any arbitrary fashion. They are given freely to all, but they are given on a definite basis. God has truly “blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ”

## Ephesians 1 : 3

Spiritual Blessings

<sup>3</sup> All praise to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly realms because we are united with Christ. but if those blessings which are ours in Christ are to become ours in experience, we must know on what ground we can appropriate them.

In considering the gift of the Holy Spirit it is helpful to think of this in two aspects, as the Spirit outpoured and the Spirit indwelling, and our purpose now is to understand on what basis this two-fold gift of the Holy Spirit becomes ours.

I have no doubt that we are right in distinguishing thus between the outward and the inward manifestations of His working, and that as we go on we shall find the distinction helpful.

Moreover, when we compare them, we cannot but come to the conclusion that the inward activity of the Holy Spirit is the more precious. But to say this is not for one moment to imply that His outward activity is not also precious, for God only gives good gifts to His children.

Unfortunately we are apt to esteem our privileges lightly because of their sheer abundance. The Old Testament saints, who were not as favoured as we are, could appreciate more readily than we do the preciousness of this gift of the outpoured Spirit. In their day it was a gift given only to the select few - chiefly to priests, judges, kings and prophets - whereas now it is the portion of every child of God.

Think! We who are mere nonentities can have the same Spirit resting upon us as rested upon

Moses the friend of God, upon David the beloved king, and upon Elijah the mighty prophet. By receiving the gift of the outpoured Holy Spirit we join the ranks of God's chosen servants of the Old Testament dispensation. Once we see the value of this gift of God, and realize too our deep need of it, we shall immediately ask, how can I receive the Holy Spirit in this way to equip me with spiritual gifts and to empower me for service?

Upon what basis has the Spirit been given?

### **The Spirit Outpoured**

Let us turn first to Acts chapter 2 verses 32 to 36:

“(32) This Jesus did God raise up, whereof we all are witnesses. (33) Being therefore by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath poured forth this, which ye see and hear. (34) For David ascended not into the heavens: but he saith himself, The Lord said unto my Lord, sit thou on my right hand, (35) Till I make thine enemies the footstool of thy feet.(36) Let all the house of Israel therefore know assuredly, that God hath made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom ye crucified.”

Let us for the moment set verses 34 and 35 aside and consider verses 33 and 36 together. The former are a quotation from the

## **Psalms 110**

A psalm of David.

<sup>1</sup> The LORD said to my Lord,

"Sit in the place of honor at my right hand  
until I humble your enemies,  
making them a footstool under your feet."

<sup>2</sup> The LORD will extend your powerful kingdom from Jerusalem [\[2\]](#) ;  
you will rule over your enemies.

<sup>3</sup> When you go to war,  
your people will serve you willingly.  
You are arrayed in holy garments,  
and your strength will be renewed each day like the morning dew.

<sup>4</sup> The LORD has taken an oath and will not break his vow:  
"You are a priest forever in the order of Melchizedek."

<sup>5</sup> The Lord stands at your right hand to protect you.  
He will strike down many kings when his anger erupts.

<sup>6</sup> He will punish the nations  
and fill their lands with corpses;  
he will shatter heads over the whole earth.

<sup>7</sup> But he himself will be refreshed from brooks along the way.  
He will be victorious.

and are really a parenthesis, so we shall get the force of Peter's argument better if we ignore them for the time being. In verse 33 Peter states that the Lord Jesus was exalted "at the right hand of God." What was the result? He "received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost". And what followed? Pentecost! The result of His exaltation was - "this, which ye see and hear." What, then, was the basis upon which the Spirit was first given to the Lord Jesus to be poured out upon His people? It was His exaltation to Heaven. This passage makes it absolutely clear that the Holy Spirit was poured out because the Lord Jesus was exalted. The outpouring of the Spirit has no relation to your merits or mine, but only to the merits of the Lord Jesus. The question of what we are does not come into consideration at all here, but only what He is. He is glorified; therefore

the Spirit is poured out.

Because the Lord Jesus died on the Cross, I have received forgiveness of sins; because the Lord Jesus rose from the dead, I have received new life; because the Lord Jesus has been exalted to the right hand of the Father, I have received the outpoured Spirit. All is because of Him; nothing is because of me. Remission of sins is not based on human merit, but on the Lord's crucifixion; regeneration is not based on human merit, but on the Lord's resurrection; and the enduement with the Holy Spirit is not based on human merit, but on the Lord's exaltation. The Holy Spirit has not been poured out on you or me to prove how great we are, but to prove the greatness of the Son of God.

Now look at verse 36. There is a word here which demands our careful attention: the word 'therefore'. How is this word generally used? Not to introduce a statement, but to follow a statement that has already been made. Its use always implies that something has been mentioned before. Now what has preceded this particular 'therefore'? With what is it connected? It cannot reasonably be connected with either verse 34 or verse 35, but it quite obviously relates back to verse 33. Peter has just referred to the outpouring of the Spirit upon the disciples "which ye see and hear," and he says: "Let all the house of Israel therefore know assuredly, that God hath made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom ye crucified."

Peter says, in effect, to his audience: 'This outpouring of the Spirit, which you have witnessed with your own eyes and ears, proves that Jesus of Nazareth whom ye crucified is now both Lord and Christ.' The Holy Spirit was poured out on earth to prove what had taken place in Heaven - the exaltation of Jesus of Nazareth to the right hand of God.

The purpose of Pentecost is to prove the Lordship of Jesus Christ.

There was a young man named Joseph, who was dearly loved of his father. One day news reached the father of the death of his son, and for years Jacob lamented Joseph's loss. But Joseph was not in the grave; he was in a place of glory and power. After Jacob had been mourning the death of his son for years, it was suddenly reported to him that Joseph was alive and in a high position in Egypt. At first Jacob could not take it in. It was too good to be true. But ultimately he was persuaded that the story of Joseph's exaltation was really a fact. How did he come to believe in it? He went out, and saw the chariots that Joseph had sent from Egypt.

What do the chariots represent here? They surely typify here the Holy Spirit, sent both to be the evidence that God's Son is in glory and to convey us there. How do we know that Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified by wicked men nearly two thousand years ago, did not just die a martyr's death but is at the Father's right hand in glory? How can we know for a surety that He is Lord of lords and King of kings? We can know it beyond dispute because He has poured out His Spirit upon us. Hallelujah! Jesus is Lord! Jesus is Christ! Jesus of Nazareth is both Lord and Christ!

The exaltation of the Lord Jesus is the basis on which the Spirit has been given. Is it possible then that the Lord has been glorified and you have not received the Spirit? On what basis did you receive forgiveness of sins? Was it because you prayed so earnestly, or because you read your Bible from cover to cover, or because of your regular attendance at Church? Was it because of your merits at all? No! A thousand times, No! On what ground then were your sins forgiven? "Apart from shedding of blood there is no remission"

## **Hebrews 9 : 22**

<sup>22</sup> In fact, according to the law of Moses, nearly everything was purified with blood. For without the shedding of blood, there is no forgiveness.

The sole ground of forgiveness is the shedding of blood; and since the precious Blood has been shed, your sins have been forgiven.

Now the principle on which we receive the enduement of the Holy Spirit is the very same as that on which we receive forgiveness of sins. The Lord has been crucified, therefore our sins have

been forgiven; the Lord has been glorified, therefore the Spirit has been poured out upon us. Is it possible that the Son of God shed His Blood and that your sins, dear child of God, have not been forgiven? Never! Then is it possible that the Son of God has been glorified and you have not received the Spirit? Never!

Some of you may say: I agree with all this, but I have no experience of it. Am I to sit down smugly and say I have everything, when I know perfectly well I have nothing? No, we must never rest content with objective facts alone. We need subjective experience also; but that experience will only come as we rest upon Divine facts. God's facts are the basis of our experience. Let us go back again to the question of justification. How were you justified? Not by doing anything at all, but by accepting the fact that the Lord had done everything. Enduement with the Holy Spirit becomes yours in exactly the same way as justification, not by your doing anything yourself, but by your putting your faith in what the Lord has already done.

If we lack the experience, we must ask God for a revelation of the eternal fact of the baptism of the Holy Spirit as the gift of the exalted Lord to His Church. Once we see that, effort will cease, and prayer will give place to praise. It was a revelation of what the Lord had done for the world that brought to an end our efforts to secure forgiveness of sins, and it is a revelation of what the Lord has done for His Church that will bring to an end our efforts to secure the baptism of the Holy Spirit. We work because we have not seen the work of Christ. But when once we have seen that, faith will spring up in our hearts, and as we believe, experience will follow.

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