
Subject: "he being dead yet speaketh." (Heb. 11.4) Thoughts From HEF - Part 4
Posted by [unclebob_5](#) on Mon, 29 Jan 2007 22:59:40 GMT
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"God testifying of his gifts: and by it he being dead yet speaketh." (Heb. 11.4) Thoughts From HEF (Part 4)

I have recently been (re-)reading HEF's book, "Deeper Life In The Spirit"; this was a book that has always blessed me, so I thought I would just excerpt from it a bit for the benefit of those who have never (or recently) read it - starting at the beginning...Here is part 4 (from pp. 13-21 of the book; emphasis in bold is mine; my thoughts follow the excerpt). Read his teaching, meditate, and be blessed!

The Doorway into the Deeper Life

As we stand on the threshold of the consummation of the age, when the world's foundations are already beginning to crumble around us; as we stand in the midst of an increasing flood of satanic wickedness, when even the church seems almost overwhelmed by the powers of darkness; as we find ourselves living in an age in which the term "discipleship" has lost all real meaning, and Christians seem, all too frequently, little more than pale shadows of their earlier brethren, with neither the power nor the fruits of the Holy Spirit in their lives, the most vital question confronting the believer today is that asked by the Apostle Paul when he inquired of the disciples at Ephesus:

"Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed?"

It is imperative that one, first of all, deal sincerely with this question which confronts every believer, or it will be impossible to enter into the deeper life in the Spirit. The Scriptures address themselves at this point only to those men and women who, because of their deep hunger and thirst for more of Christ (Matthew 5:6), and because of the awareness of their own spiritual poverty (Matthew 5:3), are convinced that nothing less than an outpouring of the Spirit from on high can deliver them from their present lifeless Christianity and the spiritual wilderness in which they seem to be wandering aimlessly.

The only question is: "How can the Christian, who has gotten over his doctrinal questions about the possibility of being filled with the Holy Spirit today, receive this experience?" For most Christians, the matter has already been settled by their denominational creed, whereby they are generally taught that the baptism of the Spirit is received at the time of regeneration and is identical with that received by the disciples at Pentecost, only without the tongues, which, according to them, was merely a temporary sign or experience of the apostolic church. Thus, the baptism in the Holy Spirit is, they believe, some dubious experience which they received more or less automatically, inevitably, and unconsciously when they were saved, or, as some contend, at the time of water baptism, or at confirmation. They are taught that after conversion they must

strive to be "filled" more and more with the Spirit, and that to the extent they yield themselves to Him, they will experience His power, bear the fruit of the Spirit, and be effective in their witness.

It must be admitted, however, that in the actual experience of most Christians, the baptism of the Holy Spirit remains only a "doctrine" in the creed, and the hope of some day being "filled" with the Spirit always seems beyond their grasp. It is evident that something is amiss with an interpretation of the Scriptures which asserts that one has already received an experience about which he seems to know so little personally.

Therefore, we must point out at the beginning that the baptism in the Holy Spirit is a definite, personal experience subsequent to salvation, confirmed to the believer with the evidence of speaking in a new language supernaturally as the Holy Spirit gives utterance. In Acts 2:38-39, we are assured that the promise of this experience is not limited to the disciples and Jews at Pentecost, but is made "to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call." There is more confusion over the subject of the baptism of the Holy Spirit and its evidence of speaking in tongues than perhaps any other. Christians have been misled, mistaught, confused, and warned against so-called "pentecostalism," until they do not know what to believe. This tragic state of affairs is no accident! An Enemy has crept in and sown his tares while the church slept. Satan knows that a Christian has no real power over him without the empowering of the Holy Spirit, which comes as a result of the baptism experience, and that a church in which the members are not filled with the Spirit of Truth is open to his deceptions, and that it has no anointing to fulfill its commission as Christ intended. Thus, the powers of darkness have done everything they can to convince Christians, and with no little success, that the baptism of the Holy Spirit is not a personal experience subsequent to salvation, and that speaking in tongues today is inspired by the Devil! Perhaps Satan's greatest victory has been to create a fear of the Holy Spirit in the hearts of Christians. The Spirit's blessed work and ministry in the life of the believer is so misunderstood by our generation that the very mention of the baptism in the Holy Spirit in many churches is sufficient to frighten people into open resistance. We insist upon the need of the baptism of the Holy Spirit, as a definite experience for the Christian subsequent to salvation, because it is not just an arbitrary requirement, but is essential to the Spirit-led life. It is the doorway into the deeper life in the Spirit.

Evidence of the Baptism in the Holy Spirit

The Apostle Paul asks a question in Acts 19:2 about which no Christian should have any doubt as to the answer. Yet most do not have any real assurance, from an experiential standpoint, whereby they could reply in the affirmative beyond any question of doubt. He asks, "Having believed, did ye receive the Holy Spirit?" (This is a literal rendering of the Greek.) Most denominational Christians, if they are honest with themselves, will give the same reply as the disciples at Ephesus: "We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost" to be received as a personal experience. In some instances, there have been those who have had an unusual spiritual encounter with God, experiencing such things as deep emotion or unspeakable joy, visions and revelations, or a great

anointing by the Holy Spirit, and have concluded that such glorious experiences must have been a "baptism" in the Holy Spirit. Usually, however, they state categorically that they have not "spoken in tongues." Therefore, the majority of believers either accept the question of their baptism in the Holy Spirit as a matter of doctrine based upon the teachings of their creeds, or in a few instances believe that they have entered into this experience because of some deep, personal, spiritual experience. Is there any definite scriptural evidence and sign of the baptism in the Holy Spirit, whereby one may know conclusively whether or not he has received this experience? We believe that there is.

1. If one has the baptism in the Holy Spirit he will know it.

This is not "begging the question" (i.e., assuming the point raised in the question). It should be obvious that unless one knows positively that he has experienced the baptism in the Holy Spirit, and has the evidence, then he has not. Just as the Christian can know by experience, from a personal encounter with Jesus Christ at a definite point in his life, that he is saved, or know, from experience, that he is married, or know that he has been baptized in water; in the same manner he will know if he has experienced the baptism in the Holy Spirit. In Acts 19:2, it is evident that the disciples at Ephesus knew that they had not yet received the baptism in the Holy Spirit; but unlike most today, they did not have to examine their creeds to determine this fact. They knew how to answer the Apostle's question, for the simple reason that they lacked the experience. But after the Apostle had laid hands upon them, they then knew that they had received the baptism in the Holy Spirit, inasmuch as they had just experienced it with its evidence, for we read, "And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues and prophesied" (Acts 19:6). It is the same today: when one receives the Holy Spirit he will know it because he has experienced it. If there is any doubt, then it is evident that he has not.

2. If one has the baptism in the Holy Spirit he will know when he received the experience.

No one was ever filled with the Holy Spirit gradually. This is to confuse the baptism of the Holy Spirit with the "fullness" of God, which is a growth (Ephesians 3:19; 4:13-16). The baptism in the Holy Spirit is a definite, personal experience into which one enters at a specific time. Because the contemporary church has lost this personal encounter with the Spirit, it now teaches a gradual "filling" based on Ephesians 5:18. In this view, as one empties himself and yields to the Holy Spirit, which he received at the time of conversion, he will find that his life is gradually "filled" more and more with the Spirit and under His control.

However, in the New Testament the terms "baptized" with the Holy Spirit and "filled" with the Spirit are synonymous (compare, for example, Acts 1:4-5 with Acts 2:4). Therefore, when one is "baptized" in the Holy Spirit, he is "filled" with the Spirit. No Christian is baptized or filled gradually over a period of time. The baptism is an instantaneous, complete filling with the Spirit at a definite, specific time in the life of any believer who in faith asks for this experience.

3. If one has received the baptism in the Holy Spirit, it is because he asked for the experience.

Almost without exception, those who have entered into this experience have done so as a direct result of their having asked the Lord in faith for His Holy Spirit. In Luke 11:13, Jesus invites the believer to ask for the Comforter, saying: "If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?"

Often I have heard Christians say, "If the baptism in the Holy Spirit were for today, I believe I would have received it, because I have told God that I want all He has for me." Such a prayer will never be answered by God, for the simple reason that it is not a prayer of faith. We must never condition our prayers with "if" when asking for that which God has specifically promised us in His Word, as He has clearly done concerning the Holy Spirit (Luke 11:9-13; Acts 2:38-39). These same Christians who say they have prayed, "If this experience is for me I want it," concerning the promise of the Holy Spirit, certainly did not pray this way concerning the promise of salvation in John 3:16, saying to God, "If salvation is for me, I want it." On the contrary, salvation, as they well know, came as a result of their making a specific claim in faith on the promise of God. All the promises of God are, without exception, received in the same manner—by a definite act of faith. Paul likewise tells us that the Holy Spirit is to be received by faith when he asks the Galatians: "Received ye the Spirit by works of the law, or by...faith?" and then concluding, "We...receive the promise of the Spirit through faith" (Galatians 3:2, 14).

The baptism of the Holy Spirit is clearly promised the believer in the Word of God, but one cannot receive this blessing until he has gotten over any doubts or doctrinal questions about the possibility of being filled with the Spirit today. All of God's promises are to be appropriated by faith. To remove doubts we recommend a study of God's Word on this question, for where there is no faith, there is no expectation for anything to happen, and where there is no expectation, nothing can happen. If one has received the baptism in the Holy Spirit, it is because he has asked for this blessed experience in faith, believing that it is promised to him in the Word of God.

4. If one has received the baptism in the Holy Spirit he will have the scriptural sign and evidence.

Is there a scriptural sign that one has been baptized in the Holy Spirit? We believe there is. Occasionally there are those who believe that the baptism in the Holy Spirit is a valid experience for the believer today, but who claim to have received the baptism without speaking in new tongues. They tell of "an inward experience," of "being overwhelmed with a great sense of love," of "feeling deep emotion," of "experiencing an awareness of God's Presence," of "an unusual anointing," of "being beside themselves with joy," of "seeing a vision," and so on. All of these experiences, as precious as they are to the recipient, are, nevertheless, based upon feeling, emotion, or other subjective factors of which the Bible says nothing in regard to the baptism. This of course is not to discredit such sacred, personal experiences with God; but we must not confuse such subjective encounters with God with the baptism in the Holy Spirit, accepting them as

evidence of the baptism. We must evaluate our experience in the light of Scripture. When we do this, we find that speaking in a new language or tongue supernaturally is the scriptural sign of having received the baptism in the Holy Spirit.

a. Speaking in tongues was predicted in the Old Testament.

(1) Joel 2:28-29. Peter quotes this to authenticate the divine source of the ability to speak the new languages at Pentecost. Joel had predicted the outpouring or baptism. Peter said the new tongues were the evidence or sign. Note carefully it was the phenomenon of speaking in new tongues that excited the Jews, causing them to inquire: "What meaneth this?"

(2) Isaiah 28:11-12. Paul cited this prophecy to indicate that speaking in tongues in the church had been predicted by Isaiah. See I Corinthians 14:21-22.

b. This sign was incontestable proof to the Jewish church that the Holy Spirit had been given to the Gentile Christians.

Acts 10:44-46. It was when they heard them speak with tongues that Peter declared that they "have received the Holy Ghost as well as we." In Acts 11:16 he calls it the "baptism with the Holy Ghost."

c. This sign was doubtless missing from the Samaritans' experience; thus it was evident that they had not received the baptism in the Holy Spirit.

Acts 8:4-8, 12-19. Moreover, verse 18 says that Simon "saw" something which caused him to offer money for the power to give the Holy Spirit to others. Neither Philip's healings, exorcisms, nor miracles caused Simon to offer money for these. Evidently he had heard them speak with new tongues when they received the baptism in the Holy Spirit.

d. The 120 disciples all spoke with new tongues and they accepted this alone as evidence that Christ had now fulfilled his promise to baptize them in the Holy Spirit.

Compare Acts 1:4-5, 8 with Acts 2:4, 33. This is their own interpretation of their experience; namely, that the baptism in the Holy Spirit results in speaking in new tongues.

e. Twenty years after Pentecost speaking in tongues was still the sign and evidence of receiving the Holy Spirit.

Acts 19:1-6.

f. Speaking in tongues was a commonly accepted phenomenon in the churches and considered a manifestation of the Holy Spirit.

I Corinthians 12-14; Romans 8:26-27; Ephesians 6:18; and Jude 1:20.

We conclude, therefore, that speaking in tongues, and this alone, can be considered as scriptural evidence confirming the baptism in the Holy Spirit. The writer has ministered to some of those who thought they had received the baptism in the Holy Spirit without tongues. When shown their untenable position from Scripture, they received the baptism with speaking in tongues. Without exception, those who want to speak with tongues always do when they yield their tongues and will to the Holy Spirit. Obviously, some have experienced "anointing" of the Holy Spirit. But they mistakenly equate the "anointing" with the baptism in the Holy Spirit, in order to avoid the stigma that has come to be associated with speaking in a new tongue.

God would not base the assurance of having given us His Holy Spirit on mere "feelings" or "emotional experiences," no matter how precious or sacred these may be. Feelings and emotional experiences are too subjective and variable from individual to individual. He chose the sign of speaking a new language supernaturally as the evidence of the baptism because it is (1) outward evidence, (2) uniform evidence, (3) universal evidence, and (4) supernatural evidence. Emotional, physical, or spiritual manifestations may also occur and sometimes do accompany the sign of tongues, but the Bible does not tell us to look for these as they are too unreliable and variable. Look for the sign God has given.

These signs shall follow them that believe;...they shall speak with new tongues.
â€“ Mark 16:17

My thoughts (see text in bold)--

--I guess the main thing that speaks to me in this section was Dr. Freeman's insistence that proper Scriptural teaching on this subject is necessary. I find today that in many churches there is a lot of appeal to having an "experience," and that not much time is spent on Scriptural teaching on this subject. Just a lot of anecdotes, slogans, and a few Scripture quotes thrown in for good measure. Later on, many who have had an "experience" but not enough teaching begin to question it all.

"He being dead...YET SPEAKETH!"
Your thoughts?
