

(Power From on High) 2. the Baptism With the Holy Ghost

by A.B. Simpson

The baptism with the Holy Ghost is the union with the living personality of the Spirit, where we receive the Spirit as the seal and source of our new life, and are empowered to accomplish God's purpose.

Scripture: Zechariah 2:5, Matthew 3:11, John 20:22, Acts 1:8, Romans 8:9, 1 Corinthians 12:13, Galatians 5:22-23, Ephesians 4:30, 2 Timothy 1:7, Hebrews 12:29

Topics: "Baptism Of The Holy Spirit", "Empowerment for Service"

Description

A.B. Simpson emphasizes the significance of the baptism with the Holy Ghost, explaining that it is Christ who baptizes us with the Spirit, enabling us to live a life reflective of His. He draws parallels between the Old and New Testament promises, highlighting that receiving the Holy Spirit follows receiving Christ as our Savior. Simpson elaborates on the transformative power of the Holy Spirit, likening it to fire that purifies, refines, and energizes believers, making them effective in their spiritual lives. He encourages believers to fully surrender to Christ to experience the fullness of the Holy Spirit, which empowers them to live out their faith with zeal and purpose. Ultimately, the sermon calls for a deep desire for the Holy Spirit's presence, which protects and energizes the believer's life.

Transcript

"He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire." Matt. 3: 11.

This sounds almost like an echo of the last promise of the Old Testament. The voice of "the Messenger" is taken up by "the Forerunner." "He is like a refiner's fire, and like fullers' soap; and He shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver: and He shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them like gold and silver, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness."

In the last chapter we have seen the relation of the Holy Ghost to the person of Christ. First, He was born by the Spirit, then He was baptized by the Spirit, and then He went forth to work out His life and ministry in the power of the Spirit.

But "He that sanctifieth and they that are sanctified are all of one;" so in like manner we must follow in His Footsteps and relive His life. Born like Him of the Spirit, we, too, must be baptized of the Spirit, and then go forth to live His life and reproduce His work. And so our next theme is the baptism of the Spirit of God

through the Lord Jesus Christ.

I. THE BAPTIZER.

It is Christ's province to baptize with the Holy Ghost. The sinner does not come first to the Holy Spirit, but to Christ. Our first business is to receive Jesus, and then to receive the Holy Ghost. Therefore, the great promise of the Old Testament is the coming of Christ, while the great promise of the New is the coming of the Spirit.

Jesus received the Spirit from the Father. We receive the Spirit from Jesus. It is necessary for us, in order that we may fully receive the Holy Ghost, that we shall first receive Christ in His person as our Savior and as our indwelling life.

The Father gave the Spirit to Him not by measure and, if He dwells in us, He will bring the Spirit with Him, and He shall dwell in us likewise in the same measure in which He dwells in Jesus.

Our mere human hearts are not fit temples for the Holy Ghost. It is only as we are united to Christ that we are prepared and enabled to receive the Holy Ghost in the fullness of His life and power. It is the Christ within us, that still receives the Holy Ghost.

And so, when our Master was about to leave the world, it is significantly stated that He breathed upon them, and said: "Receive ye the Holy Ghost." The Holy Spirit came upon them through the breath of Christ. This significant action emphasized the fact that the Spirit was imparted to them from His own person and as His own very life. It is true that the act of breathing on them did not bring immediately the residence of the Holy Ghost into their hearts, for this could not be until after the day of Pentecost. But it was meant to connect it with Himself, so that when the Holy Ghost did descend and dwell in them they would receive Him as the Spirit of Jesus, and as communicated to them by the breath and the very kiss of their departing Master.

As we have already seen, the Holy Ghost comes to us as the Spirit of Christ and even as His very heart, the One who wrought in Him His mighty works and repeats them in us.

Would we receive the baptism with the Holy Ghost, let us receive Jesus in all His fullness. Let us draw near to His inmost being, and from His lips let us in-breathe the Spirit of His mouth.

II. THE BAPTISM.

What is the baptism imparted to us by Christ?

Sometimes we hear this spoken of as if He baptized us with something different from Himself, some sort of an influence, or feeling, or power. The truth is, the Spirit Himself is the baptism. Christ baptizes, and it is with or in the Spirit that He baptizes us. There is, therefore, one baptism with the Spirit once for all, and, from that time, the Holy Ghost Himself is our indwelling life.

The word "baptize" is significant in this connection. Literally, it might be translated "Baptize you in the Holy Ghost." It is scarcely necessary to say that the word baptize means to immerse, and carries along with it always the idea of death and resurrection. There is something very significant in this in connection with the reception of the Holy Ghost. It means that we are baptized into death, and raised into life, and thus receive the Spirit from on high. Just as Jesus went down into the Jordan, which was the symbol of death, and

there received the Heavenly Dove, so we must step down into the death of all our strength and all our life, and, surrendering ourselves completely to Him, rise in newness of life with Christ, and thus receive the Holy Ghost as the seal and source of that new life.

The most important condition of the baptism with the Holy Ghost is that we shall truly die to all our own life, and enter into the meaning of Christ's resurrection. We must be completely submerged, not a hair of our head left; in sight; then when we cease from ourselves we shall enter into God and find that while, in one sense, we have received the Holy Ghost into us, we have in a far greater sense been received into the Holy Ghost. He is too vast and glorious for any soul to exhaust His fullness; therefore, after He has filled and flooded all our being, there is an overflow as boundless as the ocean of immensity, and we are still in that ocean as the element of our inexhaustible life.

It is scarcely necessary to say that the baptism of the Holy Ghost is our union with the living personality of the Spirit. It is not an influence. It is not a notion, nor a feeling, nor a power, nor a joy, into which we are submerged; but it is a heart of love, a mind of intelligence, a living being as real as Jesus Christ of Nazareth, and as real as our own personality.

III. THE SYMBOL OF THIS BAPTISM, FIRE.

"He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire." This does not mean that the Holy Ghost and fire are different, or that the baptism of fire is something distinct from that of the Spirit, but simply that the figure of fire expresses more fully the intensity and power of this divine baptism. It means that the soul that is truly baptized with God is a soul on fire. Fire is the most forceful and suggestive of natural elements, and seems made especially to symbolize the Holy Ghost.

1. It is a penetrating element. It goes to the very fibre and heart of things, and is internal and intrinsic in its action. And so the Holy Ghost "pierces to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a Discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart." He searches our inmost being, and requires and produces "truth in the hidden part."

2. Fire is a purifying element. It separates the dross from the gold. It burns up the stubble and purges the vessel from all defilement. It is the type of the cleansing, sanctifying Spirit of God, who alone can purify our sinful and polluted souls and burn up the dross of sin.

3. Fire is a consuming element. It is the most destructive of forces; so the Holy Ghost comes to destroy all that is destructible, to consume all that is corruptible, and to burn out all that is combustible. God wants a people that have been so burned out, that when the testing fires of the great final day shall come there shall be nothing left to consume. It is not only the sinful but the earthly, the natural, the self-bound life, that the Spirit comes to wither, until there is nothing left but the divine and everlasting. "The grass withereth and the flower fadeth; because the Spirit of the Lord bloweth upon it." Do we not want this blessed fire? Shall we not welcome this blessed flame? Are we not weary of the things that wither and decay, and do we not desire the life that cannot pass away; the loves and friendships that shall never say good-bye, and the treasures that shall meet us in the sky?

4. Fire is a refining element. And so the Holy Ghost in the great Refiner. He comes, not only to cleanse, but to improve, to elevate, to mature, to beautify and glorify the soul, and fit our heavenly robes for the marriage of the Lamb. "He shall sit as a Refiner and Purifier of silver." There is an instantaneous and there is a gradual work of the Holy Ghost. There is an act by which He baptizes us into Himself forever. And

there is a process in which He sits down beside the crucible, and watches the molten silver until it perfectly reflects His image, and then He removes the fire and declares the work complete. He comes not only to give us love, but all the gentleness of love; not only long-suffering, but also "all long-suffering with joyfulness;" not only "the things that are pure, and true, and honest," but also the "things that are lovely and of good report." Let us welcome the refining fire. Let us invite Him to sit down in our willing hearts, and finish His glorious work, until we are "all glorious within," our clothing of wrought gold, and our raiment "white and lustrous" for the Marriage Feast.

5. Fire is a necessary element in preparing almost every article of food for our nourishment. We cannot live on raw wheat nor uncooked meat. It must pass through the process of fire to be wholesome and nourishing; so the Holy Ghost prepares the Word of God for our spiritual subsistence. A great many people live on raw and cold theology. It is little wonder that they are spiritual invalids and suffer terribly from bad digestion. A little truth, thoroughly prepared and presented to us by the loving hands of the Holy Ghost, is worth volumes of dry theology and learned exegesis.

The Passover must not be eaten "raw or sodden," but it must be roasted in the fire and properly prepared. The Holy Ghost is as necessary as the blood of Christ and the word of truth. He is a very foolish preacher who tries to preach without Him, and a very foolish Christian who expects to find the truth and the power of God without His blessed anointing and constant illumination.

6. Fire is a quickening element. And so the Holy Ghost is the source of life. What is it that makes the spring, the flowers, and the swarming life of the insect world? It is the warmth of spring, it is the fire of yonder sun. And so the Holy Ghost quickens our whole spiritual being into vitality. Like the mother bird, whose warm bosom incubates the germs of life that she has dropped into her nest, so the Spirit of God vitalizes all our being, and quickens into life and blessing seeds that lay dormant, perhaps, for years. He quickens our spiritual life; He quickens our intellectual life; He quickens our physical life, and is the source of healing and strength.

7. The Holy Spirit, like fire, melts the rigid heart and molds it into the form of God's holy will, and highest purpose. Without the Holy Ghost we are set in our own ideas, plans, and thoughts; but the soul that is filled with the Holy Ghost is adjustable, both to God and to man. The easiest people to get along with are those most filled with God.

The Spirit is a great lubricator and mellow, and He keeps us adjusted to the will of God, and to the providences of life as they meet us, day by day, in God's perfect order of place and time.

8. Fire is the great energizer and source of power. It is the real secret of the electric current and the throbbing piston of yonder engine. And so the Holy Ghost is the source of all spiritual power. He and He alone can give effectiveness to our lives, and make us tell for God and humanity, and the great purpose of our existence. We need His power in every department of life. He is not only for the pulpit, but for every walk of life. The Holy Ghost will give power to all who will receive it, to make life effective and to make us accomplish the purpose of our being.

The Old Testament age was a life of effort, struggle, and human endeavor. It was man's best with God's help; but God is through with that forever. God is not now trying to get people to do as well as they can, but He is offering to undertake Himself the whole responsibility of their life and work, to enter and possess their hearts, and to be their all-sufficiency. And so we are without excuse if we fail through our own imperfection and ability. God is not blaming us for what we do not do, but for what we do not let Him

enable us to do.

"Ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you;" and we "can do all things through Christ who is our strength."

9. Fire warms, and so the Holy Ghost is the source of love, zeal, and holy earnestness. He sets souls on fire for God, and duty, and humanity. He makes us all aglow with divine enthusiasm. An ordinary mind will accomplish more than a brilliant one, if it is alive with holy earnestness.

We are living in an earnest age. All the forces of human intelligence are intensely alive. Be in earnest. The world is in earnest. Satan is in earnest. God is in earnest. Redemption is an earnest business and cost its Author every drop of His crimson blood. The Holy Ghost is intensely in earnest. Everything in heaven and earth and hell is in earnest but man. It is an awful thing for a Christian, redeemed by the blood of Christ, and destined to an eternal future of weal or woe, to be frivolous or trifling. O, friend, think, if that day you are wasting were to be cut off the end of your life, instead of the middle, how quickly you would awaken and tremble at the thought of trifling! If every hour you waste were deducted from the sum of your life at the close, how frightful the sacrifice would seem! And yet it is even so. God help us to be intensely aroused to life's solemn meaning!

Now, the Holy Ghost will make us earnest. Indeed, one of His own names is this, "The Earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession." The earnest means the reality. The Holy Ghost is the reality of things, and He makes us real and earnest, too.

10. Finally, fire is a protective element. The eastern shepherd surrounds his fold by night with a little wall of fire, as he heaps up the dry wood of the desert in a circle around his flock, and the wild beasts fear to come within the fiery wall. So God says, "I will be unto her a wall of fire round about, and will be the glory in the midst of her."

The Holy Ghost defends us from the power of evil. A heart on fire with God throws off a thousand temptations. An electric wire, charged with the fiery current, is as mighty as a battery of artillery. A hot stove cover throws off the water that vainly tries to rest upon it. So a heart filled with the Spirit of God is proof against temptation, sin, sorrow, and even disease.

Oh, let us be filled with the Holy Ghost, and we shall carry a charmed life and be preserved from all the powers of earth and hell!

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