

Baptism of the Spirit

by Leonard Ravenhill

The sermon emphasizes the importance of revival and the need for prophets to call people to repentance and prepare the way for God's revival.

Duration: 1:07:05

Scripture: Matthew 3:2, Mark 6:18-20, Luke 9:24, John 11:25-26, John 14:2-3, Acts 2:1-4, Ephesians 4:8

Topics: "Holy Spirit Baptism"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of learning from history and not repeating the mistakes of the past. He highlights the 400 years of captivity that the Israelites experienced under Pharaoh and how they failed to learn their lesson. The preacher also criticizes the ritualism and formality that had taken over their worship, emphasizing the need for true godliness. He calls on the audience to give their best to God and not prioritize worldly possessions or distractions. The sermon concludes with a warning about the current state of society, urging believers to stand up for righteousness and be willing to sacrifice for their faith.

Transcript

to the effect that hardened criminals, some of them who have fought until their bodies were bruised and bloody, some of them who have been pistol-whipped, some of them who have broken almost every law of God and man, and feared neither God nor man, have feared one thing. And that one thing was when the judge said that they were to be sentenced to jail, but in solitary confinement. And one very famous or really notorious criminal sank on his knees and raised his hands and begged the judge to lengthen his period behind the bars, but let him be in company with other men, because he said, if I'm alone year after year after year, I'm afraid that I can't stand the loneliness.

Prophets are a strange breed of men. They're God's emergency men for crisis hours. And the price of being a prophet is that a man has to live alone.

All God's great men have been very, very lonely. A lady once asked me what university I went to, and I said, I went to Bush University. She said, well, I never heard of anybody from Bush University.

Who else went there? Well, I said, I think Moses was the first student there, and he spent forty years on the back side of the desert. And not only does he send a man like that, but the other prophets in the word of God were very strange men. Isaiah was prepared to walk around the streets of Jerusalem barefooted

for three years.

Well, that doesn't sound strange, except you remember perhaps that when the prodigal came home, his father said, put shoes on his feet, because no slaves ever wore shoes. That's why the colored people used to sing so joyously, all God's children got shoes. I got shoes, you got shoes, gonna walk all over God's heaven in shoes, because they never had shoes.

And Isaiah was prepared to be identified as a slave. Another man was prepared to lay on his right side for a period of time. Another man like Jeremiah walked down the street with a yoke around his neck and said the nation was in bondage to sin, as he was in bondage to that yoke.

And tonight I want to think about a man that lived a very, very lonely life. I said very often that when I turn over the pages of the Bible, that one of the most challenging pages is the white page that divides the Testaments. It doesn't say anything, it says one of the most eloquent things that it's possible to say.

It's a white page, but it covers a period of 400 years of total darkness. 400 years of darkness without any light, 400 years of silence without any prophetic voice. If I were to say to you tonight, I'll give you a paper and pencil and you can write and give me, from your knowledge of the Word of God, who was the greatest man that ever lived outside of Jesus Christ, I guess you might come up with Moses or you might come up with Paul, and you'd be wrong, because the greatest character reader of all time was Jesus himself, and he said that the greatest man that was ever born of woman was John Baptist.

A man who spent some 20 years there in the fastness of the desert. A lonely man, a strange man. His father was a priest of the course of Abbia.

There were 20,000 priests at that time, and his father was a member, I think, of the 12th caste or the 8th caste. And it's an amazing thing when you think of it, at least to me it is. You know, just like the tide has to go the farthest out before it can return, we as individuals, we as churches, we as nations, as I see the picture, have to come to a place of recognizing our total barrenness before ever we bring forth life.

And you can tell me in the little spark of revival in your church, thank God for it, that you'll never convince me there's any revival in America. I'm too smart to know that. And I'll bring you statistics that will drown you.

And I'll bring you evidence that makes us realize the fact that we've out sinned Sodom and we've out sinned Gomorrah by a long, long way. We have blinded our eyes to truth and we have put our fingers in our ears to the voice of God. And the great need in America tonight, I'm convinced of this, as good as Bible schools are with their assembly lines and producing their preachers, the greatest need in America tonight is prophets.

And as dear Tozer used to say, if you're going to be a prophet, brother, you better settle. Or it was Dr. Parker who originally said, if you're going to be a prophet, you'll have to preach repentance. And before you start, dedicate your head to heaven because you won't last much more than six months maybe.

John the Baptist himself didn't. This man's father then was a very wonderful man and he had a very wonderful wife. But she was a barren woman.

It was a barren woman that brought to birth Samuel. It was a barren woman that brought to birth the amazing man by the name of Samson. It was a woman who one day was no longer fascinated by beautiful

garments, was no longer adored or interested in the adoration of the people, because unquestionably she was the queen of the tribe.

But one day she came and threw herself in prostration and I think with tears that had marked her face and her hair no longer beautifully done, and she fell down before the husband and said, Jacob, give me children or I die. And I say to you with all the power of my ransom being tonight that I think the time has come when we change Patrick Henry's wonderful cry, when you remember he said, give me liberty or give me death, that if you've got an ounce of Christ in you, this is the hour to say, give me a resign or give me death. Amen.

Because if we can live without revival, then we're not... Our brother spoke a searching word. I wish you'd heard it this morning. Get a tape.

If you don't get any of mine, I wouldn't care. But get that tape that our brother preached this morning. That message on Hosea.

Brother, that skinned us alive and hung on our hides out. That brother showed us, Brother Conrad Moreau, whose book is on the table there, he showed us, I believe, exactly where the nation is today. And the judgments that are going to fall if we don't get revival.

And maybe it is not an alternative of Christ or chaos, but Christ and chaos. Not revival or revolution, but revival and revolution. Not revival without concentration camps.

Maybe the only place you get it is in concentration camps. But as sure as that's my hand, I'm sure God is going to give us revival. Amen.

And this man had prayed and his wife had prayed. And they decided that God would give them just one thing that seemed very natural, but she bore no children. The husband was given a very wonderful privilege because only once in the life of a priest did he go into the temple and minister in the way that Zacharias was ministering on this occasion.

After all, there was a long line of 20,000 priests and most of them wouldn't get in on it anyhow. And so just once in his priestly life, when at 9 o'clock in the morning on the temple porch of Herod, because Herod financed the building of it, some men stood with their trumpets to heaven and sounded a blast and the court opened its doors and the priest went down the aisle there and as he went down nervous, under the burden of his garments, doing something that was unrehearsed, doing something he would never do again, he walked up there to the front of the temple and as he walked there, I say I believe nervous, I believe he was maybe just shaking from head to foot. And lo behold as he got there, right to the side of the temple, there was an angel standing there.

Well don't you think some of you preachers would be startled if an angel came and stood at the side of you next Sunday morning while you were preaching? I think I might. And as soon as he saw the angel, his nervousness was intensified and the angel said, Fear not, I am Gabriel. Gabriel sent from the presence of God.

And he says he stood on the right side of the altar because when he was going to speak to the nation he stood on the left side of the altar. But here he's on the right side of the altar and he says, Fear not, thy prayer is heard. Thy wife Elizabeth has conceived and will bear a son.

And I think that some of the greatest shocks you and I could have would be to have our prayers answered. We're so used to praying and nothing happened that if they got answered we'd be startled. My wife is going to bear a son.

Yes she's going to bear a son. And he shall be great in the sight of God. The man couldn't believe it and because of this you remember he was smitten with dumbness.

And eventually they brought him a pad and a table and he wrote and he said what his name was going to be and they said well there's nobody of this name, surely you'll call him by some other name. It was of this little child that Jesus said he should be the greatest man that was ever born of woman. And when this woman was pregnant with this child she went to see a cousin who was pregnant and immediately she got into the presence of Jesus.

I'm going to stress that, not until that. Immediately Elizabeth came with a child in her womb and got to marry with a child in her womb. Then the child left women in her womb and it says, and this is the wonder of the whole thing to me, it says that Zacharias was filled with the Holy Ghost, it says Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Ghost and it says of John the Baptist, whilst it doesn't even say of Jesus, that he was filled with the Holy Ghost from his mother's womb.

What an amazing thing. I'm reading about this in the book of the Spirit of God. You see I discovered something afresh today in reading this and I thought it was very beautiful.

I'm convinced, you may be convinced otherwise, but I am convinced there never has been a supernatural birth either of an individual or revival without prayer. And it says here in the thirty-seventh verse of the second chapter of Luke, there was a widow of four score and four years and she departed not from the temple and she was over a hundred years of age, come on now you pretty girls at forty and fifty, she was over a hundred years of age, she didn't depart from the temple, she stayed in the presence of God with fastings and with prayer in the night and in the day and she was praying for deliverance to come to the nation. Think of this amazing man Simeon.

Mary and Joseph come into a temple and they present to Simeon a child. There's nothing unusual about this. This is a routine.

Every day he dedicates children. And suddenly as he dedicates his child, suddenly he says, my God, here is the salvation of the nation. Do you think that wasn't echoed around Jerusalem that night, that a deliverer would come who was going to get Israel from under the heel of the oppressor? Don't you think the Pharisees and the Sadducees and the high priests and others trembled when they heard this word? Why did that man dare to say of this child who was so much like the baby he dedicated ten minutes ago, why did he suddenly say this child is for the hope of the world and for the salvation of Israel and he's going to redeem them? Why did he say that? I'll tell you why, because there's no guessing about it.

It says in verse 25 the Holy Ghost was upon him. It says in verse 26 it was revealed to him by the Holy Ghost and it says in verse 27 that by the Spirit he came into the temple and took him in his arms and blessed him and said, now let thy son of departing be. And the Holy Ghost never makes a mistake.

He was led in the Spirit. He gave utterance. He prophesied in the Spirit.

And the Holy Ghost was yet poured out. He says here is the child. Here is the design of all the nations.

For after all, all Old Testament prophecy terminated in the womb of the virgin Mary and all New Testament prophecy was born in the womb of the virgin Mary. That Christ was the fulfillment of the old and he was the fulfillment of the new. And then we know very little about John Baptist.

He went into the wilderness until the day of his showing forth. Oh, I'd love to have heard John Baptist preach, wouldn't you? I'd like to have seen this man when God says, John, you've been here 20 years now, you better go out and preach. I told you this morning it takes God 20 years to make a man.

It took him 20 years to make John Baptist and then he preached for six months. You boys went to Bible school for six months and been preaching 20 years. No wonder you're dry.

You better go back. Go back to the wilderness. Go back to the desert.

Get into the loneliness. There's nothing on God's earth like silence. Just take your Bible, forget everything and everybody and shut yourself away till that you have a new revelation from God himself.

And John came. Oh, I'd like to have seen him. He was a strange man.

He didn't wear any clerical attire like in our country all the preachers. Pentecostal to Presbyterians all wear their collars backwards way because most of them are going backwards way. But anyhow, they wear clerical attire.

But he had no distinct garments. The priest would go down the street and they would say, there's the priest and there's the high priest. They were the distinctive marks of God.

But John wore no strange garments. He was strange by the fact he wore only 11 girdles around his loins. That was his strange dress.

He was no gourmet. He didn't go through the, you know, the long, long menu and say, well, I don't know, my jaded appetite, there's nothing. You sure you don't have shrimp with a special dressing or something? He just caught the flies as they were going past.

The locusts. Pull the wings off and put them on a hot rock. He had locust burgers every day.

Breakfast, dinner, and supper. And all the prophets had honey, you know, and Jesus ate honey too, and John Baptist had honey, and the prophets in the Old Testament had honey. Samsonated.

You know, it's true that wherever honey goes, no germs ever follow it. It's one of the greatest foods you can get. And John Baptist had it.

Strange in his dress, strange in his diet, strange in his doctrine. But I don't care how you measure this man. Sometimes we think he's kind of an errand boy, just opening the door to let Jesus in.

Look, you do a bit of research and you'll discover that John Baptist was a preacher and a prophet in his own right, and he preached no less than 29 different points of doctrine, in the slight evidence that we have in the New Testament. 29 different points of doctrine that he preached. I say there had been a period of 400 years.

That's an awful... Do you think that God Almighty might favor America by giving us 400 years of total darkness? And do you think we could survive it? A lot of people want Jesus to come today because

they're scared stiff of suffering, that's right. After all, the church has been getting lashed and tormented and stripped and prostituted. There's a little man, some of you read his book, God's Smuggler.

How many of you read the book, God's Smuggler? Wonderful, exciting book. I know that little man. In fact, I gave him that title before ever he put the book together.

I said, well, you're God's Smuggler. And he had been over in China, and he said when he was in Shanghai, he noticed men sitting on the side of the road. They'd been for a haircut, and when their hair was cut, they left a cross in the middle of their heads.

Cut it, the patches out, left their hair standing up in a cross there. And then they had to sit on the sidewalk, and the young communists came past and hoisted all the flesh they could and spat on their heads. The church tonight is suffering untold agony.

You listen to the sweet little boys over the radio, they'll tell you that the Russians are going to come and burn the country up, and they're going to put us into hell itself. But you know, you little darlings, you being so faithful, you're so thin with your fasting, and your homes are so poor and poverty stricken, and you haven't two dimes to your name, and you're so stricken and helpless, that just out of His great mercy, the Lord's going to rapt you out of it, so you won't have to suffer one little stroke. All the suffering is for the Christians in Russia and the Christians in China.

But no body in America is going to suffer, because we're the most faithful people on God's earth. Isn't that lovely? Well, the man who tells you that is a liar. I know a preacher who was in Shanghai, and when he was there, because he had preached, pardon me, he was in Formosa, and because he had preached in Shanghai twenty years before, and found the Chinese people were in Shanghai, were in Formosa where they are now, he went in to see them, and he greeted them in his eloquent Chinese, and they ignored him, and he said, but I'm the pastor, I used to teach you in Shanghai, and they ignored him.

And he said, now look, this isn't oriental courtesy, what in the world are you doing? I'm your pastor. One man looked up from his busy work and just frowned and said, you're a false prophet. A what? You're a false... A false prophet? Why, I gave you lectures on Mormonism and the other religions.

I am not a false... We remember when you were our pastor in Shanghai, and you had some maps of the world, and some wonderful pictures of the Roman Empire, and you had a marvelous chart on the Antichrist, and you had some more on the Dispensations, and you told us that for long we were going to be washing blood here in China, that people were going to cut us down as though we were grass, they were going to rape our women in front of us, they were going to burn our churches and tear our Bibles up and subject us to the most gross humiliation and suffering it was possible to have. But you said, don't you worry about that, because just before that happens, the Lord's going to take all his dear little children out from this, you're not going to suffer. The man said with tears streaming down his face, my wife was dragged out of my arms, and the last time I heard she'd had three children to the Russian guards.

My daughter was taken away, and my sons and my children were taken away. You told us everything that was true except one thing, we weren't snatched out of this misery. The Lord didn't spare us, we're living in anguish and suffering.

Oh, we're living here now in a little bit of ease and comfort, but there's nothing that can bind up our broken hearts, no money, no creature comforts, our wives are gone, our children are gone, our churches are

gone, our homes are gone, everything is gone. You're a false prophet, we can't listen to you. You'd better watch it, preacher, because one day you might go into concentration camp, and some of your church members spit on you for saying the same thing.

It's easier to stand up and say excitedly, we glory in tribulation and infirmity in necessities, than you go home and have a steak dinner this size and put your feet up and watch the Rams play Sunday afternoon and feel that you've really got another star in your crown, because, well, very reluctantly you did go to church Sunday night. Not many people do do that, you know, and that really proves I'm a saint. Sure does.

Oh, brother, we're having... God let these dear people, the darlings of his heart, he let them go into captivity for 400 years under Pharaoh, and then they went in and out of captivity, you'd think they'd learn the lesson and they didn't, and then they have 400 years, and God never speaks. 400 years and God never moves. 400 years of ritual and formality and sacrifice and all the ritualism that they went through, but somehow it was a form of godliness.

And God decided to upset the apple cart, if you like. What did he do, send a legion of angels? No, no, no, no, no. He took a little man out, a baby out of the womb of its mother, he separated this man and he educated him in the spirit and sent him into the wilderness, and he came out and he had no forward man and he asked for no program and he wasn't seeking prestige and he didn't beg for anybody's power and he didn't find some secret way of promotion.

If you'd walk down the desert there, you could hardly tell a man the color of his skin, it was sunburned on the inside and fire-baptized on the inside, and fire-baptized with the sun on the outside, and you could almost see the way he'd go because his tears were rising like steam off the ground. They have broken my laws. You see, we think if we're really blessed and successful evangelists, you get a bigger home, a bigger car, more prestige, and brother, you think you're good because now you can buy \$150 suits, whereas you wore \$30 suits not too long ago.

But brother, if you've moved up, will God ever tell you what you're doing? Your heart's more broken now than it was when you started ten years ago. You see the nation going downhill more rapidly than she's ever gone before. Prostitution's increasing, crime is increasing, immorality's increasing, lawlessness is increasing.

And in the richest, most comfortable country in the whole world, we stink in the masters of Almighty God tonight, and England is equally true, it's equally true of England as well. Ah, the prophets were men who walked with God. They felt like God, they saw like God, they wept like God, they yearned like God.

They've no satisfaction in seeing the beauty of the temple, the ritual, the formality, all the things that they went through, no, no, no, no, God has gone from them. And our brother emphasized that this morning. The Spirit of the Lord departed from Samson and he was not.

And one good Baptist preacher said to Dr. Tozer, he told me this himself, he said, Len, a Baptist preacher said something the other day that shook me, but I think he's right. He said if God withdrew the Holy Spirit tomorrow, my church would function just the same. He wouldn't even know that he'd gone.

We keep up the formality, the money is coming in, people are nice, one or two come to the altar. But oh, what a difference when a man gets a heart that craves for revival, that longs that God will make bear his arm, that all the nation will have to acknowledge. And when John Baptist came, he came with no lip that

was buttoned.

He had nobody to please, he had no program, he had no priorities that he was trying to push ahead. I remember preaching on one occasion, a brother came up very graciously afterwards and he said, You know, Brother Adenow, I believe God's given you a ministry. Well, I didn't need anybody to tell me that.

Because if he hadn't, I wouldn't preach. But he said, if you'd only get a lawn on a mountain somewhere and just persuade God to give you the gift of healing, I think you could have the, well, you could be one of the top ten preachers in America. Well, the Holy Ghost never told me I had to be one of the top or one of the bottom, ten bottom ones.

I wouldn't care where I was. But he said, you know, this is a great drawing card, or the answer. Well, I want to tell you tonight, miracle is not the answer.

Because you've got men that have been taking tents over this country now and they have the same minister and they can't draw the cards anymore because they got fed up merely of miracle. And do you know what it says in John Baptist? It is true that Jesus produced miracles. And I've heard men say he got four-fifths of his ministry.

Sure it was, because he had no gospel to preach yet, only the gospel of the kingdom. And he was trying to persuade them by the very things that he did, that he was a fulfillment of the prophecy of Isaiah, that when he is come, the eyes of the blind shall be opened, the ears of the deaf shall stop, the lame will leap aside, the ten of the dumb shall sing. And he did it all, he fulfilled every command and every miracle was done through him.

Jesus did them all, sure he did. Because when he went into the temple in the seventh of John, a woman said to the big shots there, well why don't you arrest him? Will the Messiah do more miracles when he comes on this earth? She was persuaded by his miracle ministry he was the Messiah. But I want to tell you something for nothing, that after this four hundred years of stillness, people were not running out to the desert saying, have mercy on my son, he's a lunatic.

People were not saying, hey do you see who I am? I used to be blind at the street corner but now my eyes I can see. I used to be deaf, I used to have a crippled arm. There was no river of derelict humanity following John Baptist, indeed it says very plain in the word of God, John did no miracle.

No miracle? No sir. Never opened blind eyes? No sir. Never unplugged deaf ears? No sir.

He never raised a dead man? No, he didn't raise a dead man. And he did it without the miraculous in the form of the flesh. He did it in the power of the Holy Ghost.

Oh, when John came, I say he was a success on any level. I think John had already had his program from God and the Lord said, you better get busy boy because you're not going to be around here very long. No sir, they'll chop your head off if you start preaching this.

Boy, we're dealing with a few men that are prepared to lose their heads for Jesus right now. I say again, most of you men know to preach better than you do know, than you do preach but you won't do it because you'll get kicked out of the synagogue, that's why. You really have to trust God and that'll be trouble, won't it? And you've been paying in the minister's pension fund.

Oh brother, wouldn't that be awful to have to sacrifice that for Jesus? You say, I'll lay everything on the altar, I'll set my golf clubs and my minister's pension fund and my big TV and anything else you can have Lord but don't intrude just too much on me kind of thing. Oh, I like to think of John Baptist standing there, no sponsors, nobody to agree or disagree with him, and they came to see this strange man, anointed by the Holy Ghost. And I tell you this, if a man is anointed by the Holy Ghost, folk will seek him.

Anointed by the Holy Ghost. You see, when you're a young guy, you want people to recognize your ministry. And you have to go around begging.

You know, I've been around your way for a while now, let me see. Yes, I'm free, I've got three spare weeks in June, let me fill it up for you, you know. Nice to be a beggar for Jesus, isn't it? Brother, if you have no ministry, you'll have to find a place for yourself.

Isn't that what the good book says? The Bible says that a man's gift will make room for him. Now, I've never asked for an opening, and I never will. And if God shuts me off, that's fine, I'll go on the back side of the desert and pray and weep and seek God.

But I'll never ask anybody to open the doors to me. John did no miracle. But oh, brother, when John preached.

Why, man alive, he had no... No, no, those stickers, you know, you put on the backs of... Well, you say they had no autum... Well, he could have had a little card, couldn't he, and stuck it on the camel's tail or something, and had the camels going, waving a little card, Here, John Baptist up in Enon, near Salem. After all, he was a Baptist, and you know what they are for advertising. But anyhow, he didn't advertise about his meetings.

I say again, you don't have to advertise a fire. So, the synagogue was empty, the temple was empty, the crowds were up there. Heard the news, what news? Oh, there's a strange man.

Do you know what they say? Some people say... You know, it almost scares you to say it, but you know what some people say? Elijah has risen from the dead. You see, there's only one spirit that the prophet has. You can identify the prophet right away.

When God anoints a man like that, they're all of the same spirit, whether he be Isaiah, or Jeremiah, or Elijah, or Elisha, or John Baptist, there's just one mark of identification. There's some supernatural authority they have in the word of God. And John was doing no miracle, and he woke most visitors next Sunday.

But brother, they were hanging on every tree, they were climbing the banks, they were listening to Republicans, and sinners, and harlots, and thieves. And the big shots had a committee meeting up in Jerusalem, at headquarters, and they said, we've got to go down and see this fellow. The big fat bellied priest came and one said, we've come with authority to... Well, first of all, what Bible school did you go to? I don't see your diploma nailed up on a tree there.

Do you have a PhD or anything like that? What's the distinctive feature of your ministry? Where did you get your authority? Who are you? I like his answer. He said, I'm a voice. Most preachers are only echoes.

He said, I'm a voice. I heard a fellow preach a brilliant sermon in New York a while ago, and I could tell when he left Campbell Morgan and he took up DeWitt Talmadge, and when he left DeWitt Talmadge and

got on to Arthur Pinker, and when he left Arthur Pinker and got on to... I could tell he put all the bits together, you know. But oh brother, that wasn't true when you heard John Baptist.

Here is a man with a divine revelation. He preached like nobody on earth, because he'd been living so long in heavenly places, and he knew the judgment of God was this. He knew that after Pentecost, that shook the city and shook the environment, not many years after, the whole city was raped and wallowed in blood under the invasion of Titus.

And we've got to get revival in America before we're wallowing in blood and bypass the revival and still wallow in blood anyhow. John preached in the anointing, and it says they came from... Any way you measure him, this fellow is a success. Socially? Why? Because it says that the soldiers came to hear him, and it says the publicans came to hear him, and it said the people came to hear him.

But oh, they must have felt awfully indignant when he looked up and he didn't tremble and he wasn't worried, and he didn't say, well, I have to slip home and bring you my preaching papers. He just stood there and said, I'm a voice, a voice crying in the wilderness, prepare ye the way of the Lord. Do you know this man did what no other man in history was ever privileged to do? More than Isaiah, though he saw it afar off, more than anybody else, he was to introduce Jesus, and one day Jesus stood in the water, and not only was he crucified between two thieves, he was baptized between two thieves, because there were only harlots and murderers and drunks that were getting baptized anyhow.

And Jesus stood there in the spirit, and John uttered the words that echoed down the very last corridor of hell itself and has made hell tremble ever since. He says, behold, the Lamb of God hath taken away the sin of the world. Not all that bothered be some Jewish altar slain could give one guilty conscience peace or wash away one's stain, but Christ, the heavenly Lamb, took all our sins away.

He lifted God and Samson could never lift. He solved a problem that Solomon with all his wisdom could never solve. He led captive and decapitated.

He died and rose again. And he pledged my resurrection and his resurrection because he said, if I die and rise, you die and you'll rise again. If I go to my Father, you'll have a place in heaven with me.

And the Holy Ghost came. And the whole area was stirred. And when John was preaching, I said, this morning we have so many things we put up with they never had in the New Testament.

There are no Bible schools in the New Testament. The only reason we have Bible schools is because we have belts at preaching, that's why. Mr. Spurgeon said a hundred years ago that the Bible suffers more from its exponents than its opponents.

A witty American said not long ago, sure, the Bible is infallible. Otherwise, how do you think it survived so much bad preaching? Oh, brother, let's get back and preach the book. Preach what God says about it, about sin, about redemption, about the Holy Ghost, about his coming, about war and tribulation.

Why, this is the most exciting book in the whole world. And John preached and while he was preaching, shooting the arrows of God into the hearts of men and women. Dear old George Whitefield did that one night.

He said, I brought my quiver full of arrows and they tip with the fire of God and I'm going to shoot them. And he drew, he says, here is the first arrow and the arrow of repentance. Here it comes and the whole

audience stepped down.

Because, but he got them anyhow. And John was preaching something we're bypassing these days. We offer people heaven these days without repentance.

We offer them a jewel crown without repentance. We say if you just come here and want to be baptized and you'll be good and pay your tithes so the preacher won't have to work. Just let him get fat and lazy and help us along.

And you can be a real good member in a Baptist church or some other church. But brother, I'll tell you, John didn't preach that. Oh, we don't preach like these old fellows used to preach.

Old Nicholson of Ireland, I heard that fellow preach and the audience would weep and then they'd laugh and then they'd get mad and then they'd shake. And you'd think, boy, if he drops the net, now he's going to get hundreds of people and you know what he'd do, he'd stand up and sing. Stand up! Now sing.

God save our gracious King. You'd think, what in the world is the man doing? And then he'd say, well, good night, God bless you, go home, keep your nose clean and eat fish on Fridays. That was a benediction.

You say, that's ridiculous. Why does he preach a thing like that? I'll tell you why. Because he knew when God had shot an arrow in the heart of a man, he didn't have to stop there and plead and say, let's sing this once again.

And you know, you could die in an automobile wreck before you go home. He said one night when he was preaching on John 3.16 and nobody honoured the word that had been preached, he preached on hell the next night and he said, there are 1,200 people here, look, this is my farewell to you, get to hell, the whole 1,200 of you. And he went home and prayed that they'd have nightmares and they'd be in hell.

A friend of mine preaching with him said, look, it's a good thing we've only got one meeting on Sunday night because you've ruined the whole crusade. Nicholson said, what did you think of my sermon on hell? He said, it's the most terrifying sermon. Did you feel that it was real? He said, I could almost smell the sulfur.

Did you feel that God has made a hell for wicked men as well as the devil? Did you feel that there are a million ways into hell, a million roads in and no road out? That while heaven is eternal life, hell is eternal death? That while heaven is eternal life, hell is eternal darkness? While in heaven there is no mourning or sorrow, in hell it's everlasting mourning? While in heaven they sing the song of mourning, in hell they groan and groan, the harvest is past, the summer has ended and you are not safe. Did I make hell as real as that? My friend Peter Conley, some of you may know, he died just recently, dear old Peter Conley, said, Brother Nicholson, you made hell more real than any man either. He said, all right, son.

I didn't kill the meeting by getting them to sing the national anthem and my little bit of fun there, keep your nose clean and eat fish on Friday. He said, I'll tell you, if those 1,200 people stay in hell till Sunday night, they'll be glad to get out. And I'll tell you something, Sonny, he said, when I make the altar call on Sunday night, there'll be more than 100 people converted.

Peter Conley told me himself, I preach with him often, Peter says, well, I couldn't wait till Sunday night. He said, Nicholson came. Man alive, he said, he must have been in eternity, was saturated with the Holy

Ghost.

He said, he stood there and the people, he hurled God's thunderbolts at them and boy, he got those people too. They were holding on their seats and then he said, now come along tonight. The Almighty God shot an arrow in your heart the other night.

You better obey God. This may be your last chance. And if you're coming, get up and come.

And they stampeded to the altar. They were falling. They were cursing as they came to the altar.

Here's another so-and-so. They didn't know any better. But brother, you go to Northern Ireland and go to the government there at Stormont and ask them to open the book to the year 1922 and there's a great big line across the state book, the national book, and it says, we anticipated revolution.

God sent revolvers through W.P. Nicholson. That man knew God. His main theme was repentance, repent, repent, repent.

And John said, repent. And while he preached repentance, the soldiers with their bracelets on, these Roman heathen were so scared stiff, it says that even while he preached, the soldiers began to cry out. Because he was crying in the spirit, they grew in the spirit.

And the soldiers said, well, what shall we do? And before they finished crying, the publicans over there began to cry and say, what shall we do? And before they could finish crying, the people over here said, what shall we do? They were all crying, they were mourning, they were sorrowing. Oh, we don't see many heartbroken people come to the altar. And if they go, before they can get broken, we say, now darling, wipe your eyes.

You know the Lord loves you. Just put your finger on this promise. Brother, they put their finger on that promise a dozen times and got nowhere.

Let them wallow in their misery. Let them get to the place where they feel hell is opening. Let them go away from the altar not helped.

For God's sake, don't try and put a band-aid on their cancer. Open the cancer. Probe them.

Send them home terrified. They'll get to God before the week's out or before next year. Sure, sure they will.

Because God, as we heard today, never begins a work he doesn't finish. And God, you can't build a skyscraper on a desert, can you? I remember in New York there, they'd pull the building down and I watched those men go down and down and down. I thought, good night.

They'll get to Australia if they keep going. And I said, well, where are they? The man said, don't you know that Manhattan is one solid rock and they're going to go down till they... The only reason you can build a building a hundred stories high is because you go down dozens and scores and maybe hundreds of feet to the bedrock. But once you get to the bedrock, oh, but we're afraid of going to the bedrock.

We're afraid to tell people they've got to repent and turn their back on sin and hate their sin and love their sin. But John did it. And not only did he disturb the whole non-miracle, just the miracle of regeneration, which, listen, I believe in miracle.

I've been in meetings that we have had and afterwards said, if there are sick, we'd be happy to pray. And I've seen God open blind eyes. I've seen people get up out of chairs when they were crippled.

I've gone to hospital and prayed for people who are dying of cancer. And one woman I prayed for is healthier than me now, and that was 30-odd years ago. And I've seen God do that.

But I want to tell you the greatest miracle that deity can do is to take an unholy man out of an unholy world and make that unholy man holy and put him back in an unholy world and keep him holy. Amen. That's the redemptive work of God in Christ.

We had a woman in town when I was a pastor, I went as pastor, and she was distorted and crippled. And, brother, you couldn't tell that woman. She looks horrid to look at.

And in a healing meeting one night, the preacher touched her and her body just went as straight as six o'clock. And she's a beauty queen in the town now. And she smokes and she drinks and she lives in lust and she spends her night gambling and she's still healed.

Oh, I thank God for miracles. God does them. But again, the greatest miracle is that God can take a putrid heart.

God can take a heart of stone and make a heart of flesh. And in my judgment, he doesn't put a heart of flesh at the side of a dirty old stone either. I don't go along with carnal Christianity.

That's nonsense. Oh, I thank God for miracles. God does them.

But again, the greatest miracle is that God can take a putrid heart. God can take a heart of stone and make a heart of flesh. And in my judgment, he doesn't put a heart of flesh at the side of a dirty old stone either.

I don't go along with carnal Christianity. That's nonsense. You ain't got a record.

I've got the list there. I gave it our brother with 62 tapes. And one of them is a fantastic record that every preacher ought to get on carnal Christians, and I tell you it's something.

He may blow campus crusades sky-high, but brother, he stands on the word of God, I'll tell you that. You can't have the cross of Jesus in your heart and be as carnal as you were before you came in because that's nonsense. You can't be carnal as spiritual because to be carnally minded is death.

How can you be dead and be alive? You don't have to have a second blessing to put off the old man. You put off the old man when you... and become a new creature in Christ with devalued regeneration to try and make room for a sanctification or a baptism with a... I want to tell you the greatest miracle this side of heaven, because it's the basis of everything else anyhow, is an operation of God by the Holy Ghost where the man gets convicted of his sin and he gets born of the Spirit of God and he lives in the Spirit and he walks in the Spirit and he loves the Word of God which is the Word of the Spirit and then he goes on and he has repeated anointings of the Holy Ghost. But the agony of Calvary and the hell of Gethsemane was there only for one purpose, that he might redeem us from all the power of sin and I say again, make an unholy man holy and put him back in a unholy world and keep him holy.

I remind you again, friends, that Christianity is not a comparative religion, it's a superlative religion. It doesn't compare with any religion in the world, it contrasts with every other religion in the world. Now can

you imagine how the people are going, hey, did you hear the other day the brother of Barabbas, you know Barabbas and his brother were the Jesse Jameses of the day and they said, did you hear the news, Barabbas' brother got converted the other day, did you hear about that old harlot? It's all said and done about power in most cases.

The first thing God requires is purity, you can have all the gifts after that, thank God for them. But remember what God is again, you don't do much for a man when you get it, you're right, you get up when you want to, you buy one, it was only a few months, and the saviour says, yeah, the young fellow gave it up, he had to go to war, it's a marvellous car. I mean, there's about \$1,500 of it, you can't afford to miss it and he said, I can't, here, let's exchange it, and he took it and he signed off, he drove down the road, bang, it went round, and it's been going round ever since, do you know? Oh, there's selfishness, there's carnality, there's something that's there that should not be there.

Somebody said to a friend of mine, well, who is you? That's the best answer I know. But you shouldn't be living there anyhow, you should get out of it. Fire is energy, fire is power, a fire for purity.

Let me say one thing, I quoted this before, but it always... I went to preach in a little town, a lovely town, actually called Dundee in Scotland, famous for its marmalade and famous for its Dundee cakes, famous because Mary Slessor was born there, and I went along to preach with a nursery preacher. As we went in the Cherryfield Mission, this sign was up, it said, James Baxter McLagan, and he was the president of the southern section of the Nazarene Church in Britain just before he died recently, but he was in Scotland, and I had the privilege of doing a crusade for him in every church he was in. And he said, Len, I'm going off in the train this afternoon, I've got a leaf pass, I'm going to Dundee, would you come? And we went.

And I saw his name outside and I said, well... And he said, do you know, Len, that sign says, James Baxter McLagan is going to preach this afternoon. And he said, you know, it's real funny because he isn't. I said, well, who is? He said, you are.

Well, I said, that's a dirty trick. We were shivering in the cold, the river was... I said, well, I'm not going to preach. But he got up and he played his concertina and he sang with his lovely voice and then he said, you're going to stand up and sing and then I have an Englishman here, he's never preached in this town before, and he likes this city, Dundee, famous, of course, famous for Mary Slessor, famous for this, and most famous of all for a man that had revival by the name of Robert... who died at the ripe old age of 29.

But he shook the city for God with all his tuberculosis. Well, I didn't know what to do but I stood up and gave what God had given me and I said, some of you are strangled in your spiritual experience, you're still fettered, you've still got bondage, fear, doubt, weakness, nervousness, powerlessness. You've never made a total commitment, you've never said, I'm the altar in the Old Testament, what do you know? But I said, if you come and put your whole personality on the altar and let God burn up all that's there that isn't any good to him and then let him have the ashes, he'll do more.

Now, I said, I've got five minutes to get away and catch the train but I want to pray for you as I leave and if you... Amen. And I said, how many will do it? And they began to raise their hand, they began to put their hands up all over my counter and I said, there's ten, eleven, twelve. Will you bow your heads? Now as you sing Spirit of the Living God as I go after the door with you.

And they began to get up. A little woman at the back with red hair, she put her head round like that, put her hand up as quick as that. And I said, now come on lady, you get up too.

And she went like that and I went... And that little woman got up and she ran... And I went home and shivered on the train. Fifteen years after, my dear wife and I went to Manchester, England. We got in late.

I had to sit at the back. The speaker had a bad time that afternoon. Speakers can have them, I've had them and you have.

Nothing seemed to go right. And finally he sat down. People said, my, that was a terrible atmosphere, wasn't it? The devil was there.

It wasn't the devil, it was the janitor that was at fault. The place was overheated, there was no ventilation, it was hard to keep your eyes open. What's he going to blame the devil? He gets blamed for enough anyhow.

The chairman said, we've got ten minutes before tea is ready. I, I, I rubble. And he said to a little lady sitting here whose legs didn't touch the ground, she was kicking like this all the time.

I thought she was wanting to get to the preacher and kick him. I think she'd like to have done it. And she was kicking away and then he said, come on now Miss So-and-so, testify.

She jumped off the chair, hit the deck, came here and she said, I want to. She went and you know, in five minutes, we were all sitting on the edge of our seats like this and she was telling us what God did. She'd just come back from Africa, away in the woods they had a Holy Ghost revival.

I used to live by myself, I'd be listening. Hey Mr Marmalade, I once preached there and I said, yeah, that's right. And, and, and she said, you know, when I lived in Dundee, all I did was sweep the floor in a factory.

I never finished my schooling. My handwriting was very bad. I, I couldn't spell.

My English was hopeless. I just pushed a broom round the factory floor and swept up the dirt and thought she was going to say, hi Mary, she's such a nice woman, isn't she? It's pity she couldn't do something more, be a typist or something but she just doesn't have it. And she said, I shoved this broom year after year round the floor and she said, you know, I couldn't ever speak to a man.

If a man came, I blushed and I got sensitive. And you know, at night, I lived with myself. I used to go and shake the door and make sure it was locked.

And I used to check the windows and see they were all fast and I always looked under the bed to, you know, these ladies think they're so precious somebody's going to steal them. And so she'd lock the door and seal the windows and she looked under the bed and then she said, I get in bed and if there was a noise, I, I, one day she said, and she laughed and she said, you know now, I've got a little frail house way, way, way in the bush all by myself. I have a medical chest there are my other things.

And some nights when I'm in bed I turn over and I hear and she said, I just turn over and say, you better go away I'm not on the menu tonight. And the line goes away. And two o'clock in the morning there's a knock at the door and every year she comes in and she said, I've got a little frail house all by myself.

And the line goes away. there's a knock at the door and every year she comes in and she says, you better go away I'm not on the menu tonight. And two o'clock No, no, no.

My feet won't stumble. I'll get home alright. I used to run away from mice.

I don't run away from lions. I used to run away from white men. I don't run away from black men.

And she said, you know, not only that but she said, I'll tell you how it all began. My wife and I were at the back and I was behind except on occasions like this because she said, I was in a meeting and Mr. Ravenhill preached. Well I got behind the hat and she said, I went to hear another man preach and I'm glad he didn't and I don't remember much that Mr. Ravenhill said except he said, if you put everything on the altar and let God burn it up than you could ever do with any education or anything else in the whole wide world.

And she said, until that day he said, you know, Jesus took workmen, Peter, a fisherman and he took a man that was a tax gatherer. He isn't looking for PhDs and he's looking for ornery people who will bring all they have and say, yes to God, do what you want with me. And she said, Lord, that's the only chance I've ever had in my life.

I'm going. And she said, I was the one that ran down the aisle. I just flew down that aisle and I said, I want you, my home, my past, my present, my future, help yourself.

Give me the Holy Ghost. And she said, he fell in fire and he burned up my fear and he burned up my nervousness and he burned up all my ideas. And she said, I went home and I got a phone and it was the worst student you ever had but will you take me in? And she said, they took me in.

And she said, you know what I did? I couldn't spell when I got there, I couldn't write but by the time I finished I was the best student in English. And then she said, I went to France to study French because of the place I was going to and she said, I came out at the top of the list studying French and then I got to the mission field with a bunch of new recruits and I came out top in languages. That's not bad for a girl that's French.

I'm learning a new one right now. And she said, it all happened because if you told me that day that I'd become a missionary, that I would see revival, that we would see God do miracles, I couldn't have believed it. But she said, once I let go, I let God.

Amen. And she said, I'll tell you something. I'm not very sure about the day I was... You can't find when some of the apostles were saved.

You can find them in the moral film of the Holy Ghost. Amen. It's a crisis experience.

It's preceded by a process. It becomes a crisis. It's followed.

There's no finality to it as I said this morning. I'm still learning after 50 years almost, this coming year, 50 years of preaching and I know so little about it. I wish I could do it better.

But I want to tell you that this is the answer for this decadent generation that we live in. Amen. And if you come to the altar tonight, brother, some of you, it might be a bunch of golf clubs.

Yes. Hmm? Have mercy. It might be a TV set that you like more than terror and... Hmm? It might be that little side business.

Now finish. The world's going to hellfire. He says you will baptize and I don't get a red center.

But you are almighty God this answer tonight. If there's stagnation in your life, it's your fault and not God's. Amen.

Brother, we could have a bonfire but it costs some of you an awful lot, wouldn't it? Your wife thinks you're the greatest preacher on earth but in your heart of hearts you know you have no imbuement. You know you have no passion. You know it's very much a job.

And you're reaching to get some promotion. Brother, if you want to set the baptism with a holy demotion about any other thing on God's earth, all you'll be concerned about is that that fire keeps burning until the day of Jesus Christ. He'll baptize you.

Are you going to let him do it tonight? Are you going to say, Ray, well, I have no tears, I have no passion, I have no burden. If you let the poor lead the night, more than you... I say this and I'm not being dramatic because it's common honesty that there are three worlds looking into this meeting tonight. There's the world of angels, angelic world.

There's the world of demons, a satanic world. And there's the ordinary world out... He shall baptize you with the holy ghost and fire. Do you want it? More than anything on earth, do you want this? This cleansing, this imbuement, this empowering? If you do, this is the last scripture he gives, the holy ghost, to those who obey him.

Bring your failure, bring your golf clubs, bring your TV set, bring your empty church, bring your dry eyes, bring your dry spirit. Come right to the altar tonight and say, Lord, here I am. I want to be a living sacrifice.

Burn me up and all my ideas and all my ambition and fill me with the holy ghost. And take me out to live in a lost world if I only live another month under the anointing of the holy ghost. It'll be the most fruitful month in your life.

Shall we pray? I think we could sing with our heads bowed just quietly a verse that I'm sure we all know. Spirit of the living God, fall afresh on me. And I'm not going to make any other appeal than this than to say that this altar's open and I trust you'll come and do business so you preachers should and some others.

As we sing quietly, Spirit of the living God, fall afresh on me. Will you come and brother Jim will take over the meeting. Let's sing it quietly but you rise and come as we sing.

Spirit of the living help me break. Melt me. Mold me.

Before God, come on men,

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