

## Sabbath School Lesson #2 – Pentecost – 7-13 July 2018

**C**hrist promised His disciples His Spirit. When at Pentecost they were filled with His Spirit, and spoke other tongues, the gathered multitude were amazed, for every man heard them speak in his own language. Peter said, "This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses. Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, He hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear" (Acts 2:32-33).

Sunday: The Coming of the Spirit – The receiving of the Spirit of God at Pentecost is to be our continuous experience. No one can be a true Christian without receiving the Spirit, and no one can really "receive" the Spirit, without being filled with it, since God does not give the Spirit by measure. The Spirit is as free as the air. Give the air all opportunity, and it will rush in; yield to the Spirit, and He will take possession. And there is no such thing as yielding by degrees, since resistance is resistance, be it never so feeble; so that receiving means absolute submission. Therefore he who "receives" the Holy Ghost must necessarily be filled with the Spirit. Only so can he live the true Christian life. Do not make the mistake of saying that you have yielded to the Spirit, and that therefore all that you do must necessarily be the Spirit's working. In other words, let us beware of mistaking our own spirit for the Spirit of God. The man who is filled with the Spirit will make no parade of his goodness. He will make no claim for himself. Love vaunteth not herself. His religion will not be in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth. There is no limit to the possibilities before the one who is yielded to and possessed by the Spirit for the Spirit of God is "the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord" (Isaiah 11:2). Yet the possessor, conscious that he has this treasure in an earthen vessel, will be humble, giving glory to God. A vessel? – Yes, he himself is only a "vessel," a means of conveying the Spirit to others: for "he that believeth, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water." How to receive the Spirit? Study the story of creation, not simply that which is recorded in the first chapter of Genesis, but that which is written on the earth, the sea, and the sky, and you will know. Then when you say to the messenger of God, bringing God's word, no matter what it is, "Behold the servant of the Lord; be it unto me as Thou wilt" (Luke 1:38), the Holy Ghost shall come upon you, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow you, and all that comes from you will be holy.

Monday: The Gift of Tongues – The knowledge that the Holy Spirit gives is of such a kind that even the world acknowledges its reality. This is seen in the immediate results of the reception of the Spirit on Pentecost. The disciples began to speak with other tongues. The reason why this particular phase of knowledge was imparted at that time was that there were thousands of people present from every nation under heaven, all of whom needed to hear the Gospel. Whatever one needs in order to do the work of the Lord, that the Spirit gives as soon as one is ready to receive it, and will make the right use of it. But this does not mean that the Spirit relieves one of the necessity for study; far from it. God has no sympathy with laziness, and He does not give His Spirit for the purpose of pandering to us. Be sure that God will not impart the gift of tongues to a man who has not enough interest in the work of giving the Gospel as a witness to all nations, to impel him to use all the means in his power to fit himself by study to engage in that work. Everything is a free gift from God, and all is by His power, but we must nevertheless be willing to work, and must expect that the reception of the Spirit will bring more active service and more difficult work than ever before. God helps those who cannot help themselves; "for when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly." He gives us every faculty we possess; but He increases the gift only to those who develop and put to the best use the talents entrusted to them. The gifts of the Spirit are not for the purpose of encouraging laziness. No one need think that God will ever impart, to him the gift of tongues, if he has not enough interest and energy to use the ability that God has already given him in that direction. God gives wisdom, but not so as to discourage study. If we do not make use of the little that we already have, how can we expect God to give us more?

Tuesday: Peter's Sermon – Peter's sermon at Pentecost convicted the multitude of the awful sin of crucifying Christ. What could they do to undo the wicked deed? – Nothing within human power. With the awful guilt upon their souls their cry of agony was, "What shall we do?" The answer was: "Repent and be baptized, every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost" (Acts 2:37-38). Convicted of slaying the Prince of life, with no power to recover themselves, they had only to repent, confess their share in the death of Christ by burial in baptism, and they could rise from the watery grave with a new life, the sins remitted, and the gift of the Holy Spirit as the power for righteousness. What a change! No wonder those who believed "gladly received" Peter's word. It was glad tidings indeed. And Peter passed on the same promise to "all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call" (verse 39) –

even to us. It was the Jewish rulers who delivered Christ to death by the Romans. But had He not devoted His life to save His people from their sins He need never have allowed Himself to fall into the hands of the wicked. It was the iniquity of every one of us, laid upon Him, that brought Jesus to the cross. Every soul has a share in the guilt of Christ's crucifixion. Therefore to all is sent the promise of pardon and life on the same conditions – "Repent and be baptized, every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost."

Wednesday: The Exaltation of Jesus – Why could the spirit not be given or the comforter could not come until Jesus was glorified? In 1 Peter 1:10-11 we are told that "the spirit of Christ" was in the prophets of old, yet John said the spirit was not yet (John 7:39). Is this contradictory? In order to solve this problem some have interpreted John's words to mean that the spirit was not yet given in this measure before. But this is not what John said. He said it was not yet because Jesus was not yet glorified. Jesus Himself said, "if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you ...." In other words, before glorification, the spirit could not be given. Yet 1 Peter 1:10-11 says the Spirit of Christ was in the prophets of Old! In order to harmonise these verses we must understand what Spirit or life John was talking about. This particular Spirit is intrinsically linked to the glorification; and the glorification is linked to the incarnation. Notice Jesus' prayer in John 17. This was not long before the crucifixion: "I have glorified Thee on the earth: I have finished the work which Thou gavest Me to do. And now, O Father, glorify Thou Me with Thine own self with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was" (John 17:4-5). Where did Jesus glorify the Father? "On the earth" He also said "I finished the work you gave Me to do." Because Jesus glorified the Father on earth, and finished His work on earth, He is asking the Father to glorify Him with "Thine own self".

As one of us (human being), He finished the work God gave Him to do on earth. Hence, as one of us, as a human being He is asking the Father to glorify Him with His own self. Yes, He was 100% divine, but He was 100% human at the same time. As a Divine-human Being, He is asking the Father to glorify Him. It is important to understand that the life Jesus lived on earth, the life He is asking the Father to glorify never existed prior to the incarnation. The humanity of Christ and the experience He went through as a human being never existed before. Many miss the point that in the incarnation Jesus took upon Himself a nature and an experience He never had before (see Hebrews 2:10, 14-18; 5:7-10). It was the Divine-Human Jesus, with His Divine Human life/spirit, who was asking the Father to glorify Him. In this sense John said, "the spirit was not yet". The life Jesus lived in Humanity, the Divine Human life, was not given yet because it was not yet glorified. That is why Jesus said, unless I go to the Father, the Comforter will not come. With the correct understanding of who was asking for glorification, we can appreciate more what happened on Pentecost. After resurrection, ascension to heaven and return (John 20: 17-19), Jesus breathed on His disciples saying, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost" (John 20:22). This was a sample of what was to follow. The full glorification of Christ had not taken place yet, although the sacrifice of Christ and life was accepted by the Father. This was not the complete outpouring Christ referred to, that was still to follow later (Luke 24:49). On day of Pentecost, Jesus, Divine-Human Person, was glorified, He was anointed with the oil of gladness as the High Priest of His people (Hebrews 1:8-9). As a Divine Human Being, Jesus was anointed with the Spirit of God. Not that He did not have the spirit before, but this simply refers to the glorification of this Divine Human life through which Jesus accomplished the work of God on earth. This was the glorification John referred to (John 7:39). It is thus Peter relates this account in his first sermon: "This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses. Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear." "The God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob, the God of our fathers, hath glorified His Son Jesus; whom ye delivered up, and denied him in the presence of Pilate, when he was determined to let him go" (Acts 2:32-33; 3:13). And Paul says, "Though He were a Son, yet learned He obedience by the things which He suffered [during His humanity or incarnation]; And being made perfect [or having qualified because of what He accomplished], He became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey Him [He became the author, or source of eternal salvation/life]; Called of God an high priest after the order of Melchisedec" (Hebrews 5:8-10) [inserted notes are added].

Thursday: The First Fruits – The converts at Pentecost were not the "first fruits." But we learn from Peter's preaching that all are called. "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call" (Acts 2:38-39). Who are they whom "the Lord our God shall call"? "all that are afar off." That includes everybody. This agree with the call of Christ, "Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (Matthew 11:28). This includes every needy soul.