The Baptism of the Holy Spirit

By Pastor Dennis Smith

To come out of the Laodicean condition, become just like Jesus and be ready for His glorious return we must have the "eye salve," baptism of the Holy Spirit.

When Jesus listed the necessity of the "eye salve" to come out of the Laodicea spiritual condition (Rev 3:18) He stated it gave spiritual sight. Jesus called the Holy Spirit the "Spirit of truth" (John 14:17). The Spirit is described as the Spirit of truth because it is the Spirit that "guides into all truth" (John 16:13); opens our eyes to see truth. Ellen White referred to the eye salve as the "eye-salve of spiritual discernment."

Hence, when one studies God's Word or teaches God's Word it is essential the eye salve of the Spirit be present to clearly understand the Word or enable those who hear the Word to be convicted that it is truth. Jesus emphasized the necessity of the Spirit for the disciples to effectively witness for Him to the world when He said, *"And, being assembled together with them, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith he, ye have heard of me. For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence…"But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth."* Acts 1:4-5, 8

Jesus made it very clear to the disciples that they must receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit in order to be effective in fulfilling their God given mission. Hence, the "eye salve" necessary to have God's Word impact one's life and empower the preaching of the gospel is the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Concerning this Ellen White wrote:"*When our eyes are anointed with the holy eye-salve, we shall be able to detect the precious gems of truth, even though they may be buried beneath the surface."* {RH, February 14, 1899 par. 1} "*Their eyes, anointed with the heavenly eye salve will see other lessons in the Holy Word than those seen by readers whose hearts are not cleansed, refined, and elevated. Under the working of the Holy Spirit the conscience will recognize a pure, high standard of righteousness that puts to shame the*

low, cheap ideas of the surface reader, whose mind is corrupted with sin. They see that the doers of the Word alone are justified before God." Letter 34, 1896. {RH, August 13, 1959 par. 20}

Satan's Plan

Satan does not want you to understand or experience the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Ellen White was aware of Satan's devices to hinder the reception of this Gift by God's people. "*Since the ministry of the Holy Spirit is of vital importance to the church of Christ, it is one of the devices of Satan, through the errors of extremists and fanatics, to cast contempt upon the work of the Spirit, and cause the people of God to neglect this source of strength which our Lord Himself has provided." Australian Signs of the Times*, July 24, 1911

The baptism of the Holy Spirit simply describes a special infilling of the Holy Spirit into the life of the believer. This baptism is also called infilling and anointing and has been available to Christians since the day of Pentecost 2000 years ago. Peter associated the Pentecost outpouring of the Spirit with the "*early rain*" prophecy of Joel; (Acts 2:16-21).

Jesus' Promise and Example

Jesus promised that the Father would give the Spirit if asked for, (Luke 11:13). Paul tells us we receive this gift by faith, (Galatians 3:14). The reception of this Gift is so important that Paul commands us to "*be filled with the Spirit*," (Ephesians 5:18). It is not simply an option. It is a necessity if the believer is earnest about experiencing the full deliverance from sin the gospel of Jesus Christ offers.

Jesus is our example in all things. In His life we see the baptism of the Holy Spirit as a special, separate event following His water baptism. This event equipped Him for personal victory over Satan's temptations and Spirit anointed ministry. His experience is a divine model for every Christian. Christ was "*begotten"* of the Spirit, (Luke 1:35). He was led by the Spirit in his childhood and early manhood, (Luke 2:52). He received water baptism, which was followed by baptism in the Spirit, (Luke 3:21-22). From that point on He was filled with the Spirit, (Luke 4:1). After this experience of Spirit baptism (infilling or anointing) He was prepared to confront Satan and gain His great victories over this enemy, (Luke 4:2-13). He went forward to minister in the power of the Spirit from that day forward, (Luke 4:14; Acts 10:38).

The experience of every believer is to follow Christ's example. The Christian is first born of the Spirit and baptized in water, (John 3:5-8). However, water baptism is not enough. It is only the beginning. God wants the believer to also be baptized by the Holy Spirit, (Luke

3:16). This Spirit baptism became available to every believer from the day of Pentecost onward. This infilling of the Spirit is necessary for the believer to have the power to live a victorious life and successfully witness for Christ, (Acts 1:8).

Jesus said the believer would do the "works" He did and "greater works." When Jesus was on earth He could only be at one place at one time. However, when He ascended to His Father He was able to be in many places throughout the earth by indwelling His followers through the Holy Spirit, (1John 3:24). Hence, Jesus empowers the believer to do the same works He did by the Holy Spirit and these works will be greater because they are more widespread.

The fulfillment of Jesus' promise was seen on the day of Pentecost and following. The gospel was preached, souls were won, unity and joy were seen in the believers and the sick were healed, (Acts 2:46-47; 5:15-16). This was the same type of ministry as Jesus' ministry because it was Jesus doing this ministry through His church, which is called the "*body of Christ"* (1Corinthians 12:27).

Receiving the Baptism of the Spirit After Pentecost

Not every believer was present at Pentecost. A practical question might be, how did believers receive the baptism of the Spirit after Pentecost? The answer is found in the book of Acts. On a couple occasions the Spirit fell on a group while Peter spoke to them, (Acts 10:44-46; 11:15-17). It appears that God led the church to receive the baptism of the Spirit in a more orderly way by the laying on of hands also, (Acts 8:12-17; 19:1-6). Note in Acts 8 the individuals of Samaria were led by the Spirit to accept Christ and be baptized. Yet they had not received the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Peter and John came to them from Jerusalem for the specific purpose to lay hands on them and pray for the baptism of the Spirit to come upon them. This is a clear indication that water baptism and Spirit baptism are two separate experiences. The Spirit leads an individual to accept Christ and be baptized in water. This is a different work than the baptism of the Spirit, which must be sought separately when one becomes aware of it. We see in Acts that Paul also received the baptism of the Spirit by the laying on of hands and prayer, (Acts 9:17). The one performing this prayer with laying on of hands should be a believer who has received the baptism of the Holy Spirit themselves.

A believer desiring the baptism of the Holy Spirit does not necessarily have to have someone pray for them laying hands on them. When I first began sharing this teaching with our church one of the members decided that very evening to seek the baptism of the Spirit. She earnestly prayed for God to fill her with His Spirit. She said later that she felt the greatest peace that she ever felt come over her. God has not limited Himself to only one method of

receiving the baptism of the Spirit. I do believe that the special ceremony of praying with laying on of hands is a wonderful way to seek the infilling of the Spirit. It is always a special blessing to share in this sacred experience with a fellow believer.

Ellen White stated many years ago; *"What we need is the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Without this, we are no more fitted to go forth to the world than were the disciples after the crucifixion of their Lord." Review & Herald*, Feb. 18, 1890 *"Impress upon all the necessity of the baptism of the Holy Spirit, the sanctification of the church, so that they will be living, growing, fruit-bearing trees of the Lord's planting." Testimonies* Vol. 6, p.86

When one reads Ellen White's statements on the baptism of the Holy Spirit she saw its importance and urged every believer to seek it. It was clear to her that the baptism of the Spirit was essential for God's work to be finished in the lives of His people and in this earth. This is why those in Laodicea must receive the *"eye salve"* in order to come out of their spiritually blind condition.

It is also clear from these statements that she viewed conversion by the Spirit and the baptism of the Spirit as two separate experiences in the Spirit. If one automatically received the baptism of the Spirit at conversion or water baptism there would be no reason for Ellen White to state, *"What we need is the baptism of the Holy Spirit."*

There has been much misinformation and confusion about what happens when a person receives the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Satan fears this experience in the believer more than any other. He knows that the baptism of the Holy Spirit will break his power in the believer's life and the resulting powerful witness for Jesus Christ will bring Satan's work to an end on planet earth. For this reason, he has done everything he can to confuse this teaching and cause many sincere Christians to misunderstand it and even be suspicious of it. *"There is nothing that Satan fears so much as that the people of God shall clear the way by removing every hindrance, so that the Lord can pour out His Spirit upon a languishing church and an impenitent congregation. When the way is prepared for the Spirit of God, the blessing will come." Review & Herald*, March 22, 1887

Receiving the baptism of the Spirit does not necessarily involve a highly emotional experience. One may or may not feel something at the time of seeking the infilling of the Spirit. However, the Spirit will make Himself known to the one He indwells. His presence will begin changing the believer’s life from within. A new power for victory and service will be manifested, and a stronger desire to pray and study God’s Word will be experienced.

God desires to give His children this wonderful experience of Spirit baptism. However, in order to receive we must ask in faith believing He will bestow it. Secondly we must be willing to give ourselves completely to God. "*The heart must be emptied of every defilement and cleansed for the indwelling of the Spirit. It was by the confession and forsaking of sin, by earnest prayer and consecration of themselves to God, that the early disciples prepared for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost." Testimonies to Ministers*, p. 507

This is why Jesus tells Laodicea that they must "buy" the eye salve from Him. In order to receive one must surrender 100% to Jesus. This was the experience of the disciples as they prayed for 10 days before receiving the baptism of the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost. *"They were bidden not to leave Jerusalem till they had been endued with power from on high. They therefore remained in Jerusalem, fasting and praying. They emptied from their hearts all bitterness, all estrangement, all differences; for this would have prevented their prayers being as one. And when they were emptied of self, Christ filled the vacancy. The Holy Spirit came upon them, and filled all the house where they were sitting. Then was the promise fulfilled: 'If ye love Me, keep My commandments. And I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you forever.'"* (*Signs of the Times*, January 20, 1898, par. 8)

Seek the Baptism Every Day

Another very important point is that we must renew this infilling every day. Paul said, "*I die daily"*, (1Corinthians 15:31). The dying to self and infilling of the Spirit is a daily experience. It is not a "once and forever" experience. Paul tells us that the "*inward man is renewed day by day*", (2Corinthians 4:16). We need the renewing of the Spirit every day of our life. Also Paul's command to "*be filled with the Spirit,"* (Ephesians 5:18), is a continuous action verb in the Greek meaning we are to keep on being filled with the Spirit daily. With the infilling of the Spirit the believer is led by the Spirit. Paul writes of the importance of this being a daily experience when he states; "*For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God."* Romans 8:14

Again the verb form in the Greek is continuous action. Paul is saying, "as many as are continuing to be led daily by the Spirit of God" are the sons of God. Hence, we must receive the Spirit every day to be led by Him every day.

Christ is our example in all things. Note what Ellen White writes about the baptism of the Spirit in Christ's daily life. *"Daily He received a fresh baptism of the Holy Spirit. In the early hours of the new day the Lord awakened Him from His slumbers, and His soul and*

His lips were anointed with grace, that He might impart to others." Christ's Object Lessons, p.139

Jesus Lives in the Spirit Filled Believer

John tells us that the Christians who are living when Jesus comes will be *"like"* Him (1 John 3:2). How much like Jesus are we to become? The Greek word translated "like" means "just like" Him. How can this happen? Through the daily baptism of the Holy Spirit Jesus will live out His life in us. Paul described this when he wrote: "*I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but* ***Christ liveth in me****: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me"* (Galatians 2:20). (emphasis added)

Through the infilling of the Holy Spirit Christ will come and live in each of us. The text quoted above states that the Spirit-filled believer would have the "*faith of Jesus*." Why; because Jesus is living in them.

The Spirit-filled believer will have the mind of Christ (1 Corinthians 2:16, Philippians 2:5). They will have the likes and dislikes of Christ; the love of righteousness and hatred of sin Christ has. They will have the same desire to obey the Father that Christ has (Psalm 40:7-8), and the same passion for souls Christ has (Luke 19:10). Paul tells us the wisdom—righteousness—holiness of Christ is theirs (1Corinthians 1:30); every virtue and quality of Christ. They will become more and more like Christ every day as they are changed into His "*image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord"* (2 Corinthians 3:18).

Christ living in the believer through the infilling of the Spirit causes the character of Christ to be fully developed in them. The Holy Spirit produces the "*fruit of the Spirit*" when He dwells within us (Galatians 5:22-23). This wonderful fruit of character will be manifested in the life increasingly abundantly as the Spirit takes greater possession of the life. The Spirit will take such control of the believer that they will become like Jesus in every way (1 John 3:2). Ellen White very nicely describes this in the following statement, "*All true obedience comes from the heart. It was heart work with Christ. And if we consent, He will so identify Himself with our thoughts and aims, so blend our hearts and minds into conformity to His will, that when obeying Him we shall be but carrying out our own impulses. The will, refined and sanctified, will find its highest delight in doing His service. When we know God, as it is our privilege to know Him, our life will be a life of continual obedience. Through an appreciation of the character of Christ, through communion with God, sin will become hateful to us*" (*Desire of Ages*, p. 668).

The baptism of the Holy Spirit will bring about the fulfillment of Christ's promise that the believers would do the "*works"* He did and greater works (John 14:12). Christ will do the same works today through the believer as He did when He walked this earth 2000 years ago. This happens when the believer receives the baptism of the Holy Spirit and continues to walk in the Spirit. In fact, Jesus said the believers would do "*greater works*" because Jesus' works will be manifested through every believer that receives Him fully. In a very real sense, every believer becomes as Christ to the world. We become Christ's mouth, hands, feet, doing the very works He did; preaching, teaching, healing, casting out devils, etc.

It is this full *"manifestation of the sons of God*" that the whole of creation is waiting for (Romans 8:19). When this occurs in its fullness the earth will then be lighted with God's character of glory and the end will come (Revelation 18:1).

Benefits of Receiving the Baptism

The baptism of the Holy Spirit gives power to our witness and brings forth the fruit of Christ's character in the life. Paul speaks of this when he writes; "*But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord."* 2Corinthians 3:18

God's glory is His character, (Exodus 33:18-19). Paul states here that the believer will be growing in Christ's character, "*from glory to glory*," by the Spirit of the Lord that dwells in him. The infilling of the Spirit of God will "*make you perfect in every good work, to do His will, working in you that which is wellpleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever",* (Hebrews 13:21).

Ellen White reaffirms the development of character the recipient of the Spirit's infilling receives when she writes; "*When the Spirit of God takes possession of the heart, it transforms the life. Sinful thoughts are put away, evil deeds are renounced; love, humility, and peace take the place of anger, envy, and strife. Joy takes the place of sadness, and the countenance reflects the light of heaven*." *Desire of Ages*, p.173

We can clearly see why Jesus counsels those in Laodicea to receive this eye salve of the Spirit. It is the only way to come out of their spiritually blind and spiritually weak condition.

We Must Experience the Early Rain to Receive the Latter Rain of the Spirit

It is time for the "latter rain" to fall. If we do not experience the infilling of the Spirit, which is the "early rain" (Joel 2:23), we will not be prepared to receive and participate in the work of the latter rain. I believe God is moving among His people today and leading them into this wonderful experience.

A Necessity for Coming Out of Laodicea

As I mentioned at the beginning of this article, in order to come out of our Laodicean condition and be ready for Christ's second coming we must daily experience the baptism of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit filled experience is not an option for those ready to meet Jesus when He returns. It is a necessity! Ellen White confirms this with the words: *"Nothing but the baptism of the Holy Spirit can bring up the church to its right position, and prepare the people of God for the fast approaching conflict."* Letter 15, 1889, Dr Burke

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