

THE COMFORTER

Message by: Leroy Surface

Break forth into joy, sing together, ye waste places of Jerusalem: for the LORD hath comforted his people, he hath redeemed Jerusalem.

Isaiah 52:9

Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you. And when he is come, He will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: of sin, because they believe not on me; of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more; of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged.

John 16:7-11

Our subject is vast. Certainly there is no end of the books that could be written about *"The Comforter,"* because the subject is as vast as God is. Jesus first identified *"The Comforter"* as *"The Spirit of Truth"* (John 14:17), then as *"The Holy Ghost"* (John 14:26). In Romans 1:4, He is *"The Spirit of Holiness,"* and in Ephesians 1:13 He is *"The Holy Spirit of Promise"* (Ezekiel 36:27). In the second verse of the Bible He is *"The Spirit of God"* that *"moved upon the face of the waters"* (Genesis 1:2), and in the last five verses of the Bible He is the *"Spirit"* that calls to *"whosoever will,"* saying *"come...take the water of life freely"* (Revelation 22:17). Jesus calls Him *"The Spirit of your Father"* (Matthew 10:20), and says He *"proceedeth from the Father"* (John 15:26). It is only in the fourteenth, fifteenth, and sixteenth chapters of John that Jesus calls Him *"The Comforter."* Obviously there is a certain aspect of *"The Holy Ghost"* that Jesus would call our attention to.

If we are to understand the message of *"The Comforter,"* we must first rid our minds of everything the modern word *"comfort"* means to us. The old English word *"comfort"* was derived from two Latin words, *"com,"* meaning *"together,"* and *"fortis,"* meaning *"strong."* It is easy to see that our words *"fort"* and *"fortify"* are both taken from the same root word *"fortis."* The English word *"comfort"* literally means *"together strong."* This is the reason the translators of the *"KJV"* chose the word *"comforter"* to define the word *"parakletos,"* which is used in the Greek text.

"Strong's Exhaustive Concordance" defines the Greek word *"parakletos"* as an *"intercessor,"* or, a *"consoler."* I will deal foremost with the word *"intercessor,"* which means *"one who intercedes,"* or, *"one who comes between."* The word *"parakletos"* itself is derived from two different Greek words. The first is *"para,"* which means *"near,"* and the second is *"kletos,"* which means *"invited"* or *"appointed,"* or, as *"Strong's"* says, *"a saint."* *"Kletos"* always speaks of those who are *"invited"* or *"appointed"* to a higher calling; hence in the scriptures they are *"The Called"* (Romans 1:6, 8:28). Bringing these two words together we form the word *"parakletos,"* literally meaning *"near The Called."* His mission is to be with the child of God at all times.

If I can bring all these word definitions together we may receive a powerful insight into exactly what *"The Comforter"* is to us as the children of God. He proceeds from the Father to us. He is sent to us by Jesus to *"strengthen"* and *"fortify"* us. Remember the words of Jesus, **"Ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you..."** (Acts 1:8). Together, we are strong, we are *"fortified,"* but without Him, we can do nothing. He is our *"intercessor."* He *"intercedes"* when the enemy comes in like a flood. He *"comes between"* whenever we face the adversary. In the language of the scriptures, the *"Holy Ghost"* will dwell *"in us,"* come *"upon us"* and ever be *"with us."* It is chiefly the last of these that Jesus' teaching of *"The Comforter"* speaks of.

And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you forever.

John 14:16

Expediency

Jesus said, **“It is expedient for you that I go away...”** The word *“expedient,”* from its Greek root word means *“bear together,”* and carries the connotation of *“conducive”* or, *“advantageous”*. Literally He said, *“It is best for you...”* How could it be possible that it was *“best”* for His disciples that He should *“go away?”* **“...for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you.”** *“The Comforter”* had been with Jesus throughout His ministry. Now, it was time for Jesus to suffer the cross and shed His blood for the sin of the world. We would be *“redeemed from all iniquity”* (Titus 2:14) *“through His blood”* (Colossians 1:14) and *“sanctified through the offering”* of His body (Hebrews 10:10). Now there would be *“vessels unto honour, sanctified, meet for the masters use”* (II Timothy 2:21). Jesus said, **“If I depart, I will send Him** (The Comforter) **unto you.”** *“The Comforter”* will never come to an *“unsanctified vessel.”*

The word *“expedient”* is actually a little weak to express exactly what Jesus was saying. If *“The Comforter”* was to come *“unto us,”* it was *“necessary”* that Jesus suffer, die, be resurrected, and ascend to the right hand of God, because we who were *“lost”* have been *“redeemed”* by the shed blood of the Son of God. Our salvation is *“finished”* in the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Our *“old man”* is crucified with Him (Romans 6:6), and we are *“born again”* by His resurrection (I Peter 1:4). He has *“commissioned”* us to go *“into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature”* (Mark 16:15). He has *“given unto us the ministry of reconciliation”* (II Corinthians 5:18). The salvation of the lost world has been given into our hands. It is at this point that *“necessity”* comes to us. It is *“necessary”* that *“The Comforter”* come *“unto us”* if we are to fulfill this great commission.

When He is Come

And when he is come, He will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment:

John 16:8

Two times in the previous verse, Jesus spoke of *“The Comforter”* coming *“unto”* His people: **“If I go not away, the comforter will not come unto you,”** and, **“If I depart, I will send Him unto you.”** When He speaks in the eighth verse saying, **“And when He is come...,”** it is to be understood as *“When He is come unto you, He will reprove the world of sin, etc.”* There is a common misconception among many Christians that the *“day of Pentecost”* was a one-time event in which God sent the Holy Ghost *“into the world.”* This never happened. God has never sent His Spirit into the world, but *“into His people.”* When God said, **“I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh”** (Joel 2:28), He was not speaking of sinners and believers alike. Until Calvary, *“salvation”* was *“of the Jews”* (John 4:22), but after Calvary, salvation is for *“everyone that believeth”* (Romans 1:16). *“All flesh”* in the prophecy speaks of both Jews and Gentiles, both male and female, and both bond and free (Galatians 3:28), for they are all made to be *“one in Christ Jesus.”* Revelation 7:9 speaks of a *“multitude which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues.”* These are the blood washed, the redeemed from among men. They are the *“all flesh”* of Joel’s prophecy.

Then shall we know, if we follow on to know the LORD: his going forth is prepared as the morning; and he shall come unto us as the rain, as the latter and former rain unto the earth.

Hosea 6:3

When God poured out His Spirit on the day of Pentecost, it was the *“birth of the church.”* The Spirit came as a *“breath of life”* to these believers, hence the *“sound from Heaven as of a rushing mighty wind”* (Acts 2:2). The house of Cornelius had their personal *“day of Pentecost”* when Peter came with the truth of the gospel: the Holy Ghost *“fell on all them that heard the word”* (Acts 10:44). Every born again child of God needs their

personal “*day of Pentecost.*” Jesus has promised to “*send the comforter unto you.*” The prophet Hosea said, “**His going forth is prepared as the morning.**” Understand this verse this way; “*His going forth is as sure as the sunrise in the morning. He shall come **unto us** as the rain...*”

It is only when “*The Comforter*” is come “*unto us*” that the lost world around us is affected by God. There would never have been three thousand souls saved at the feast of Pentecost (Acts 2:41) if there had not first been the one hundred and twenty that the Holy Ghost came upon and filled. There must be a Peter for God to speak to the multitude through. It wasn’t the merely the words that Peter spoke that convicted the three thousand that day, those same “*words*” could have caused a riot except for one thing, “*The Comforter*” had come to Peter. The “*Spirit of God*” was upon him. The “*Spirit of Truth*” spoke through him. He had received a “*mouth*” that they could neither gainsay nor resist (Luke 21:15).

The subject matter of Jesus’ words in our text is what “*The Comforter*” will do when He is come “*unto us.*” “**He will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment.**” The Greek word translated “*reprove*” means to “*convict*” or to “*convince.*” Both of these are correct in this verse: He will “*convict*” the world of sin; He will “*convince*” the world of righteousness and of judgment. This work of the Spirit is absolutely essential to the salvation of a single soul. We of ourselves, through our talents and programs, cannot convict or convince a single soul. When it seems that we have, it can only be on an intellectual level, which can never birth a “*new creature in Christ Jesus.*” Our necessity is that “*The Comforter*” comes unto us.

The Working of His Mighty Power

Whosoever will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it; but whosoever shall lose his life for my sake and the gospel's, the same shall save it. For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?

Mark 8:34-37

These words of Jesus clearly show the necessity that the Holy Ghost bring “*conviction of sin*” before any person can be saved. Jesus is speaking these words just a short time before Calvary. He had just told His disciples of how He would be rejected by the chief priests, scribes, and elders, and be killed and raised again the third day. Peter began to rebuke Jesus saying, “*this shall not be unto thee*” (Matthew 16:22). Jesus immediately rebuked Peter harshly: “**Get thee behind me Satan, for thou savourest not the things that be of God but the things that be of men.**” Then He made it abundantly clear, not only would He be tried, convicted, denied of men, and forced to carry a cross to His own death, but all who would come after Him must also deny themselves, take up the cross, and die with Him. In this is the great mystery of redemption.

To Convict of Sin:

The first work of the Holy Ghost on the soul of a lost man is to “*convict*” it of sin. Some are more readily convicted than others, and some more easily “*convinced*” of the righteousness of God. Others, however, must be literally “*prosecuted*” by the Spirit before a conviction can be obtained. In the courts of man, the case will be made against the defendant by the “*prosecuting attorney.*” A jury will hear the evidence and come to a decision. If the jury declares the defendant to be “*guilty,*” he is “*convicted*” and condemned to bear the sentence of the court. The defendant may still declare his innocence, but he is convicted nonetheless. When the Holy Ghost convicts the soul of a man, however, the man himself is the “*jury.*” When the Spirit obtains “*conviction*”, it is the very soul of the man that cries “*guilty.*” This is what it means for a man to “*deny himself.*” Just as the elders, the scribes, the chief priests and the multitude “*denied*” Jesus and asked for Barabbas to be released, even so the “*convicted*” man will “*hate*” his life in this world, and would gladly “*lose*” it if only he could have peace for his own soul. This man repents. He tries to “*change*” his life to be acceptable to God, but all to no avail. He is in the “*agony*” of Romans chapter seven. He “*would do good, but*

evil is present with him” (Romans 7:15-21). He cannot do the good, and cannot shun the evil. In Romans 7:24, his final cry comes up: **“O, wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?”** His soul is in torment. He has reached the verdict. He is *“guilty, and worthy only of death.”*

To Convince of Righteousness:

The second work of the Holy Ghost on the soul of a lost man is to *“convince”* it of righteousness. This speaks of the *“righteousness of God”* which was *“declared”* at Calvary when God *“set forth”* His Son to be a *“propitiation (sacrifice victim)”* for us (Romans 3:25). When Jesus died for our sin, His death declared to the whole world that *“God is just”* (Romans 3:26). The *“convicted”* sinner is hopeless and helpless.” He has *“turned from his sin and toward God”* seeking the mercy of God. He must be convinced that the *“righteousness of God”* is to save us from sin: that **“If we confess our sin, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness”** (I John 1:9). The *“convicted”* soul that is not yet *“convinced”* is pitiful indeed. He continues seeking to *“establish his own righteousness”* (Romans 10:3). The soul that is *“convinced”* by the Holy Ghost, *“believes”* the gospel. He puts his trust in Jesus Christ alone for salvation from sin.

To Convince of Judgment:

Whether in this order or not, a third work of the Holy Ghost on the soul of a lost man is to *“convince”* it of judgment to come. This most definitely speaks of the *“great white throne”* judgment recorded in Revelation 20:11-15, where *“the dead, small and great, stand before God,”* and are judged according to their works. The fifteenth verse says, **“And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.”** That is the *“judgment”* that awaits the lost soul of man. The *“soul,”* being convinced of judgment, *“fears”* God. This *“fear”* begins as *“terror”* in the heart of the convicted, but turns into *“reverence”* in the heart of the believer. The *“convicted”* soul knows that God is justified to cast him into eternal damnation. The *“convinced”* soul knows that God is just to save him from eternal damnation. The *“fear of the LORD”* is said to be both the *“beginning of wisdom (Psalms 111:10),”* and the *“beginning of knowledge (Proverbs 1:7).”* We are told in Hebrews 12:28 to, *“have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably in reverence and Godly fear.”* Certainly, this is the proper ground of every man’s walk with God.

To Regenerate:

The soul, being convicted of sin, repents; being convinced of righteousness, believes. These are the two necessary ingredients for the salvation of the soul. In Acts 20:20-21, Paul tells the elders of the churches in Asia that *“repentance toward God, and faith toward Jesus Christ”* is the only message that is profitable to the people. **“I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you, but have shewed you, and have taught you publicly, and from house to house, testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.”** The convicted soul has turned to God. The convinced soul has trusted in Jesus Christ. Now comes a *“fourth”* work of the Holy Ghost in the salvation of man. It is *“regeneration.”* Paul tells Titus that it is **“Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour”** (Titus 3:5-6).

In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters. And God said, Let there be light: and there was light.

Genesis 1:1-3

The Holy Ghost was totally involved in the original creation. God spoke: the Spirit of God moved: and *“there was.”* The Holy Ghost is also totally involved in the *“new creation.”* We are *“born again”* by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead (I Peter 1:4). We are *“quicken together with Christ (Ephesians 2:5)”* by that

same Spirit that raised Christ from the dead, which is the Holy Ghost. We are *“born again of the Spirit of God.”* All who repent and believe the gospel of Jesus Christ are also *“regenerated,”* or, *“reborn”* by the Spirit of God.

To Indwell: The Spirit In Us

Even though the Holy Ghost is essential in every part of our salvation, we were not *“filled”* with the Holy Ghost when we were born again. In Ezekiel 36:26-27 God gives this promise; **“A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them.”** Notice, God says in the twenty-sixth verse, **“a new heart...and a new spirit will I put within you.”** Then He says in the twenty-seventh verse, **“And I will put my Spirit within you.”** The *“new heart”* and the *“new spirit”* speak of the *“new man,”* a *“new creation in Christ Jesus.”* When God says, **“And I will put my Spirit within you,”** He gives the promise of the Holy Ghost’s coming into the redeemed man. In the nineteenth chapter of Acts, Paul asked the question of some disciples of John, **“Have you received the Holy Ghost since you believed?”** In the eighth chapter of Acts, Phillip preached the gospel in Samaria with great manifestations of the Spirit. Unclean spirits were cast out and the sick and lame were healed. The people, *“with one accord”* believed the gospel and were baptized. It was not until later, when Peter and John came to Samaria, that the believers received the Holy Ghost. Listen to the teaching of the Apostle Paul on this subject.

And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness. But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.

Romans 8:10-11

These two verses give the spiritual condition of two different believers, both of whom are *“born again.”* The first, in the tenth verse is **“If Christ be in you...”** The second, in the eleventh verse is **“If the Spirit of God dwell in you...”** The condition of the first is this; they have a *“new spirit,”* hence, *“the spirit is life”* but *“the body is dead.”* He does not say the body is sinful, but it is dead; it can do nothing of spiritual value even though the spirit of that person is a *“new man in Christ.”* The condition of the second is this; the *“Spirit of God”* that raised Jesus from the dead dwells in him and *“quickens the mortal body”* to do the works of God. On the day of Pentecost, they were all filled with the Holy Ghost and immediately there were supernatural manifestations given as evidence that the Spirit of God had *“quicken their mortal bodies.”* They *“spoke with new tongues”* (Mark 16:17-20), they *“cast out devils,”* they *“laid hands on the sick and they recovered,”* all just as Jesus said they would. There is nothing about the hands of any man or woman that could heal the slightest affliction, but when those hands are *“quicken”* by the Holy Ghost, great and wonderful things happen through them. It is never the man that does such things, but the Spirit of God that is in the man. It is the will and purpose of God to *“baptize”* and *“fill”* every believer with the Holy Ghost. This experience is the doorway into the ministry God has called us all into. The importance to the kingdom of God that you be baptized and filled with the Holy Ghost seen in Jesus’ instructions to His followers on His last day with them before He ascended to Heaven. He told them to **“go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature”** (Mark 16:15). Then He **“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”** (Acts 1:4-5). Hear this clearly, *“Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature, but don’t leave until you have received the promise of the Father and been baptized with the Holy Ghost.”* No man can fulfill the great commission unless the Spirit of God dwells in him to do the work of the Father.

To Anoint: The Spirit Upon Us:

Too many Pentecostals have traditionally believed that when they received the Holy Ghost and “*spoke in tongues*,” they had obtained the ultimate goal that God had for them. When this is the case, “*The Holy Ghost*” becomes to them just an experience that periodically causes them to shout or dance and get excited. They have reached an end instead of a beginning, and all too often end up defeated, depressed, and backslidden. The purpose of God is to have men and women, full of the Holy Ghost, who He can “*anoint*” with the Holy Ghost and with power to do the works of God. In the fourth chapter of Luke, when Jesus went into the wilderness to fast forty days and be tested by the devil, He was “*full of the Holy Ghost*” and “*led by the Spirit*.” When He came out of the wilderness the fourteenth verse says He “**returned in the power of the Spirit.**” He went to the synagogue in Nazareth and took up the prophecy of Isaiah, saying, “**the Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because He hath anointed me...**”

The anointing of God is always for a particular purpose, and it is always His purpose (Romans 8:28). Jesus said, “**The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord**” (Luke 4:18-19). These are the purposes of the anointing. The Spirit of God never comes upon a man for the man’s own purposes. The Spirit never testifies of the man or brings glory to the man. His testimony is always Jesus, and His work is that Jesus would be glorified in the man.

To Abide: God With Us

And John bare record, saying, I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it abode upon him. And I knew him not: but he that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on him, the same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost. And I saw, and bare record that this is the Son of God.

John 1:32-34

The sign given to John the Baptist was not only that the Spirit of God would “*descend*” upon the Son of God, but also that it would “*remain*” on Him. John said, “**And I saw, and bare record that this is the Son of God.**” Three distinct things happened the day Jesus came to John’s baptism: He was “*filled*” with the Holy Ghost; the Holy Ghost came “*upon*” Him, and the Holy Ghost remained “*with*” Him. These three events seem to follow this same order in all who have experienced them. I received the Holy Ghost over forty-five years ago. The Lord baptized me with the Holy Ghost on March 9, 1958. It was very much like Cornelius’ experience, for I was also saved the same day. I was convicted of sin during the morning worship service of a church the second time I was in their service. I went to the altar in repentance, God gave faith into my heart, and I wept and rejoiced in His wonderful salvation. I had been kneeling at the altar in repentance, but now I was lying on my back, eyes closed, hands uplifted, praising and worshiping the Lord who saved me. As I lay there I began to hear someone speaking in heavenly languages. I thought it was the most beautiful thing I had ever heard. I wondered if I would open my eyes, maybe I could see who was speaking that beautiful language. When I opened my eyes, the pastor had the microphone right near my mouth: it was the Holy Ghost speaking through me, and I did not even know it. What a wonderful experience that was, but it could have been an end instead of a beginning. The door was only opened to the things God had prepared for me.

It was about five years later that the Spirit of God began to come “*upon*” me to anoint me. God called me to preach His gospel in 1963, and confirmed it with powerful anointings of the Holy Ghost. Soon after, I experienced a period of about a year that the presence of the Holy Ghost seemed to be with me continually. During that time I saw the Spirit of God do wonderful things on an almost continual basis. He would heal the sick in a home, in a place of business, or on the streets as readily as He would in a church service. Many miraculous things happened during that period of time, but the time came that I turned aside to other things. Over the years, however, God has been faithful to anoint me when I have sought Him. How wonderful it is when a man can say as Jesus, “*The Spirit of the Lord is upon me...*”

God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him.

Acts 10:38

“God was with him.” What greater testimony could there be of any man than *“God is with him?”* This speaks of the abiding presence of God almighty *“in,” “upon,”* and *“with”* man. Jesus said, in John 14:10, **“Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? The words I speak unto you, I speak not of myself: but the Father that dwelleth in me, He doeth the works.”** The Spirit of God, His Father, was in Him, upon Him and with Him. It is no wonder He *“healed all that were oppressed of the devil,”* because *“God was with Him.”*

Send the Comforter to Us, O Lord

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.

Acts 1:4-5

The *“Baptism of the Holy Ghost”* is the *“promise of the Father”* that Jesus spoke of to His disciples. The great importance of every *“believer”* receiving this *“baptism,”* is shown in this text. We remember that Mark 16:15 records that Jesus gave the disciples the *“great commission”* just before He ascended into Heaven. He said, **“Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.”** This is the most necessary work the church has been given to do, because if we fail to do so, the entire world, souls that Jesus died for, will be lost. Yet, with all the urgency to carry the gospel into *“all the world,”* Jesus then told them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to *“wait”* for the promise of the Father, which is the *“baptism of the Holy Ghost.”* The *“business”* of preaching the gospel to every creature is so important that it cannot and will never be accomplished without the Spirit of God dwelling in and working through His people. Both of these *“commands”* were given by Jesus on the same day at the same setting, the first being, **“go into all the world,”** and the second, **“...don’t depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father.”** In Luke 24:46-49, Jesus said it this way, **“Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. And ye are witnesses of these things. And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high.”** Notice the two different commands again, first, to preach the gospel *“among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem,”* and second, *“but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem until ye be endued with power from on high.”* Did Jesus contradict Himself? Of course not! His first command, to *“go”* was of such great importance that it was of even greater importance that they *“wait”* for the promise of the Father (the baptism of the Holy Ghost), and *“tarry”* until they were *“endued (clothed)”* with power from on high.

And we are his witnesses of these things; and so is also the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey him.

Acts 5:32

This is a text that is so easy to misunderstand; He gives the Holy Ghost to *“them that obey Him.”* Over five hundred people heard these two commands from the Lord. One was to *“go,”* the other was to *“wait.”* Almost all of these were *“men of Galilee (Acts 1:11).”* They were two or three days journey from their families and homes. Over three hundred, eighty of them *“went,”* undoubtedly to their homes in Galilee. It was the one hundred twenty who *“waited”* that received the promise. The scripture says, in Acts 2:4, **“And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost...”** These were the ones that *“obeyed Him.”* Today, there are untold thousands of *“zealous”* Christians that are trying to *“obey”* the command to reach the world for Jesus, but have never obeyed the command to **“wait for the promise,”** and **“tarry...until ye be endued with power from on high.”**

We Must Have the “Rain”

God never intended that the “*day of Pentecost*” would be a “*one time affair.*” In fact, it was repeated in Acts 4:31, Acts 8:14-17, Acts 10:44, Acts 19:1-6, and, without a doubt, many other times not recorded in scripture. God compares the “*outpouring*” of His Spirit to the “*rain*” that comes from heaven and gives life to the earth. He promised the “*former rain,*” and the “*latter rain,*” both in their season. The “*former rain*” is the rain that causes the “*seed*” to sprout and grow. The “*latter rain*” is the rain that comes just before harvest to bring the grain to its fullness. There is nothing in the scripture to indicate that the “*former rain*” was on the “*Day of Pentecost,*” and the “*latter rain*” yet to come in the last day, as some teach. In the natural, every “*seedtime and harvest*” has its “*former*” and “*latter*” rain. If it were not so, there would be no harvest. Can you imagine the horrors in a nation that received no rain for three or more years? Consider the “*horrors*” in a church that has not been “*rained upon*” by God for years at a time. I tell you, they have no harvest. Instead, it is as the prophet Ezekiel described by the Spirit:

Son of man, say unto her, Thou art the land that is not cleansed, nor rained upon in the day of indignation. There is a conspiracy of her prophets in the midst thereof, like a roaring lion ravening the prey; they have devoured souls; they have taken the treasure and precious things; they have made her many widows in the midst thereof. Her priests have violated my law, and have profaned mine holy things: they have put no difference between the holy and profane, neither have they shewed difference between the unclean and the clean, and have hid their eyes from my sabbaths, and I am profaned among them. Her princes in the midst thereof are like wolves ravening the prey, to shed blood, and to destroy souls, to get dishonest gain. And her prophets have daubed them with untempered mortar, seeing vanity, and divining lies unto them, saying, Thus saith the Lord GOD, when the LORD hath not spoken. The people of the land have used oppression, and exercised robbery, and have vexed the poor and needy: yea, they have oppressed the stranger wrongfully.

Ezek 22:24-29

If we will “*obey*” God, every “*true*” believer will seek the Baptism of the Holy Ghost. They will “*wait*” before God for the promise. They will “*tarry until*” they are “*clothed*” with power from on high. The modern “*prophets*” and “*priests*” are just like those Ezekiel described in his day. They have not been “*cleansed, nor rained upon.*” They no longer believe that the blood of Jesus “*cleanses from all sin*” (I John 1:7), nor do they believe that it “*sanctifies the people*” (Hebrews 13:12). They do not understand that God will not “*rain*” upon the land that is not “*cleansed;*” that He will not “*pour*” His Spirit into an unclean vessel. They no longer believe in “*tarrying*” or “*waiting*” for the Spirit. They “*went,*” but they were not “*sent,*” because they did not “*wait*” upon the Lord. They justify their “*covetousness*” by their “*ambitions.*” They believe they can “*win the world*” if they only have enough money, therefore they “*raven the prey,*” and “*take the treasure and precious things,*” and “*make many widows.*” They “*put no difference between the holy and profane.*” They “*see vanity*” and “*divine lies,*” saying “*Thus saith the Lord GOD, when the LORD hath not spoken.*” All these “*horrors*” find their way into the “*church*” that is not “*cleansed, nor rained upon*” by God.

God promised in Hosea 6:1-3, if the people would “**return to Him**” He would heal them and bind them up. If they would “**follow on to know Him,**” He would come to them as the “**rain, as the latter and the former rain upon the earth.**” In Joel 2:12-13, God calls to His people to, “**turn ye even to me with all your heart, and with fasting, and with weeping, and with mourning: and rend your heart, and not your garments...**” He will accept no “**pretense:**” no “**outward shows**” of humility or sorrow will ever move Him. He knows every thought and intent of the hearts of the people. He calls on the “**ministers of the LORD** (Joel 2:17)” to “**weep between the porch and the altar,**” saying, “**Spare thy people, O LORD, and give not thine heritage to reproach, that the heathen should rule over them: wherefore should they say among the people, Where is their God?**”

God had *“called”* for the locusts, the famine, and the pestilence to come and devour the land. They had utterly destroyed the nation. Total desolation gripped the land, and despair the hearts of the people. Now, upon their *“returning unto the LORD,”* He would give the rain. **“He will cause to come down for you the rain, the former rain, and the latter rain in the first month. And the floors shall be full of wheat, and the fats shall overflow with wine and oil”** (Joel 2:23-24). It is only five verses later that God explains the meaning of all this in Joel 2:28, **“And it shall come to pass afterwards, that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh...”** Oh, man or woman of God! Turn to the Lord with all your heart. Come daily before the Lord with brokenness and trembling (Isaiah 66:1-2). Weep before Him for the sins of our nation and the sins of the *“church.”* He will hear from Heaven; He will forgive our sin; He will heal our land. We can know with absolute certainty, God will **“rain”** upon His people once more.

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Awake, Ye Watchmen!

All ye beasts of the field, come to devour, yea, all ye beasts in the forest. His watchmen are blind: they are all ignorant, they are all dumb dogs, they cannot bark; sleeping, lying down, loving to slumber. Yea, they are greedy dogs which can never have enough, and they are shepherds that cannot understand: they all look to their own way, every one for his gain, from his quarter. Come ye, say they, I will fetch wine, and we will fill ourselves with strong drink; and to morrow shall be as this day, and much more abundant.

Isaiah 56:9-12

America is under all out attack by unclean spirits. For over a generation we have been inundated by their arrival. Like the *“beasts of the field”* that are emboldened when there are no hunters or *“barking dogs”* to hold them back, they have filled our land and are *“devouring”* everything that is good and precious thing in our nation. The reason given by Isaiah is clear, *“His watchmen are blind: they are all ignorant, they are all dumb dogs, they cannot bark; sleeping, lying down, loving to slumber. Yea, they are greedy dogs which can never have enough, and they are shepherds that cannot understand.”* Recently, in a time of fasting and prayer, I awoke in the night hearing the *“call”* for unclean spirits, *“demons”* and *“devils”* to devour and destroy our nation. In the *“vision”* it was the *“parents”* and the *“pastors”* that were the watchmen on the front lines, and they were asleep. They could not see, they could not awaken, they could not even *“bark”* as the enemy came in to destroy their children and their churches. The foundations have already been destroyed in America, and the war has begun that will cause our nation to crumble and fall if **we**, *“who are called by His name”* do not awaken from our sleep of death, and *“humble ourselves, and pray, and seek His face, and turn from our wicked ways.”* The watchmen must repent from being asleep at the post, if so be they can be awakened, even at this late hour.

Thirty-four years ago, July of 1969, I received a vision from the Lord. I saw an *“unclean spirit”* coming to the church, and the *“church”* received it as the Spirit of God. This *“vision”* was the first of many I received during a period of several years. I saw the *“arising”* of the *“mega-churches,”* and the spirit of *“banqueting”* and entertainment that came with them. I saw the ministers *“enrich”* themselves from the offerings of the people. I saw them build *“great houses”* for themselves. I saw them fall asleep in the *“midnight hour,”* as their houses turned to *“sticks and straw,”* and were burned to ashes. I heard their *“weeping and wailing”* as these things came to naught. In 1970, in a vision from the Lord, I saw the *“church”* fall asleep, and when it finally awoke, it was *“wrapped”* in the *“coils of a snake.”* I preached these things on radio, television, and in literature, by every means at our disposal at the time, but very few were awakened.

The time has come in America that the *“church”* has become *“public enemy number one.”* I told a man of God, *“Look at me! I am the ‘criminal’ of America’s future, and so are you.”* Reader, if there is not an awakening immediately, the hour is rushing upon us that you will be arrested and jailed for speaking the *“name of Jesus”* in public places. The war has been declared; the battle lines have been drawn. Revelation 17:14 tells us the *“horns of the beast”* will make *“war with the Lamb.”* The *“Lamb”* will overcome them, and *“they that are with Him are called, and chosen, and faithful.”* Revelation 17:16-17 says, *“And the ten horns which thou sawest upon the beast, these shall hate the whore, and shall make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and burn her with fire. For God hath put in their hearts to fulfill His will...”* In these scriptures you see the *“warfare”* against the *“true church,”* and the *“false church.”* The *“true”* will overcome because of the *“Lamb.”* The *“false”* will be made *“desolate, naked, and will be devoured.”*

Awake ye watchmen! We must *“sound the alarm in Zion;”* we must *“cry aloud;”* if we are counted to be but *“dogs,”* yet we must *“bark.”* Most of all, we must spend time alone in the altars of God. We must come with *“fasting, and weeping and mourning,”* for the *“day of the Lord”* is near in America. Please pray for our nation.

More on **“Awake Ye Watchmen”** next month!

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