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5-1-2020

THE UPPER ROOM EXPERIENCE

Prior to Jesus' ascension to heaven, he instructed his followers to ***"wait for the promise of the Father...ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost..."*** (Acts 1:4-5). ***And "ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you."*** (Acts 1:8).

Following the ascension, 120 of them gathered to wait for that promise of Holy Ghost baptism and power. (Joel 2:28.) On the feast day of Pentecost, it happened. The Holy Ghost was poured out upon these believers. Two things occurred. What looked like little "tongues of fire" appeared on their heads. Fire represented the energy or power associated with the Holy Spirit. This was a one-time occurrence. The other was that all 120 began speaking with "other tongues," in languages of which they had no understanding. This was to be an enduring sign of the Holy Spirit baptism. It was a sign that continued from that day to this day.

Why did Holy Spirit need control of the tongue? James 3:6, 8 says ***"...the tongue is a fire...the tongue can no man tame...unruly..."*** If the Spirit from Father is to fill you, then you must be totally submitted to Him. The one thing we stubbornly hold on to is our tongue. We have an inherent compulsion to choose how to use it, how to speak, and what to say. It is the last thing we would willingly give up control of. If we are to be totally immersed in God's power, we must give everything, our complete will, over to Him. When He can take our tongues and speak "we know not what," that is the ultimate sign that His power has been endued (placed) into you. Many people never get to that point of submission or desire.

Each of the 120 was speaking a different language. As a sign to unbelievers, this was an instance in which they were speaking languages known in various lands and regions of that day, just not known to the speakers. Foreigners gathered in the area heard them speaking in the native languages of their homeland. Why were these foreigners there? They were proselytes from other countries who had converted to traditional Judaism. Pentecost was one of the biblical feasts that men were commanded to attend in Jerusalem. They had made a pilgrimage to Jerusalem to attend this feast day. They each heard an "uneducated Galilean" speaking in their language – Parthians, Medes, Elamites, Mesopotamians, Judeans, Cappadocians, Asians, Phrygians, Pamphylans, Egyptians, Libyans, Cyreneans, Romans, etc.

The "miracle sign" was the speaking of those various languages. I have heard false teaching that it was a "hearing" miracle, that all 120 were speaking their own language (not "other" tongues or languages) and Holy Spirit enabled the crowd to simply "hear it" in their native understanding. That is not what scripture says. It is a lying deception devised by those who oppose speaking in tongues. I have even heard such preachers declare from the pulpit that "speaking in tongues is of the devil." Danger: never call the work of the Holy Spirit to be the work of Satan.

Tomorrow we will look at what occurred in the aftermath of this outpouring of the Holy Spirit. Afterward, we shall see why this same experience is both valid and valuable to us today. It will all be proven by scripture. Stay tuned