

Don’t Wait Until There’s Fruit



Foundations (Day 152)
by Derek Prince

After many people in Samaria had been converted through the preaching of Philip, Peter and John went down to pray for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit.

> “Now when the apostles who were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent Peter and John to them, who, when they had come down, prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit. For as yet He had fallen upon none of them. They had only been baptised in the name of the Lord Jesus. Then they laid hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit. Now when Simon saw that through the laying on of the apostles’ hands the Holy Spirit was given, he offered them money, saying, ‘Give me this power also, that anyone on whom I lay hands may receive the Holy Spirit.’ But Peter said to him, ‘Your money perish with you, because you thought that the gift of God could be purchased with money!’” (Acts 8:14-20)

From this account we understand that the people in Samaria had only been converted for a few days, or at the most a few weeks. Yet they received the Holy Spirit through the laying on of the apostles’ hands as a single, complete experience.

There was no question of waiting to see whether in the ensuing weeks and months sufficient spiritual fruit would be manifested in the lives of these new converts to prove that they really had received the Holy Spirit. No, their receiving the Holy Spirit was a single, complete experience, after which no further evidence or tests were needed.

The objection is sometimes raised that the Scripture does not explicitly state that these people in Samaria spoke with tongues when they received the Holy Spirit. This is quite true. However, the Scripture does make it plain that, through the laying on of the apostles’ hands, there was an open demonstration of supernatural power such that Simon, who had been a professional sorcerer, was willing to pay money to receive the power to produce a similar supernatural demonstration in anyone upon whom he might thereafter lay

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his hands.

If we accept that these people in Samaria, as a result of the laying on of the apostles' hands, spoke with other tongues, this will fit in with every detail of the story as it is recorded in Acts, and it will also bring their experience into line with the cases of all the other people in the book of Acts who received the baptism in the Holy Spirit.

On the other hand, if people prefer to assume that in this particular incident in Samaria there was some supernatural manifestation other than speaking with tongues, they must at least acknowledge that we have no way of finding out what this other kind of manifestation was.

Upon this assumption, therefore, it is not possible to build any kind of positive doctrinal conclusion concerning the baptism in the Holy Spirit. For example, a person cannot say: "I have not spoken with tongues; nevertheless I know I have received the baptism in the Holy Spirit because I have received the same evidence or experience as the people of Samaria." If the people of Samaria did not speak with tongues, there is no way of knowing what else they may have done instead.

Thus this assumption leads only to negative and sterile conclusions. It cannot in any way affect the positive conclusions we have formed from the other cases where we know that people, on receiving the baptism in the Spirit, did speak with tongues.

Devotional

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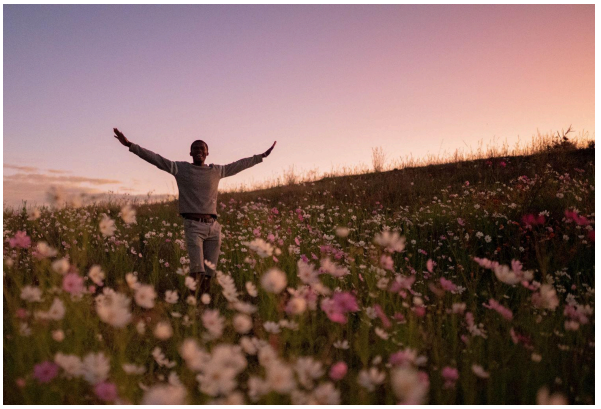

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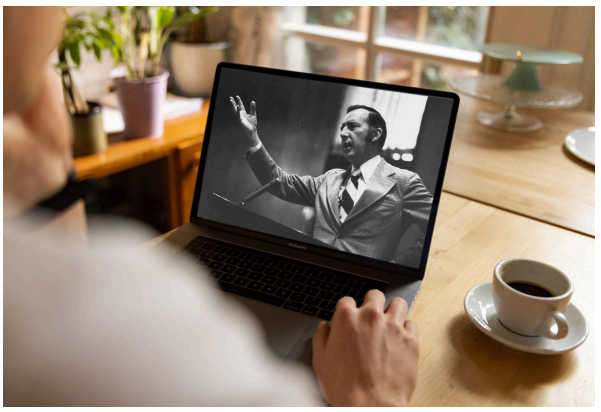

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