

# The Charismatic “Spirit Baptism” and the biblical Baptism in the Holy Spirit

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Lecture 2

*This paper is written by a Bible-believing German preacher and Bible teacher who joined the Pentecostal and Charismatic movement as a young believer about 1986. He was an ardent Charismatic for about four years, but then he was convinced by the Lord that in this movement not the Holy Spirit is at work, but a deceptive spirit. He separated from the movement, and through years of Bible study and critical examination came to a biblically founded repudiation of Charismatic teachings and practices. He wrote a book about this topic and holds seminars about the Charismatic movement in Bible-believing churches in order to warn the children of God and equip them with sound doctrine to discern the end-time deceptions.*

*These are the notes of a teaching lecture the author held in 2011 in Kenya, Africa. Due to the fact that the author is not a native speaker of English, the text may contain some unusual and unidiomatic phrasing or even occasionally a false choice in wording. The author strongly recommends that all readers look up all the given Bible references and use a traditional, conservative Bible translation which is close to the original wording of the Holy Scriptures. Normally he would have used the King James Version (being a supporter of the underlying Masoretic Text and Textus Receptus), but as the majority of his readers will be believers who do not speak English as their native language, he decided to use the New King James Version in all the quoted passages, although he is aware of the shortcomings of this version. It is not advisable to use modern paraphrases like “Living Bible”, “Good News” or even the “New International Version” (NIV), as these are not faithful to the original wording, and if you use them you will be misled about what the Bible truly teaches.*

## 1. Charismatic teachings about the „spirit baptism“ as a “second blessing”

One of the central topics in Pentecostal and Charismatic circles is the claim that every believer needs to receive a “spirit baptism” as a second experience or “second blessing” separate from conversion and having been born again. The insight in the necessity of such a “spirit baptism” was supposedly lost to the Church in post-apostolic times, but was given by God to the end-time generation who would experience the big “outpouring of the spirit” (we spoke about that in the foregoing lecture).

According to these teachings, God wanted to equip the end-time church with special power, in fact with the return of the apostolic powers and gifts which are conveyed to the individual by the “spirit baptism”. So the teaching about “spirit baptism” is the counterpart to the teaching of the “end time outpouring of the Spirit”; these form together the doctrinal foundation of the whole Pentecostal and Charismatic movement.

So Charismatics are used to ask Bible-believing Christians questions like: "Did you receive the Holy Spirit already?" or "Have you had a spirit baptism"? In fact almost all Pentecostal and Charismatic factions teach that the believer does not receive the Holy Spirit at his conversion and spiritual birth as a child of God, but has to seek such an experience in order to receive the Spirit of God or at least its fullness, power and gifts. The experience can be gained by different methods, according to different Charismatic teachers.

The most popular method is the laying on of hands; one is asked to be fully open for what is given and to empty oneself, to lay aside one's reason, and the Pentecostal will lay hands on the seeker. Other methods are intensive "waiting sessions" with fasting and praying and sometimes just the command to imitate the tongues spoken by others, which often results in the person speaking in tongues herself and the "spirit baptism" being achieved. The central sign of a "spirit baptism" is the ability to speak in tongues, i. e. ecstatic utterances in (usually totally unintelligible) supernatural "language".

The most important consequences of "spirit baptism" are said to be tongues speaking, the ability to receive "the speaking of God" through visions, dreams and audible or mentally discerned voices, and the ability to work miracles like healings or supernatural powers. Moreover, the Pentecostal and Charismatic preachers tell us that the "spirit baptism" is the initiation into a totally different spiritual plane which makes the believers "super-Christians" in all aspects.

They are said to receive complete or almost complete victory over sin and temptation, they experience an impressive sanctification, joy, spiritual power, authority over Satan and his demons, and the continual "presence of God" which can be felt and results in overwhelming, ecstatic emotional experiences. According to these people, you only have to get "baptized in the spirit" in order to experience everything that the Apostles saw and experienced - including visits of angels, guiding dreams, miraculous translations to other places, trips to heaven and hell and whatever else religious fantasy can imagine.

So it is little wonder that such messages are quite attractive for a lot of Christians nowadays. There are many who are depressed over their spiritual failure or low spiritual state, who experience all too often lack of power and spiritual defeat in their lives, who battle with seemingly overpowering difficulties.

So the offer of a single spiritual breakthrough which will solve all their problems sounds sweet to their ears, and they are prone to open themselves for such an all-changing experience. And after all, the Bible seems to give the Pentecostal and Charismatic teachers right; don't we read that Christ will baptize us with the Holy Spirit? So we understand some of the reasons why a growing number of believers turns to the Pentecostal and Charismatic movement and seeks that "spirit baptism" as an enrichment for their spiritual lives.

But is this special experience really from God? How can we determine whether it is genuine or faked? What about some rather dubious occurrences that are invariably connected with that "spirit baptism"? Can we ignore the warnings that many respected Christian leaders and teachers of the Word have issued against this experience? Well, the only way to get light and certainty in these questions is to search the Scriptures and look, whether the Pentecostal and Charismatic teachings are really in accordance with the Apostolic teaching of the New Testament.

Everything that is from God is in accordance with the true and complete revelation of God, with the Bible. Every false teaching, as much as it may camouflage as "biblical", will necessarily contradict the sound teaching of Scripture in some important points. So Scripture must be our testing standard, when we test the spirits, as we are commanded in 1Jn 4:1: **"Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world"**.

## 2. The teaching of the Bible: When does a believer receive the Holy Spirit?

So when we want to test whether the Pentecostal and Charismatic teachings about receiving the Holy Spirit in a second experience are true or not, we have to look for the teaching of the Bible on this subject. This leads us to the question where this teaching can be found and how.

*How and where can we find the teaching of the Bible on a certain topic?*

Now this is a crucial point when we want to avoid being deceived by false teachers. False teachers often operate with certain passages of Scripture which are isolated from their context and often taken from the Old Testament (OT) and falsely applied to the believer of the Church age. For example they would cite God's promise to Israel that He would not put any of the diseases of Egypt on them if they were obedient (Ex 15:26), and they would then say any child of God could avoid being sick just by obeying God and "believing the right way". But this ignores the fact that while Israel had many *earthly, outward* promises and blessings, we as NT believers enjoy *spiritual and heavenly* promises and blessings in Christ (cf. Eph 1:3) which are higher and more precious than those of the OT, but don't include the promise that we will never be sick.

One basic principle of Biblical interpretation is that we have to distinguish God's ways with *Israel*, the earthly people of God in the Old Covenant, with the *Church* as the distinct heavenly people of God in the New Covenant, and with future Israel under the New Covenant and the Gentiles in the 1.000 year *Messianic kingdom*. These are three different and distinct stages in God's history of redemption.

To acknowledge the distinctions in regard to God's dealings with men in these three dispensations or ages means to "**rightly divide the word of truth**" (2Tim 2:15). To do this simply means to interpret God's revelation according to the principles that are given in this very word (cf. Rom 9:1 - 11:36; 1Cor 10:1-11; 2Cor 3:6-16; Gal 3:15 - 4:31; Eph 2:11 - 3:11; Col 2:16-17; 1Tim 1:7-11; Hebr 7:11 - 10:18). If we confuse God's dealings with Israel, the Church and the Messianic Kingdom, we will inevitably err from biblical teaching and probably end up in an end-time deception.

Consequently we will not find the doctrine of the Bible about any feature of the New Testament (NT) Church in the Old Testament. We may find some shadows, types or promises which can be applied to the NT believer (Col 2:17; 1Cor 10:6+11; 2Cor 1:20), but never doctrine which refers to the Church, simply because the Church, its principles and teachings had been a mystery hidden to the prophets of the OT (Rom 16:25-26; Eph 3:4-10). We cannot construct any doctrine about the Church and the NT believers based on OT revelation. The obvious basis for all our teaching must be the holy Scriptures of the NT. This does of course not mean that we could not find promises or words of the LORD in the OT which we can apply to us and our Church age. But the doctrinal basis for the Church must be distilled out of the NT revelation.

But when we come to the New Testament, we still find the necessity to differentiate and look for the true basis of doctrine regarding the NT Church and believer. The Gospels contain many precious teachings of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we must be conscious of the fact that our Lord here taught His Jewish disciples about the coming Kingdom of God in general. His teachings in the Gospels do not yet reveal the full and whole counsel of God for the Church (cf. Acts 20:27). This was not possible according to our Lord's own words because the disciples could then not bear such a teaching. Therefore the full truth about the Church was only revealed when the Holy Spirit had been given at Pentecost:

**I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come. He will glorify Me, for He will take of what is Mine and declare it to you. (Jn 16:12-14)**

This promise obviously refers to the teaching of the Apostles after Pentecost (cf. Acts 2:42). Only when the Jewish disciples had received the Holy Spirit and were baptized into the newly created body of Christ were they able to understand, if gradually and with difficulties, the totally new plan that God had with the Church: a new spiritual body where Jews and Gentiles were united into a new man in Christ (Eph 2:11 - 3:10; Gal 3:28; Col 3:9-11).

This counsel of God was so revolutionary for the Jews that they had serious problems to understand and accept it even after Pentecost; at first they even resisted that unity of Jew and Gentile in Christ and demanded the Gentiles should be circumcised and put under the Law (Acts 10-11; Acts 15; Galatians 2-4). God gave His teachings about that mystery of the NT Church only gradually and especially through the apostle Paul who was the chosen vessel of God to reveal the teachings of the risen Christ for His Church (Rom 16:25-26; 1Cor 4:1; 1Cor 14:36-37; Gal 1:11; Eph 3:1-11; Col 1:23-27; Tit 1:1-3).

So when we study the Bible to receive the teaching of God about His Church, we have to look at the letters of the NT first, because they contain the fully developed truth about the Church. When we look at the Gospels we see that Christ there gave many teachings and commands that address the disciples as representatives of the Jewish people (e.g. Mt 10:5-15; Mt 24:15-22), as well as such that address them in a broader way, also as representatives of the future Church (e.g. John 3 and 4).

When we look at the book of Acts, we cannot expect teaching about the NT Church there, because Acts is not a book of doctrine, but a book of inspired history predominantly dealing with the decisive first years after Pentecost where the Church was just established and developed from an exclusively Jewish body of believers at Jerusalem and Judah (Acts 1-7) to the extension to the Gentiles (Acts 8 to 12) and the initial ministry of the apostle of the Gentiles, Paul (Acts 13-28).

It is a very important principle of sound Bible teaching to regard the NT letters as the God-given standard of interpretation for all Scripture. They represent the highest plane of Bible revelation; they alone give light about the essentials of our Church dispensation, and therefore give the rules how to understand and apply all the Bible to us.

That means that in studying the doctrine of the Bible for the Church, we start with the letters and thus with the foundation given by the NT apostles and prophets (Eph 2:20). In the light of that teaching we interpret and study the message of the rest of the NT (Gospels, Acts, Revelation), always distinguishing between the dispensations of Israel, the Church, and the Messianic Kingdom, and in the light of NT revelation we study and apply the OT revelation. Thus we arrive at the sound doctrine of the Bible and avoid distortions of Biblical truths or even deceptive doctrines that would harm our faith (cf. 1Tim 1:6-11).

Having explained this important principle of Bible study, we would now proceed to study the question when a NT believer receives the Holy Spirit. Is the Pentecostal teaching that this only happens at a later stage and not at the point of being born again, true and biblically sound?

### **a) The teachings of the apostolic letters about the reception of the Spirit**

As we would expect, we do not find any teaching about when a believer of the Church age receives the Spirit in the OT, because the Church is not in view there. We find, though, some important promises for the future of Israel, when they will turn to the Lord at the end of days. Then God will take their heart of stone out of them and give them a new heart, and He will put His Spirit in them (cf. Ez 36:26-27). This is analogous to the experience of being born again which the NT believers have, inasmuch as we partake of the New Covenant now which will be granted to converted Israel in the future (cf. Jer 31:31-34; Lk 22:20; 2Cor 3,6; Hebrews 8 + 9).

In the Gospels we do not find any teaching about this point, although we have a *promise* pointing to Pentecost in Jn 7:39. In Acts we don't find teaching either, but we find several *examples* how people received the Holy Spirit (cf. Acts 2:38; 10:47). The *doctrine* about this topic is found in the NT letters, especially in the letter to the Galatians. The apostle argues against the error of those peo-

ple to add the Law to Grace, and asks them: “Did you receive the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?” (Gal 3:2; cf. 3:5).

In the same line of argument he points to Christ who has borne the curse of the law “that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith” (Gal 3:14). One might argue that these passages make not obvious whether the Spirit is received through saving faith at the beginning of new life or through some special “act of faith” at a later time. But the third Scripture clarifies this: “But the Scripture has confined all under sin, that the promise [of the Spirit] by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe” (Gal 3:22; cf. Gal 4:6).

So taken together, these passages of Scripture teach that the NT believer receives the Holy Spirit through saving faith in Christ, that is when he first believes in Christ as his Lord and Saviour. Thus the Spirit is received at conversion, and the reception of the Spirit is connected with being born again by that Spirit. This connection is confirmed by Tit 3:5-6, Eph 1:13 and 2Cor 1:22. It is definitely proven by another important Scripture, Romans 8:9: “But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His” (cf. Jude 1:19; 1Jn 3:24; 4:13). So the reception of the Spirit and the beginning of true spiritual life go together and cannot be separated from each other; if you have not yet received the Spirit, you don’t have life, you are not truly converted.

Now some want to get around this clear doctrine by claiming that a believer might have received the Holy Spirit at his conversion, but not the fullness, only some little portion of Him. But this would require the unbiblical notion that the Holy Spirit were an impersonal force, a mere power of God, and not a Divine person. But the latter is undoubtedly true, as many passages of Scripture prove, where the Bible attaches to the Holy Spirit all the qualities of a person (e.g. Mt 4:1; 10:20; 28:19; Mk 13:11; Lk 12:12; Jn 14:16-17; 15:26; 16:13; Acts 5:3+9; 10:19; 16:7; 18:5; 20:28; Rom 8:26; 1Cor 2:10; 1Cor 12:11; Eph 4:30; Phil 1:19; 1Tim 4:1; Tit 3:5; Heb 3:7; 9:8; 10:29; Jam 4:5; 2Pt 1:21; 1Jn 5:6-8; Rev 2:7; 22:17).

But if the Holy Spirit is a Divine person, then you can only receive Him as such - as a whole being, not just part of Him! Therefore to receive the Spirit means to receive potentially the whole fullness of Him - how much of that fullness the individual believer experiences is another question; that depends on his walk with the Lord. But at conversion and new birth, every believer receives the Spirit of God as a person and in His fullness, who dwells in him, begets him as a child of God, sanctifies him, seals him - all at the decisive moment of true conversion and new life.

Thus we see that the Pentecostal and Charismatic doctrine which says that the Spirit is only received at a later stage of Christian life is being proven false by Scripture. The Bible does not teach different stages of spiritual gifts; it only teaches different stages of maturity (cf. 1Jn 2:12-14). The true NT gift of the Spirit is received at the new birth and not at a later time.

## **b) Charismatic arguments from the book of Acts**

To defend their unscriptural doctrine against this coherent teaching of the apostolic letters, the Pentecostals sometimes set some arguments derived from the book of Acts.

### *The disciples before and after Pentecost*

One such example are *the disciples of our Lord before and after Pentecost*. “Look at the disciples before they got the Spirit”, one might argue. “Look how weak and faithless, how wayward and coward they were! But once they received the Holy Spirit, they became courageous, strong and faithful. Now they were believers before Pentecost, but they received power only afterwards. So you, too, must experience your personal Pentecost in order to become a powerful man of God!” This sounds true enough at first sight, but we have to study Scripture thoroughly in order to get truthful answers and clear teachings from it.

The question is: Can you take the Lord's disciples before Pentecost as an argument for the spiritual state of New Testament (NT) believers after Pentecost? When we study the Bible on this topic, we must say that this is not possible. The disciples of our Lord were, in terms of dispensations, still under the Law; they were not yet sons of God in Christ, though they believed in the Messiah. Their belief was in the Messiah on earth before He had accomplished His decisive work; we believe in the crucified, risen and ascended Messiah to the right hand of God in heaven. They could not receive the full NT sonship because the Spirit of Sonship was not yet poured out. We see this from Jn 7:39:

**But this he spoke concerning the Spirit whom those believing in Him would receive; for the Holy Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.**

So the reception of the Spirit was not possible before Pentecost, and biblical new birth, which is effected by the Spirit of Sonship (or: adoption as sons), was not possible either (cf. Rom 8:15; Gal 4:6). The Comforter could not come to dwelling the believers before the work of our Lord was fully accomplished. In this light, we also have to understand that they did not really receive the Holy Spirit as such when the Lord Jesus breathed on them and told them: **"Receive Holy Spirit"** in Jn 20:22. In the Greek, there is no definite article before "Holy Spirit", so that we should not translate, as many versions do: "Receive *the* Holy Spirit". We can only understand this as a temporary strengthening with the Spirit for the time until they really received *the* Spirit at Pentecost.

In fact, it would have been impossible for the Spirit of Holiness to dwell in sinful men before the perfect sacrifice of Christ our Lord had been accomplished and His precious blood been shed, this blood that alone is able to cleanse a sinful heart effectively. Only after that great and world-moving sacrifice of our great High Priest had been accomplished could the Spirit of the holy God come and dwell in men. But that accomplished work implied not only the death of our redeemer on the cross, but also His resurrection and ascension to heaven, and His entering the heavenly sanctuary with His own blood, which had to be (so we can infer) sprinkled on the heavenly mercy-seat where it still speaks for us (cf. Hebr 9:5; 9:11-14; 9:23-26; 10:1-22; 12:24).

Only after all this had been accomplished, the Father gave His Spirit to His Son so that He could pour Him out on the believers, as we see from Acts 2:32. So the disciples of our Lord were in a very special situation before Pentecost, and you cannot compare them with us. Although they believed in Christ before, it was only at Pentecost that they received the fullness of what we receive as believers in the Church age; they were born again, received the Spirit, were baptized and sealed with the Spirit, filled with the Spirit and empowered by the Spirit. We now receive all this at the moment we believe in Christ, so you cannot compare the disciples with us to "prove" a "second blessing" doctrine.

#### *The disciples of John at Ephesus*

The other incident in Acts that is frequently quoted as a proof for the "second blessing" is the meeting of the apostle Paul with certain disciples of John the Baptist in Ephesus (Acts 19:1-7). Here, in v. 2, Paul asks the disciples a question which many Pentecostals would ask other Christians today: "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?" This sounds very much like a real confirmation of Pentecostal teachings - at first glance, at least. But who were these people Paul asked that question?

We learn from the text that they were Jews living in the *diaspora*, among the heathen. They were obliged by the Law of Moses to visit Jerusalem and the temple three times a year, at the solemn high feasts. This they had done when John the Baptist arose and preached his message of repentance. They had repented and been baptized, but their faith was not a faith in the complete NT gospel. They believed in the coming Messiah as John the Baptist had preached Him, but they obviously were not in Jerusalem when the Lord Himself preached or when He offered up Himself for sinners at the Cross. So now the apostle preaches to them the full NT gospel about the Messiah who had come, died on the Cross for us sinners, had been resurrected and set high in the heavens at the right hand of God.

Only when these Jews believed in this true Gospel and were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus, they received the Spirit, and that through the laying on of hands by the apostle Paul. We see here that this episode was a special situation in the beginning of the Church; but it is in no way typical

for how a NT believer receives the Holy Spirit. These people were not yet truly born again, and even the way they received the Spirit is a special way, not typical for us today.

For when the Scripture mentions Jews, the once chosen people who had rejected their Messiah, it appears that these Jews had to be baptized with water first in order to receive the Spirit (cf. Acts 2:38). Probably God demanded that they had to publicly renounce their connection with the Jewish people and testify to their faith in the rejected Messiah before they could receive the Spirit. But with the heathen in the house of Cornelius God acted differently; they received the Spirit first and water baptism later, as with us today (cf. Acts 10:44-48).

Again, the disciples at Ephesus received the Spirit through the laying on of hands by an apostle, as the Samaritans (Acts 8:16-17). But you cannot build a doctrine on this incident because it was different with Cornelius, and we never find the laying on of hands mentioned in regard to the reception of the Spirit anywhere in the letters of the apostles. The only ones who used this to establish a false doctrine are the cult of the New Apostolic Church who teach that you cannot receive the Spirit unless one of their false apostles has laid hands on you.

We can learn one thing from this: You should not build a biblical teaching on the book of Acts, because it is an inspired book of history, not of doctrine. It shows the development of the Church and the spreading of the Gospel from its beginnings in Jerusalem through Judah and Samaria until the ends of the earth, but it does not give you the doctrine of the Church.

One more thing we can learn: The seemingly “biblical” arguments in favour of the Pentecostal “second blessing” doctrine turn out to be profoundly unbiblical at closer inspection. The Pentecostal doctrine is in flagrant contradiction to the clear doctrine of the New Testament Scriptures. It is a false doctrine which leads the believers astray. The true NT doctrine states that a believer receives the Spirit at his conversion and new birth, not later on in his Christian life.

### **3. The teaching of the Bible: What is the “Baptism in the Holy Spirit” and when do we receive it?**

We have to deal with a second question now: What about the “spirit baptism” the Pentecostals talk about? Is that biblical or not? Now when we search the Scriptures we realize that the term itself is not found, but similar notions like “to be baptized with the Spirit”. Again we realize that the doctrine of the “spirit baptism” is not found in the OT, because it is a distinct feature of the Church age. In the Gospels, we don’t find a doctrine (that is, an explanation what the meaning and way of receiving is), but rather an *announcement* of that baptism as something future. This announcement comes from John the Baptist (Mt 3:11; cf. Mk 1:7-8; Lk 3:16; Jn 1:26-27):

**I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance, but He who is coming after me is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. (Mt 3:11)**

We see here that it is the Lord Jesus Christ Himself who has the right and ministry to baptize with the Holy Spirit. The “baptism with fire” mentioned here is something many Pentecostals value even more than the “spirit baptism”, and some ardent Pentecostals would pray: “Lord, baptize me with fire!” thinking this to be an even higher blessing. But when we study the passage Mt 3:7-12 as a whole, we realize that the “Baptism with fire” is unquestionably judgement, as can be seen from v. 10: “**Therefore every tree which does not bear good fruits is cut down and thrown into the fire**”, as well as from v. 12, where Christ is said to “**gather His wheat into the barn; but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire**”. So these people are misled by the false spirits to pray for their own judgement!

In the book of Acts, we first find the coming „Spirit Baptism“ more precisely announced by Christ Himself in Chapter 1. Here obviously the pouring out of the Spirit at Pentecost is in view:

**And being assembled together with them, He commanded them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the Promise of the Father, which (He said) you have heard from me: for John truly baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with Holy Spirit not many days from now. (Acts 1:4-5)**

In Acts 2, we find nothing mentioned about this baptism with the Spirit. But when the apostle Peter accounts to the believers in Jerusalem for his visit to Cornelius, he testifies that at Pentecost this promise of „Spirit Baptism“ had been fulfilled:

**And as I began to speak, the Holy Spirit fell upon them, as upon us at the beginning. Then I remembered the word of the Lord, how He said, ‘John indeed baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit.’ If therefore God gave them the same gift as he gave us when we believed on the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I that I could withstand God? (Acts 11:15-17)**

Here we see that in the inspired judgement of the apostle, the giving of the gift of the Holy Spirit coincided with the Baptism with that same Spirit. Both happened first at Pentecost, but it also happened at Cornelius’ house.

But we still do not know what the meaning of that "Spirit Baptism" is. Why is this baptism necessary? What effects does it have? The answer to these questions is found, as we should expect, in the NT letters, in the doctrine of the apostles. We read it in the first letter to the Corinthians:

**For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body - whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free - and have all been made to drink into one Spirit. (1Cor 12:13)**

Now here we have the teaching about "Spirit Baptism". The inspired apostle tells us that this work of Christ happens to all believers in the very moment they experience their new birth and become part of the body of Christ, the Church. In fact, biblical Spirit Baptism is the very operation by which a natural man, be he Gentile or Jew, is brought into the spiritual body of Christ. Now he no longer is a Jew or heathen, no longer a German, or British, or Kenyan, no longer from the Luo tribe or Massai - he now is a new man in Christ, he has a heavenly citizenship (Phil 3:20). He is part of the body of Christ, of the new temple of the Church. This is effected by the Holy Spirit, because the body, as the temple, is spiritual, not according to the flesh.

We can, in fact, link this passage with the important teaching in Romans 6, where we find, according to my conviction, the Spirit Baptism described as bringing the believer into a union with the death and resurrection of Christ (which water baptism never could bring about). Then the "Spirit Baptism" would also mean bringing a person "into Christ" and effecting in him the state of being crucified and risen with Christ (Rom 6:1-11).

When we study this doctrinal text, we can see that the true "Spirit Baptism" is not, as the Pentecostals claim, an experience where deep emotions, visions, the flowing through of power, heat sensations or other bodily symptoms are involved. True "Spirit Baptism" is something which cannot be felt or experienced with the senses. It is an invisible activity of the Holy Spirit just as the sealing with the Spirit or the sanctification through the Spirit. All that happens unseen, unfelt at the hidden wonderful moment where the new birth takes place. You can see the fruits of these workings of the Spirit, but they themselves happen in the inner man, hidden from our senses.

Mind you, there is one working of the Spirit which you can definitely experience, and that is the filling with the Spirit. Even this is not accompanied by visions and bodily sensations, but it is experienced in spiritual strength and boldness in the testimony for the Lord. We find examples of a temporary filling with the Spirit in the book of Acts (4:8; 4:31; 7:55; 11:24; 13:9); this is almost everywhere in connection with a public testimony for the Gospel and our Lord (cf. Lk 12:11-12).

The filling with the Spirit is in any case no "second blessing"; it first happens when you receive the Spirit. After that it depends very much on your life of faith and your spiritual attitude whether you are spirit-filled or not. The apostle Paul gives us the command "be filled with the Spirit" in Eph 5:18, and Stephen was an example of a man "full of faith and the Holy Spirit" (Acts 6:5). The special moments of filling with the Spirit we encounter in Acts 4 are all connected with a testimony

before unbelievers, and they did not last permanently, but obviously only for the time the special equipment was needed.

So our study has confirmed the biblical doctrine that the baptism of the Spirit as we find it in the Bible is no “second blessing”, but happens at the new birth, together with and linked to other workings of the Spirit. Again we see that the Pentecostal and Charismatic doctrines about a „spirit baptism“ as “second blessing” are refuted by Scripture.

#### **4. The true gift of the Holy Spirit and the false spirit working in Charismatic „spirit baptism“**

We have now established the biblical truth that we receive the Holy Spirit as a Divine person and in His potential fullness at conversion and new birth, not afterwards, and that the biblical “Spirit Baptism” takes place at the very same time. In this we find a very deep and important truth confirmed: the truth of the all-sufficiency of Christ.

This means that in the moment we receive Christ as our Lord and redeemer, we also receive all the fullness of Him, all blessings that we could possibly receive, according to the word of God: **“He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall he not with Him also freely give us all things?”** (Rom 8:32). And as is written in Col 2:9-10: **“For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily; and you are complete (or: filled, brought to fullness) in Him, who is the head of all principality and power.”** So when we have Christ, we have all (Jn 10:10); we do not need any “second blessings”, because we have received in Him all we need (2Pt 1:2-3); truly, God has **“blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ”** (Eph 1:3).

It is up to us to live accordingly, and every believer will experience these gifts and blessings in a different measure, according to his spiritual state and maturity. But they are all given us in Christ from the very start of our spiritual life. If we live in obedience, faith and surrender to God, we shall have a large share of these blessings present in our life; if we lack these things, we may experience very little of them, but still they are ours in Christ.

##### **a) The true way to spiritual strength**

The Pentecostal and Charismatic doctrine of a “second blessing” is fundamentally wrong and even heretical, exactly because they deny the all-sufficiency of Christ and suggest that the child of God after having received Christ still needs something more and “higher” than the gifts and blessings God gave him in Christ - although God’s word expressly tells us that He gave us **“all things”** with Christ (Rom 8:32). This opens the door for deceiving spirits coming into the life of believers through the false „spirit baptism“.

We must be aware, though, that these misleading doctrines appeal to the flesh and to the feelings many believers may have. If you look at yourself in a fleshly way, determined by the soul rather than the Spirit, then you may ask: “Do I really feel blessed with every spiritual blessing? Why don’t I feel the power of the Holy Spirit more in my life? I am aware of so many shortcomings, of so many defeats in my struggle against sin and flesh - sure I must be lacking something. Maybe I have not yet received the Spirit at all? Maybe I ought to look for the Charismatic spirit baptism - maybe this experience will change my life for the better!”

What is the biblical answer to these questions? How can we overcome our carnal state and experience the power of the Holy Spirit in our lives? What is the way the Bible teaches us?

As we saw before, the Bible says we have received all we need, all spiritual blessings and gifts, all spiritual power and strength, the Holy Spirit Himself and His fullness at the new birth. But in which measure we actually experience all this depends on our walk with Christ, on our obedience to the Bible and on our faith. It may be that although all spiritual blessings in Christ are stored up for us in the heavenly places, we do not enjoy much of them on earth - perhaps because we hide and cherish some sin, or because we live a self-willed, carnal life.

It might help us to understand this aspect of our spiritual life when we look at our Lord's teaching about the Holy Spirit in John 4. There the Lord Jesus tells a Samaritan woman about the wonderful water of life: "... whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst. But the water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life" (Jn 4:14).

Here the indwelling Spirit of God is likened to a fountain of living water, which feeds a stream that flows steadily through us, quickening our life and making it fruitful for God. Now when this stream of the Spirit has been reduced to a mere trickle and the living water is no more flowing within us, we have to inspect the fountainhead and to clean it from all the rubbish which we have allowed to accumulate there! As soon as we have cleansed the fountainhead, the living water will flow again in abundance.

The Bible teaches us that, although we have received the Spirit of God in all His fullness, we may grieve the Spirit (Eph 4:30-31) and quench Him (1Thess 5:19) through carnal attitudes, self-will and sin which we do not clear up. If this is the case, we will experience inner drought and lack of spiritual strength, defeats and heavy temptations. We will lack the power and joy, the peace and intimate fellowship with Christ which results from a Spirit-filled life. In such a state we become feeble and fickle; we are tempted to look for carnal ways of getting at joy and some sort of "power"; this is a state where many fall for the deceptive attractions of the Pentecostal and Charismatic movement.

But the biblical way out is to judge our sins and carnal attitudes in the light of God's word, to repent of them and confess them to God. This is the "walk in the light" the apostle John teaches us (1Jn 1:5-10). This implies a continuous study and application of the Word of God to ourselves and our inner life. It means that we seek the face of the Lord and ask Him to convict us of our sins and wrong attitudes and clean us through His word (cf. Eph 5:26; Hebr 4:11-13). It means that we humble us before God, as James tells us:

**Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. Draw near to God and he will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded. Lament and mourn and weep! Let your laughter be turned to mourning and your joy to gloom. Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He will lift you up. (James 4:7-10)**

An important precondition for a Spirit-filled life is a basic attitude of full surrender to God and Christ. "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service" (Rom 12:1). It is of great importance that I cease to live according to my own lusts, my own will, and instead yield my life, especially my body and its members, which are the instruments of action, to the living God, to do His will and serve Him faithfully. "And do not present your members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin, but present yourselves to God as being alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God" (Rom 6:13).

In a deeper sense, this means to die to our self-will and self-life by living consciously as crucified and risen with Christ. This foundation of an overcoming, victorious life is taught in Romans 6 and Galatians 5:

**3 Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? 4 Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. 5 For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection, 6 knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with**

(or: might be made ineffective), that we should no longer be slaves of sin. 7 For he who has died has been freed from sin. 8 Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him (...) 11 Likewise you also, reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Rom 6:3-11)

16 I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh. 17 For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another; so that you do not do the things that you wish. (...) 24 And those who are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. (Gal 5:16-24)

So the true way to spiritual strength and victory is the conscious life in the fellowship with Christ as one crucified with Christ (Rom 6:6; Gal 2:20), dead with Christ (Rom 6:8; Col 3:3), buried with Christ (Rom 6:4; Col 2:12), risen with Christ (Rom 6:4-5; Eph 2:5-6; Col 3:3) and set with Christ in the heavenly places (Eph 2:6; Col 3:1-3). This means that we reckon in faith with our position in Christ which we cannot feel or see, but which is very effective once we walk in it, putting to death our flesh and its lusts and motions (Col 3:5) and consciously living a new life in the power of Christ's resurrection. All this is wonderfully summed up in the confession of the apostle Paul:

**I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me. (Gal 2:20)**

This is the sound doctrine of the Apostles, and if we live according to that doctrine, we shall experience the spiritual power, victory and leading which we long for and which we need. There are no shortcuts to this way, unless we risk to fall into error and deception. In a way, many people nowadays long to possess the power of Christ's resurrection life, but they do not want to pay the price, that means: to live as one crucified with Christ and dead to one's lusts and sins. This often leads people to a false "holiness life", and all too often into the errors of the Pentecostal and Charismatic movement.

## **b) Drinking from poisoned wells: The Charismatic deceit**

When we take heed to the teaching of the Bible, we will realize that the Pentecostal and Charismatic doctrine of „spirit baptism“ as a “second blessing” is not only wrong, but it leads believers away from biblical faith into a dangerous road of deception and encounter with false spirits. If a true believer has received the true Spirit of God already at his conversion, he cannot receive Him a second time. From God he has got all that God can and will give.

If he now, misled by the false Pentecostal and Charismatic doctrines, opens himself for the “second blessing” spirit experience, he will surely receive a spirit, yet this cannot be the true Spirit of God, but a deceptive spirit of darkness. The Lord laments in the OT: **“For my people have committed two evils: They have forsaken me, the fountain of living waters, and hewn themselves cisterns - broken cisterns that can hold no water”** (Jer 2:13). The Pentecostals and Charismatics, too, have forsaken the true fountain of living water and have drunk strange waters from a poisoned well.

We must think about it to detect the satanic scheme in these teachings. Whereas God's word assures us that in receiving Christ we have received all God's gifts and blessings, the Devil tells believers: “You may have Christ in you - but God has not yet given you all you need! You need to receive our Spirit Baptism, otherwise you cannot be a powerful, overcoming Christian!” Thus people are being prepared for the next step. They are led to seek for this false spirit of the Pentecostals; they are sometimes taught to pray instantly and ask God to give them His Spirit. This sounds very pious, but as God has told us clearly that He has given us the Holy Spirit already, all these prayers amount to making God a liar. Such a prayer is not acceptable to God.

In order to justify such prayers, Charismatics often refer to Lk 11:13, where we read: **“If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him!”** But this was said to believing Jews before Pen-

tecost, and it certainly should encourage the disciples to pray for the Holy Spirit soon to be given. The disciples were told to tarry in Jerusalem and wait for the Spirit (Lk 24:49; Acts 1:4), and this they did with much prayer (Acts 1:13-14; 2:1) until the promised Spirit had been given. But afterwards we never read again that we should pray for the Holy Spirit. In this Church age, you cannot receive the Holy Spirit by praying for it, but only by repenting and believing in the Lord Jesus Christ, as we have shown from the apostolic letters above.

### **c) Receiving a different spirit (2. Corinthians 11)**

When a child of God is thus misled to seek the Charismatic „spirit baptism“, he has placed himself on the slippery ground of lie and demonic deception. He is taught by the Pentecostals to let all reservations go and open himself unconditionally for the spirit he is going to get. Nowadays it is mostly received through the laying on of hands by a Charismatic. It is remarkable that nothing happens when the believer is on his guard and prays “Lord, if this not from you, then protect me and let nothing evil happen!” Only if the believer is fully passive and receptive and *wills* to receive the false spirit, this spirit can actually come into his life and influence it with its false leadings and revelations, with its occult powers and “gifts”.

Now there are not few Christians who would deny that it is at all possible for a child of God to receive a false spirit. They would argue that God would never allow this to happen, that a Christian could detect a demonic spirit easily and avoid being influenced by it. But this is only wishful thinking. In fact we have a very important inspired teaching in the Bible which testifies to the contrary and gives us a solemn warning against demonic deception; it is found in 2Cor 11:2-4 and 13-15:

**2 For I am jealous for you with godly jealousy. For I have betrothed you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ. 3 But I fear, lest somehow, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, so your minds may be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ.**

**4 For if he who comes preaches another Jesus, whom we have not preached, or if you receive a different spirit which you have not received, or a different gospel which you have not accepted - you may well put up with it! (...)**

**13 For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into apostles of Christ. 14 And no wonder! For Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light. 15 Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also transform themselves into ministers of righteousness, whose end will be according to their works.**

This passage of Scripture unmasks the crafty wiles of the Devil which he uses to deceive believers. It shows us how the deception in the Church works - not only the Pentecostal and Charismatic deception, but other heresies as well. It is of utmost importance to study and understand this warning well; this will help us to see through the smokescreen which the Devil uses.

This passage shows that the Corinthians, who were doubtless true believers, if very carnal ones, were deceived by false apostles when the true apostle Paul had to leave them. Some Jewish people from Jerusalem had visited the church, and they had impressed the believers by their rhetorics and their seemingly deep spiritual learning. The Corinthians even thought these swindlers more inspired than Paul himself! Now Paul tries to help them and bring them back to apostolic truth. He explains to them what had happened, and this is very instructive for us.

These false apostles were in fact servants of Satan and disguised themselves as true, powerful Christian ministers. They bewitched the Corinthians and brought them to accept their false preaching. It seemed all well to the Corinthians; they felt lifted up and enriched by new revelations and interesting doctrines. But the apostle has to tell them that in fact they accepted a false gospel, received a strange, false spirit and a false Jesus as well!

### *The three elements of demonic deception*

Now this is Satan's basic method when he wants to deceive the children of God. We can detect these three elements wherever heresies and deceptive movements appear in the Church of God.

#### \*\* A different Gospel, a strange, demonically distorted message of salvation:

We know about the false Gospel of the Catholic Church, of the Jehovah's Witnesses, of the Liberal Protestants, of the Emerging Church. The Pentecostal and Charismatic movement also has its false gospel. It is often called the "full gospel", and this misleading name means that according to it health (and often also wealth) is included in the redemption. It is based on an erroneous interpretation of Is 53:3-4 where it is written that the Lord Jesus bore our griefs (or illnesses). This is said to mean that a believer in Christ needs not be ill, but can claim health as his birthright. Many other Pentecostal and Charismatic preachers add to this prosperity and success which may also be "claimed" by the Christian.

But as with the false gospel in Galatians, we also see here that any addition to the biblical gospel of redemption by the blood of Jesus Christ is actually a falsification and a corruption. The heretical "gospel" of redemption *plus* the Law and circumcision is called a false gospel in Galatians 1. The addition of health and wealth to the gospel is also a corruption. Apart from that there are many other corruptions of the gospel found in these circles, e.g. false holiness teachings and salvation by works of sanctification in the Holiness-Pentecostal camp, and self-realization and worldliness, cheap grace, magical word-faith formulas in the Charismatic camp.

#### \*\* a different, strange, false spirit:

Here we have the proof that a true believer can receive a false, demonic spirit when deceived by false teachers or false prophets. The fascinating messages and signs and wonders that these people spread are effected by demonic forces. So when the Corinthians listened readily and without critical reserve to the deceiving message of the false apostles, they came under the influence of "**deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons**" (1Tim 4:1). This resulted in receiving a different spirit, which obviously disguised itself as the Spirit of God, but is unmasked by the word of God as a spirit out of darkness.

This does not mean *possession* or indwelling by such a spirit, because a true child of God is sealed with the Holy Spirit and saved out of the power of darkness (Col 1:13). But these believers came under the permanent influence of a deceiving spirit; they accepted its teachings and leadings as from God. This is the way Satan works to lead the saints astray, and this is what happens in the Pentecostal and Charismatic movement, where the preaching and teaching, the prophecies and miracles are worked by deceiving spirits. Believers who open themselves for the messages, for the prophets or healers come under the blinding and seducing influence of these spirits. Especially when they seek the Charismatic „spirit baptism“ or allow Charismatics to lay their hands on them, they will suffer demonic influence.

#### \*\* a different, false Jesus:

This is one of the secrets of Satan's work that many evangelical Christians do not understand. They may say: "But look at these Charismatics, how they love Jesus, how they burn for Jesus and talk about him every day - they must be sincere!" But we have to ask: *Which Jesus?* The true Lord Jesus Christ that is revealed in God's Word - or the false Jesus of the Catholic Church, the strange Jesus of Jehovah's Witnesses, the different Jesus of the Liberals and Emergent heretics - or the false Jesus of the Pentecostal and Charismatic movement?

We have to acknowledge the sad and solemn truth that the "Jesus" that appears in dreams and visions, the "Jesus" that inspires the false prophets and apostles, the "Jesus" that is adored by Charismatic Rock&Pop "praise" is a different Jesus from our precious Lord. This deceptive angel of light who calls himself "Jesus" appears in visions in ever changing form - the true Lord Jesus cannot be seen until we are united with Him in glory (1Pt 1:8; 1Jn 3:2). This angel calls in prophecies for

the ecumenic unity with Catholics and Orthodox churches - the true Lord warns against false unity (2Cor 6:14-18) and the babylonic Whore (Revelation 17 and 18).

One of the world's leading Charismatics, the Lutheran Arnold Bittlinger, once called this false "Jesus" "the prototype of a shaman" and compared him with the occult healers of the heathen. Another world-famous Charismatic, Merlin Carothers, once told about a "Jesus vision" he had, where that Jesus approached him, knelt down before him, placed his face on Carother's thighs and said: "I do not want to use you; I want you to use me". If you compare this with the true vision the apostle John had in Revelation 1, you can easily see that this "Jesus" was a demonic fake, and never our glorious Lord!

*We need a sober spiritual judgement on the Pentecostal and Charismatic movement*

In order to understand the quality of deception both in the individual who is under the Pentecostal false spirit and in the movement as a whole, we must clearly see the demonic nature of that deception. This whole movement has been created, led and spread by deceiving spirits. The bewildering symptoms many deceived adherents of this movement experience, such as blasphemous or suicidal thoughts, depressions, horrifying visions and dreams, unclean and adulterous impulses, trances and uncontrollable reactions - all these are symptoms of occult, demonic forces. The equally bewildering false teachings and heretical doctrines that grow rampant in the movement, the multitude of unbiblical, even magical practices that are found everywhere - all this is the bad fruit of **"deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons"** (1Tim 4:1), and not of mere human error.

It is important to state this fact, which is acknowledged by almost all believers, who - like the author of this paper - were personally involved eye-witnesses from within that movement. There are so many phenomena in the movement that clearly come from the activity of spirits, not merely of men. Nevertheless many well-meaning but spiritually short-sighted evangelicals today have a humanistic, misleading judgement on the Pentecostal and Charismatic movement. They talk about mere "unbiblical doctrines", "unsound enthusiasm" or even an "over-estimation of the Holy Spirit" with the Pentecostals and Charismatics. But such views are definitely beside the point.

In the Pentecostal and Charismatic movement there are not only "unbiblical" or "erroneous" teachings; this we can find almost everywhere even in biblical churches. Here we are dealing with false teachings destructive to the biblical faith (2Pt 2:1-3), with "doctrines of demons", with heretical and deceptive influences that undermine the core of biblical faith and work to destroy the true churches of Christ.

The doctrines and messages of this movement are dangerous; they are not mere human error, but spiritual leaven that leavens the whole lump (Gal 5:7-10), if not checked and purged (1Cor 5:6-8). These doctrines are fascinating and contagious, they bewitch many and draw them deeper and deeper into that movement, because demonic forces are their source. They destroy the spiritual chasteness of the bride of Christ (2Cor 11:2-3) and lead into spiritual fornication (Rev 2:20); they mislead the people of God to follow "another Jesus" in stead of our precious Lord.

In the Pentecostal and Charismatic movement the problem is not that the Holy Spirit were "over-emphasized", but that He is set aside and quenched, and a lying demonic spirit takes His place and misleads and deceives and soils and pollutes many children of God as well as even more false Christians. Behind that all is the spirit of Antichrist (1Jn 4:1-6).

These false spirits inspire thousands of false prophets to utter lying, deceiving prophecies which pose as "messages from God", but in reality are worthless, misleading chaff (cf. Jer 23:21-29). The deceiving spirits also work false miracles, signs and wonders in great number to bring the gullible to believe their lying preachers and prophets (cf. Mt 24:24; 2Thess 2:8-12; Rev 16:13-14). This false spirit makes people drunken and sets them in trance; it throws them backward and makes them lose their self-control - all in total contrast to the fruit of the true Holy Spirit!

So we must say that many modern evangelicals nowadays have an unbiblical, liberal attitude towards the Pentecostal and Charismatic movement. They see it as a slightly unorthodox, but fast growing branch of the evangelicals. They talk about the "strengths" and "weaknesses" of that movement, although with an end-time deception, you cannot talk about "strengths", and their

“weaknesses” are in truth evil teachings and practices. This just as if you would praise the Jehovah’s Witnesses for their “zeal” or the liberal theologians for their “erudition”.

Some praise the Charismatics for their zeal in praying, but overlook the fact that this praying is mislead and marred by their magical practices and false doctrines. They praise the Charismatics for their evangelistic activity, but they overlook the fact that a false gospel is spread by most of this activity, and true evangelistic endeavours are sabotaged by them. But these sober truths are overlooked by those deceived evangelicals. They only criticise the extreme symptoms of the Charismatics and sympathize with the “moderates”, but those “moderates” are under the influence of the same deceptive spirits and mostly spread the same false doctrines. They are in some respect even more dangerous than the “extremists”, because through them the error is more effectively smuggled into Bible-believing churches. Generally we have to say that most of today’s evangelicals underestimate the danger of the demonic doctrines and deceiving spirits working in the Pentecostal and Charismatic movement, and they therefore are quickly leavened by this spiritual leaven.

#### **d) The false spirit detected and unmasked**

We have to deal with this point in some more detail. The spirit of the Pentecostal and Charismatic movement poses as the Holy Spirit of God and imitates some of the fruits and effects of the true Spirit - but its effects still show clearly its demonic nature. They show it clearly to those who have still open eyes to see and spiritual minds to discern.

Once this spirit has taken hold of a person this person becomes spiritually blinded and unable to discern the obvious symptoms of demonic activity. Today, not only the “spirit-baptized” Charismatics themselves are blind and insensitive to these realities, but also scores of modern evangelicals who lost their spiritual discernment through many deviations from biblical truth and many compromises with the world, and not least through an unbiblical cooperation with Pentecostals and Charismatics.

*We can detect the false spirit by its working*

But for those who still have enlightened eyes of understanding (Eph 1:18) the false spirit is exposed and made manifest (Eph 5:11-13) by the demonic nature of its workings and effects. To detect this we have to test this spirit with the true and unfailing revelation of the Word of God (1Jn 4:1; Hebr 4:12-13).

There is one basic principle which we have to uphold if we do not want to be deceived beyond help. This principle says *that all true work of God is in accordance with His inspired self-revelation in the Bible; and that everything that contradicts this self-revelation in the Word must not be accepted as divine*. Today many misled people would say: “Well, God wrote this in the Bible about His character and ways, but He may also act very differently today”. This is mystical deception and a lie of the Devil, constructed in order to disguise his evil workings as possibly divine.

There is another wile of the Devil we have to overcome, and that is the reckless threat with the unpardonable “sin against the Holy Spirit”, which he throws against anyone who dares to test the spirits and unmask the demonic delusions in the Pentecostal and Charismatic movement. But the true Holy Spirit does not forbid the testing of the spirits, but expressly commands it in 1Jn 4:1! And a born-again true believer, who has the Spirit of God indwelling and is sealed by Him can never commit such a detestable sin. It was, in fact, committed by unbelieving Jews at a time where the Holy Spirit was in a singular way working through the person of the Lord Jesus Christ.

We as believers in Christ have the duty to test all (1Thess 5:21), to test the spirits, if they are of God or not (1Jn 4:1), and we are warned that deceiving spirits will be working in the Church especially in later times (1Tim 4:1). So we have to refute these vain threats as well as the arrogant claims of today’s false prophets and apostles that whoever criticises them or unmasks their lies would be killed by God or suffer evil from the Devil.

When we take our Bible and judge and test the modern false prophets and the spirits that inspire them by their fruits, as we should do (Mt 7:16-17), then we soon realize certain facts:

\*\* Teachings, prophecies and leadings that contradict the Bible:

There are very many prophecies and doctrines in that movement which claim to be divinely inspired but flagrantly contradict the Bible. This is true for topics like the world-wide outpouring of the Spirit or the “call to ecumenical unity” as well as for calls for “spiritual warfare”, the “health and wealth” doctrine, the magical techniques of the “word-Faith” movement or the “positive thinking/confession” movement. The false spirit called countless women to be leaders, prophets, preachers and pastors in direct opposition to 1Tim 2:12. It led quite a few Charismatics into the Catholic Church. It led people to declare “God has shown me that I should divorce my wife” or brought them to give up good jobs and engage themselves in starting some questionable business venture with only extreme debts coming out of it.

\*\* Divisions, lies and moral sin:

Among the many bad fruits of the Pentecostal and Charismatic movement are an abnormal number of divisions between scores of “anointed” prophets, apostles and leaders who often called the others misled by the Devil and only themselves as genuine. This lying spirit has caused tens of thousands of local churches to be split or deprived of former members, especially young people. This movement has also seen a terrifying amount of moral sin among leading figures - lying and fraud, greediness of filthy lucre and financial enrichment, fornication, adultery and divorce, alcohol abuse and homosexual relations, questionable big projects and waste of money for personal luxury’s sake. Just to mention a few names: Charles Parham, John A. Dowie, A. A. Allen, Aimee Semple McPherson, Pat Robertson, Jim Bakker, Jimmy Swaggart, Earl Paulk, Paul Crouch, Paul Cain, Bob Jones, Todd Bentley.

Many more, if less famous, could be added. We know of course, that divisions and moral sins do also happen among true, Bible-believing Christians. But still the number of such transgressions in the Pentecostal and Charismatic movement is far above anything found in true churches - and this despite their claim that they possess an anointing and power they deem far above that “ordinary” children of God can claim.

\*\* False signs and miracles:

The many miracles, especially miraculous healings form a large part of the fascination this movement evokes with many Christians. Yet these wonders prove, upon closer biblical examination, to be rather poor forgeries of the original miracles which the Lord and His apostles worked. When the Lord and His apostles healed, it was always *all* the seeking people that were healed, and those healings were instant, complete, and lasting.

The Charismatic false healers cannot heal most of the people that come to them; they mostly heal psycho-somatic diseases that can also be cured by suggestion; the healings often are incomplete and last only for a short time. Some of the leading “healing evangelists” in the USA were asked to produce some cases where two independent doctors would testify a permanent miraculous healing of a serious organic disease; they could not name one such case.

Similarly, the miraculous “tongues” gift of the Charismatics is totally different from the original apostolic gift. The biblical tongues always were real foreign languages of heathen people (Acts 2:6-12; 1Cor 14:21), the tongues speakers were not allowed to speak all together; they had to keep silent unless they were translated (1Cor 14:27-28). The charismatic “tongues” are to 95% ecstatic gibberish and no existing foreign language at all (and if existing languages, they turned not infrequently out to contain blasphemies against the Lord); the tongues speakers very often speak loud all at one time, and without translation. Many other “miracles” are practically identical with occult phenomena: soothsaying, levitation, astral projection etc.

## \*\* Loss of self-control and decency:

The Bible teaches that one important fruit of the Holy Spirit is self-control (Gal 5:22; some others translate “temperance”, but the Greek word says “might over oneself/self-control”; comp. 2Pt 1:6). The true Holy Spirit is a spirit of a “sound mind”, which can also be translated “self-control, sobriety” (Trench), but also “decency, decorousness”.

The Bible teaches that the true Spirit of God never enslaves or manipulates man; He never turns off man’s personality, responsibility and conscious decision: **“where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty”** (2Cor 3:17); **“and the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets”** (1Cor 14:32). The Holy Spirit does not dictate or control a person against his will, but He appeals to the conscience and mind of the person to make him do God’s will out of his own will.

But the demonic spirits manipulate men and switch off their consciousness and personality to take over and bring them to do things they would not want to do. This is a clear symptom of occult influence. Demonic compulsion is found in the testimony of John Wimber, when he experienced his “baptism of the spirit” and reported that a force came over him and threw him on the ground and forced him to stay there although he wanted to rise.

In the Pentecostal and Charismatic movement there are very many “spirit phenomena” which point to demon possession or spiritualist workings. If people “under the spirit” laugh hysterically and for hours or hop and shout like animals without being able to stop, this is worked by a demon and never by the Holy Spirit! When a Charismatic magician commands “Come, Holy Spirit!”, and hundreds fall backwards, this, too, can never be the work of God’s Spirit!

Special attention should be given to the issue of falling backwards under the false spirit, where often women lie on the floor in such an indecent way that others have to cover them with blankets. A Bible study convinces every reader that, when the true Spirit of God worked, men always fell *on their faces*, whereas to fall *backward* has always been a sort of judgement (comp. Gen 49:17; 1Sam 4:8; Job 12:19; Prov 12:7; 24:16; Isa 26:5; Isa 28:13; Jn 18:6) and can never be from God’s spirit, because thereby man’s nakedness is exposed before God (comp. Exo 20:26; 28,42; Gen 9:22-23). Also the many symptoms of “spirit drunkenness” and loss of self-control cannot be caused by the Holy Spirit who works sobriety, discipline and conscious decent behaviour in a believer. The frequent symptoms of trance, ecstasy and unconsciousness are also caused by demons.

## \*\* Symptoms of occult and spiritualistic influence:

Persons who experienced the Pentecostal „spirit baptism“ often report of symptoms that clearly point to occult influences, like suicidal thoughts, obsessive thoughts, thoughts of damnation and accusation, unclean fantasies, inner voices and sometimes even symptoms of schizophrenia and psychosis. Often people lose their assurance of salvation and become depressive; they undergo severe crises of faith because they become fixed on and addicted to delusive spiritual experiences.

When such symptoms occur, the Charismatics often claim that they are due to demon possession and start exorcisms, which only aggravate the problems. Moreover symptoms like clairvoyance, precognition or out-of-body voyages of the soul show the occult nature of the spirit which is at work in this movement.

### *How to become freed of the demonic influence*

Now if a child of God has realized that he has been deceived into receiving the false „spirit baptism“ of the Pentecostal and Charismatic movement, the question is urgent: How can I get rid of that spirit? The answer is: Through repentance, confession and a clear break with that false spirit.

There is no need of any exorcism, addressing the spirit and driving it out, because with a true child of God, there can be no demon possession, as we have seen (cf. Col 1:13). The believer has invited the false spirit and placed himself under its influence, and the cause for that is in almost all cases personal sin and failure: it was our flesh, our lust for tickling religious experiences, the pride of

being a “prophet” and “miracle-worker”, religious self-fulfilment, carnal attitudes. It is not without our own guilt and responsibility that we go astray.

So the first thing is to realize in the light of Scripture and biblical sound doctrine that the spirit we received is actually a false spirit. Then we have to humble ourselves before the Lord and repent of the sins and carnal attitudes that lie at the root of our becoming deceived.

We must confess the sin of having drunk poisoned water from strange wells instead of seeking biblical true filling with God’s Spirit. We must confess the sin of having worshipped a false Jesus with demonic rock music and probably having practiced magical forms of prayer and other unbiblical things. And then we have to clearly renounce the false spirit, all laying on of hands, exorcisms, healings and other points of contact with the demons.

This “negative” step must be accompanied by some “positive” steps. We ought to surrender anew to the true Lord Jesus Christ, strive to study the Bible thoroughly and to obey God’s word carefully. We have to separate ourselves from all connections with Pentecostals and Charismatics, not without having warned all those we can warn, and we have to seek the fellowship of a true Bible-believing church (2Tim 2:22).

We have to ask God to teach us anew His ways, how to follow the Lord Jesus in a sober, balanced, biblical manner. We have to ask the Lord to free us from all imprints of the deceptive Charismatic way of life, of all deceptive doctrines and false practices. We have to strive to renew our mind in order to do the will of God (Rom 12:1-2). If we do this (Jn 8:31-32), we shall experience the truth of our Lord’s promise: **“Therefore if the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed”** (Jn 8:36).

#### **e) Why it is vital to separate from the false spirit and its workings**

So when we soberly and consciously test the spirits of the Pentecostal and Charismatic movement with the Bible truth, we cannot but acknowledge that this movement is a demonic deception and not from God. The fruits are bad, so the tree is bad (Mt 7:15-20). We know about those true children of God who stick to that movement, although God’s will for them is to separate from it, and we are sorry for them and pray for them - but the movement as a whole is not from God, but constitutes an end-time false-prophetic delusion.

The demonic messages and doctrines as well as the demonic powers, signs and miracles in that movement help to prepare the world and Christendom for the coming Antichrist. This is even acknowledged by a prominent US Charismatic, who, in respect to the thousands of blinded fans of the false prophet Todd Bentley, who still admired him after he had committed adultery, publicly said that he is sure the majority of Charismatics would follow the Antichrist when he comes with his miracles, because they have no spiritual discernment.

#### *The Pentecostal and Charismatic movement works as leaven in the true Church*

So the Pentecostal and Charismatic movement cannot be viewed as an acceptable, if in some aspects problematic part of evangelical Christianity, as many nowadays do. From a biblical point of view, this movement must be declared as heretical and destructive, as part of the big deception in the end times which is clearly foretold in Scripture. We cannot accept the Pentecostals and Charismatics wholesale as our “brothers and sisters in Christ”. We have to realize that, due to the false gospel and the demonic influences in that movement, the greater part of it cannot be said to be true, born-again children of God; they rather have to be called self-deceived false Christians.

Certainly we find some true believers among the Pentecostals and Charismatics - we would never deny that. But we have to deal with these as erring brothers and sisters who have been involved in heresy and must be subjected to church discipline in order to help them come out of their wrong path. But most of the adherents of the Pentecostal and Charismatic movement are, we regret to say, deceived heathen or Jews who never experienced a biblical conversion and new birth. The

whole movement has such a destructive and seductive quality that a biblical church never can cooperate with it or open up to its influence or to its adherents.

In regard to the Pentecostal and Charismatic movement, as with other deceptive and heretical currents, it is vital to have the *Biblical principle of separation* in mind, which is itself intimately connected with the biblical doctrine of leaven and its consequences. According to the clear teaching of the Bible, false doctrine and deceptive false prophecy constitutes spiritual leaven (sourdough) which must be purged out of the church and of the individual believer.

We find in 1Corinthians 5 that fornication and other sins are considered leaven and have to be purged out. But in Gal 5:7-12 we find *that false doctrine also constitutes leaven in the eyes of God*, and this is confirmed by the Lord in Mt 16:11-12, where He calls the doctrine of the Pharisees and Sadducees leaven. Everywhere in the Bible, when leaven is mentioned, it is a symbol of moral and spiritual corruption, and everywhere the lesson is the same: **“Therefore purge out the old leaven, that you may be a new lump, since you truly are unleavened. For indeed Christ, our Passover, was sacrificed for us.”** (1Cor 5:7).

Now when spiritual leaven is at work in the Church, there exists a very important spiritual law which is often overlooked nowadays. This unailing, very solemn divine law states that **“A little leaven leavens the whole lump”** (Gal 5:9). This means that false doctrine, demonical influence and heretical groups work like the real leaven in nature: You take a very small portion of it and mix it with flour, and within hours the whole lump of dough is leavened.

This law is also mentioned in the Lord’s important parable of the leaven in Mt 13:33, where the end-time corruption of Christendom is pictured with these words: **“The kingdom of heaven is like leaven which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal till it was all leavened.”** Many evangelicals think that here leaven has a positive meaning, but this understanding would mean Christianity slowly grows till all the world is converted, and this is contradicted by many Bible truths, some of which we dealt with in the first lecture. The true meaning is that towards the end of the Church dispensation, the leaven of false doctrines and apostasy will grow evermore until after the rapture of the true believers there is only leaven left - the big world church of Babylon.

#### *The Biblical path of separation - the only protection from corruption*

If you want to prevent the pure meal to be corrupted by the leaven, you have to separate the two; either you take the leaven out of the pure meal, or, if the corruption has already set in, you must take the rest of pure meal out of the vessel where the leavened dough is. So biblical separation is the way to deal with false, deceptive doctrine and practice in the Church. This vital principle is taught in the New Testament time and again, as some passages of Scripture will show.

The most important and fundamental teaching is found in 2 Corinthians 6, where the apostle Paul gives us the reason why we as Church of God have to separate from evil, from evil doctrine as well as from evil practice:

**Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness? And what accord has Christ with Belial? Or what part has a believer with an unbeliever? And what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For you are the temple of the living God. As God has said: ‘I will dwell in them and walk among them. I will be their God, and they shall be my people!’ Therefore ‘Come out from among them and be separate, says the Lord. Do not touch what is unclean, and I will receive you. I will be a Father to you, and you shall be my sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty.’ Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God. (2Cor 6:14 - 7:1)**

Several NT passages stress the necessity to separate from false teachers and their works:

**Now I urge you, brethren, note those who cause divisions and offenses, contrary to the doctrine which you learned, and avoid them. For those who are such do not serve our**

Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly, and by smooth words and flattering speech deceive the hearts of the simple. (Rom 16:17-18)

If anyone teaches otherwise and does not consent to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which accords with godliness, he is proud, knowing nothing, but is obsessed with disputes and arguments over words, from which come envy, strife, reviling, evil suspicions, useless wranglings of men with corrupt minds and destitute of the truth, who suppose that godliness is a means of gain. From such withdraw yourself. (1Tim 6:3-5)

Reject a divisive [or heretical] man after the first and second admonition, knowing that such a person is warped and sinning, being self-condemned. (Titus 3:10-11)

Whoever transgresses and does not abide in the doctrine of Christ does not have God. He who abides in the doctrine of Christ has both the Father and the Son. If anyone comes to you and does not bring this doctrine, do not receive him into your house nor greet him; for he who greets him shares in his evil deeds. (2Jn 1:9-11)

So it is very important today to take a clear stand against the Pentecostal and Charismatic deception. In failing to do so, many church leaders have unwittingly opened the door of their churches for the Charismatic leaven, and many church members are carried away by the Charismatic winds and currents (Eph 4:14). Mainly through the Charismatic "Praise and Worship" music, deceptive influences have crept into many conservative, Bible-believing churches. But also through false counseling methods, the search for physical healing, and ecumenical "evangelism" these deceptive influences reach many children of God today.

So we must sound a warning trumpet, and make clear that without biblical separation, the bible-believing churches are soon undermined and led astray by the wiles of the Devil. Many church leaders nowadays think that "a little leaven" can be tolerated - some charismatic "worship" songs, some church members speaking in tongues, some people who say there are miraculous healers today ... and they do not realize how these little compromises destroy the very foundation of their churches.

If we really want to build sound, biblical churches, we have to obey the commands of God's word concerning the necessary separation from evil, from leaven, from all heretical and deceptive teachings and groups. This means that we do not cooperate with Charismatic or Pentecostal churches or organisations in any field, including evangelism. This also means leaving such modern evangelical associations which include Charismatics or cooperate with them. Furthermore we need clear teaching about the false doctrines and deceiving spirits in that movement. We need to warn the believers about the dangers of that movement, especially about the danger of getting under the influence of demonic spirits through the laying on of hands, through participation in Charismatic mass meetings, Charismatic counselling, "healing" and exorcism.

## **5. The urgent need of a Spirit-filled life and true revival**

Some people would accuse sober, earnest believers who argue against the Pentecostal and Charismatic pseudo-revival and false „spirit baptism“, and insinuate that they are against all revival in the Church and against a real Spirit-filled live. But this is not true, certainly not for the author of these papers.

I am convinced all serious Bible-believing children of God realize the sad and weak spiritual state of many branches of the true church in these last days. We are conscious of our lack of faith, obedience and strength, of our tendency to make worldly compromises and our failure to obey God's commands and doctrines as fervently as we should. There is much lack of faithfulness and simplicity in Christ, of true surrender and love for Christ; there is a tendency to become more and more car-

nal, and a danger to become self-satisfied and lukewarm. We have no reason to be proud and content with our condition. We seriously yearn for a true revival and renewal in the Church of God.

One of the reasons why we fight against the deceptive teachings and practices of the Pentecostal and Charismatic movement is the sad fact that this movement and its influence is one of the biggest obstacles against any true revival in the Church! The fascinating Pentecostal-Charismatic pseudo-religion and pseudo-revival spread by deceiving spirits weakens the true church and leads many believers astray. They think they are in the midst of the big end-time revival - and in fact they are in the midst of deception and apostasy! The search for the "great outpouring of the spirit" and of an unbiblical mass conversion of millions and billions actually keeps many Christians from seeking true revival. The fake Charismatic "revivalism" actually has further weakened the church and only produced many divisions, confusions and new heresies.

But what is true revival, then? What can we hope and pray for in these difficult days? Now we have to state soberly that we do not have any promise of revival for the Church as a whole in the end time short before the return of the Lord. On the contrary, God's word predicts the growing apostasy (1Tim 4:1), the cancer-like growth of deceptions and heresies (cf. 2Tim 2:17; 3:13) and confirms, that Christendom at large more and more develops into Babylon the great, the whore (Rev 17 and 18); that even many believers grow worldly and lukewarm. These are the days where the judgement in the house of God is severe and large-scale (1Pt 4:17) - what will be the end of those who do not obey the gospel of God?

In these days of decline and ruin in the Church, the promises mainly address the individual believer. We have to choose ourselves whether we want to follow our Lord faithfully and take upon us all the self-denial and suffering that implies. But there is a certain promise for the faithful remnant of those who still fear the Lord and are eager to do His will. There is a promise for those believers who belong, spiritually speaking, to Philadelphia. The Lord promises them an open door, although they have a little strength, but have kept Christ's word and have not denied His name (Rev 3:7-13). The Lord promises to keep them from the hour of trial. Now if we are really zealous to honour His name and serve Him as holy priests and as faithful witnesses, we may ask for strength and renewal, for revival in order to fulfil His commission.

When we ask ourselves what true revival might mean in our days, we may gain insight and hope from the Old Testament, inasmuch as God's dealings with Israel are in many ways typical and meant to teach us (cf. Rom 15:4; 1Cor 10:1-11). The Old Testament saints prayed for revival and renewal in times of distress and decline among the people of God. Their purpose and goal was the honour of God, their longing was that God should come to His aim and be glorified, even though men had failed. So they prayed and asked God to revive and awake the god-fearing faithful:

**Restore us, o God of our salvation,  
And cause Your anger toward us to cease.  
Will You be angry with us forever?  
Will You prolong your anger to all generations?  
Will You not revive us again,  
That Your people may rejoice in You? (Ps 85:4-6; cf. Psalm 80:3)**

**O LORD, revive Your work in the midst of the years!  
In the midst of the years make it known;  
In wrath remember mercy. (Hab 3:2)**

**For thus says the High and Lofty One who inhabits eternity, whose name is Holy: I dwell in the high and holy place, with him who has a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones. (Isa 57:15)**

We find encouraging examples and types in God's dealings with the faithful remnant of Israel (cf. Zeph 3:12-13). God will remember those that fear Him (Mal 3:16-18). He will strengthen those who work to build up His spiritual temple in the midst of opposition and distress (Hag 1:3-14; 2:4-5). His work will not be done not by might nor by power, but by His Spirit (Zech 4:6). A very encouraging example are the revivals God granted to the returned Jews in Jerusalem when they struggled to build the temple and the walls of the holy city, as they are written in Esra and Nehemiah. We can learn a lot of these records.

What is especially important for our days is the attitude we find in the prayers for renewal that were prayed by Daniel (Dan 9:1-19), Ezra (Ezra 9:6-15), Nehemiah (Neh 1:4-11), and the Levites (Neh 9:1-38). Just as these men of God, we ought to humble ourselves before God, confess our sins and failures and those of the people of God honestly and in a priestly attitude, and ask God to restore and revive us for His name's sake, so that His goals for the Church are achieved and His name glorified.

True revival in these days, if God grants it, has four characteristic traits:

1. True revival does not primarily concern the masses, the unbelievers, the world. Biblical revival always starts with individual God-fearing believers who realize their deficient state and humble themselves to search God and ask for renewal. It is the believers who are awakened, and if they are renewed through God's grace, their testimony will result in unbelievers coming to Christ.
2. True revival is a result of God's grace in spite of our failure. It cannot be made by men, organized and stirred up through "revivalist" action. It begins with humble prayer, with confession of our sins and failures, with fasting and a contrite spirit, with priestly intercession. It is a work of God's Holy Spirit who uses God's word to convict the children of God and moves them anew to fulfil God's will.
3. True revival always has the inspired Word of God, the Bible as its foundation. We see this typically with Josiah and with Nehemiah. The word of God must speak to our consciences and convict us of our sins and our true condition. True revival involves authoritative, Spirit-led teaching of the sound doctrine. This shows us the standard for our lives, the aims we have to go for, the path we have to choose.
4. True revival does not result in millions of converts, fantastic church growth, signs and miracles everywhere. True revival may even reduce the numbers of a biblical church as wheat and tares are sorted out! Some marks of biblical renewal and awakening are: real repentance of sins, of pride and self-will, of lukewarmness and worldliness; a new dedication of the whole person to Christ, living crucified and risen with Christ; a lasting change of mind and attitude from carnal to spiritual; an intensified love for God and the neighbours; restored and purified relations between believers, a strengthening of spiritual unity between the children of God; reverence and obedience towards the inspired Word of God; the readiness to suffer for Christ and to bring sacrifices for the Lord.

For such a revival we ought to pray and seek the Lord, both individually and in prayer groups. In seeking the Lord we should also make supplication for the many deceived people who follow the false prophets and teachers of the Pentecostal and Charismatic movement. May the Lord in His grace open the eyes of many who are now blinded and deceived by demonic spirits! May the Lord lead them to repentance and make them truly free to follow Him! May the Lord wake up many evangelical church leaders who do not see clearly the deceptive danger of the false spirit working in these movements! May the Lord have mercy and strengthen the faithful remnant in His Church!

**Now may the God of peace  
who brought up our Lord Jesus from the dead,  
that great Shepherd of the sheep,  
through the blood of the everlasting covenant,  
make you complete in every good work to do His will,  
working in you what is well pleasing in His sight,  
through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen.**

(Hebr 13:20-21)