

About Me

written by Alfred Persson | April 7, 2016



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My Story:



At 16 years of age I became a US Merchant Mariner, like my dad. That's my first ship, Acting Deck Maintenance on the SS Exchequer, Isbrantsen Lines in 1970. National Maritime Union. Its Jamacian Bos'n was a mountain of a man. Sometimes he'd stop off a mooring line with his bare hands, while I rushed to make it fast. He had a heart of gold, but pulled no punches. He insisted I do the job I was being paid to do, even though I was not an "AB" (Able Seaman). Fear of heights caused me to freeze halfway up the mast on my first climb. He fixed that by saying: "Concentrate on what's

around you, and on what I will do to you if you fall and make a mess on my deck!" That worked.

Non-container (C2) ships like the Excheater are long gone from American fleets. Unlike today, it took days to unload cargo, leaving plenty of time to see the sights, romance the ladies. A sailor could really see the world back then, not like today where you just "see the sea", 99% of the time.

While discharging cargo (Hoboken, Staten Island? Don't recall.), Mate on Watch ordered me to supervise a hold. On purpose the Cargo Net was dropped causing breakage, loose bottles of expensive wine quickly vanished among the longshoremen. Their Union Rep. ambled alongside: "Did you see that Kid?" "No Sir!" I replied. "Good, that's the way to stay healthy" he growled as he walked away.

Lots of time on ships to read. On one of them I happened upon the Jehovah's Witnesses' book "Evolution or Creation". Convinced by its creationist arguments I decided to read their New World Translation of the Bible. The Word of God had a unique power over me, I was compelled to read it cover to cover and then again. I couldn't put it down.

The time came when I was determined to become a JW. I was convinced they alone were God's people, and everyone else belonged to "Babylon the Great." I hastened to the San Pedro Kingdom Hall to be baptized. But they insisted I answer a question first, to see if I really understood JW beliefs.

"What do you believe about baptism"-the Elder asked. Immediately I paraphrased Romans 6:3-4 "We are buried with Christ, and we are raised with Christ!" That is the wrong answer, unless JWs believe you are one of the "144,000" anointed. They clearly did not believe I was because they insisted I complete discipleship indoctrination.

While at the public library researching I came upon "Apostles of Denial," by Edmond C. Gruss. I was determined to prove his arguments against JW belief wrong. None of his arguments for the Deity of Christ were making sense to me. I blazed my way through his book, until I got where he argued the Holy Spirit must be a "Person" and not an impersonal force of God as JWs believe. He uses personal pronouns "I" "Me" and even commands the disciples to act for "Me". When reading Acts 13:2 it was as if JW doctrines were like a house of cards, the collapse was truly great. I "knew" as the Holy Spirit says "I", "Me", He is a "Person":

As they were publicly ministering to Jehovah and fasting, the holy spirit said: "Of all persons set Barnabas and Saul apart for me for the work to which I have them.-Acts 13:2 New World Translation

I was devastated. I felt totally alone, "if the Jehovah's Witnesses are not God's people, who are?" [It didn't occur to me the E. C. Gruss was!!!] I cried out in prayer to Jehovah, "please help me, I beg you! I

can't see who your people are!". I was absolutely devastated, went about as if in a stupor. But Jehovah would not answer me.

One day a Baptist Radio minister was urging listeners to call in and confess "Jesus Christ is LORD" and that God "raised Him from the dead" publicly (Mat. 10:32) and you will be saved. "God does not lie," and He promised:

That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. (Rom. 10:9 KJV)

I rushed to the public phone in the lobby of the Amory Hotel. A few of my fellow sailors sat there socializing, they would overhear every word I said on the phone!" Then a thought appeared: "You don't want to embarrass yourself in front of them! You'll be a laughingstock!" I drove the thought away thinking: "I want Jesus to be my LORD more than life itself!"

The Radio minister asked "do you confess Jesus Christ is LORD!" "Yes, I confess Jesus Christ is LORD!" "Do you believe in your heart God raised Him from the dead?" "Yes, I believe God raised Him from the dead!"

"Then you are saved, for God cannot lie and in Romans 10: 9-11 He says:

That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.

10 For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.

11 For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed. (Rom. 10:9-11 KJV)

I thanked him profusely and went to my room, stunned. As I was pondering these things I was "baptized in the Holy Spirit!"

God the Holy Spirit fell upon me like a warm wind, filling my soul regenerating it. The washing of regeneration (Tit. 3:5) renewed my spirit (Rom. 8:16), not my flesh body or brain (Rom. 7:18). My soul, the "ghost operating the machine" became a partaker of the divine nature (2 Pet. 1:4). God breathed into my soul the "breath of lives" and the filling gave rise to a "new creature" (Gen. 2:7; 2 Cor. 5:17), risen from the dead in Christ Jesus my LORD (Rom. 6:4). Over forty years ago this happened, and never has the Spirit left or forsaken me. God is more real to me than anyone or anything existing.

32 Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven.

33 But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven.

34 Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword.

35 For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter in law against her mother in law.

36 And a man's foes shall be they of his own household.

37 He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me.

38 And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me.

39 He that findeth his life shall lose it: and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it. (Matt. 10:32-39 KJV)

So why reveal my conversion experience? As a Cessationist I can't claim special revelation. I certainly am not a prophet. I study scripture to show myself approved (2 Tim. 2:15). I believe Scripture alone 100% true, is the **sole infallible source of authority for Christian faith and practice.**

Normally the regeneration experience revealed in scripture is "spiritually discerned" (1 Cor. 2:14-15; 1 John 2:29; 3:7) because it is "beyond the physical senses" in the realm of the "Holy Spirit to the human spirit". So why did God grace "I experientially know" Scripture is speaking of actual events when it reveals the new birth? I believe God wanted me to testify, without any doubt "scripture is true", that the **regeneration by the Holy Spirit is an event that is real in everyone who calls upon the name of the LORD. It is the SAME for EVERY born again believer whether they "felt something supernatural" or not.**

Everyone born from above knows a radical change has occurred. They now perceive God is their ABBA, and love for Him, His Truth the bible and His people has suddenly and exponentially increased. One perceives they have been born again, born from above. Its perception, not a physical feeling. It is spiritually discerned (2 Cor. 2:11-14)

11 For what man knows the things of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so no one knows the things of God except the Spirit of God.

12 Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things that have been freely given to us by God.

13 These things we also speak, not in words which man's wisdom teaches but which the Holy Spirit teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual.

14 But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. (1 Cor. 2:11-14 NKJ)

15 For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you

received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, "Abba, Father."

16 The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God. (Rom. 8:15-16 NKJ)

Every believer partakes of the divine nature (2Pet. 1:4) at regeneration, when the weak human spirit becomes "a new creature" "living man" born from above in Christ. Because that change occurs "Spirit to spirit" (Rom. 8:16), not in the flesh, the senses of the flesh are unaware of it. Just as we cannot "feel the soul existing in us", we cannot feel what is happening in our spirit apart from our flesh. So nothing is felt physically. If anyone believes a physical experience occurred when they were regenerated, they are putting "the cart before the horse". Their changed heart and mind may have caused the physical organ of the brain to produce the electro-chemicals creating the physical experience, but there is no real connection between the Holy Spirit and that physical sensation (Rom. 7:18). That explains why scripture NEVER identifies a physical experience as being the work of the Holy Spirit. Our physical regeneration must wait for the resurrection (1 Cor. 15:35-56).

The modern "new birth experience" also known as being "born again" is precisely the same experience the 3,000 had on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2:41-47). The outward "physical evidence" of their regeneration is evident by their devotion to God's truth and His people (1 John 2:29; 3:7). Nothing in the context implies they were inferior to the 120 saved that Day, even though the context proves tongues of fire and speaking in tongues did NOT happen to them because if it did it would be impossible not to state that in the context.

Hence it is written:

4 There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling;

5 one Lord, one faith, one baptism;

6 one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.

7 But to each one of us grace was given according to the measure of Christ's gift. (Eph. 4:4-7 NKJ)

Therefore, all born-again Christians receive the same baptism, same Holy Spirit, the one seal of God's approval, the same guarantee of our one inheritance after they believe (Eph. 1:13-14). But all receive different measure of power producing different gifts by the same Spirit (1 Cor. 12:4-30).

How much *grace* is received is according to God's will (Rom. 12:3-8). Only Jesus's human nature received the Holy Spirit without measure (John 3:34). The NT does not command believers seek "a second blessing". It commands repentance, turning from everything displeasing to God, and so be "filled with the Holy Spirit" (Eph. 5:18).

Even on the Day of Pentecost, the time of maximum manifestation of God the Holy Spirit, the new birth experience was the same for every believer. "Those who... were baptized... were added to them" saved (Acts 2:41). That the salvation experience affected all equally is evident by the signs and wonders uniquely done by the Apostles caused the same "fear...upon every soul" (Acts 2:43). "Now all who believed were together" (Ac. 2:44), the 120 and 3000 having "all things in common". Different "classes" of Christians are not seen in the context, on the contrary it is expressly stated they all are "one in Christ". Therefore, the unique group of Jews chosen by Christ before His crucifixion who alone had special revelatory gifts, received these as a special addition, not part of salvation experience which all Christians have in common.

Corroborating the 120 were uniquely graced with special revelation from God, and not the rest of the Church is Paul's express denial Corinthian prophecy tongues and knowledge was "the word of God" (1 Cor. 14:36), unlike what Paul was writing to them (1 Cor. 14:37). Confirming its human origin, it could be revised by other "prophets" (1 Cor. 14:32) without the "prophet" thereby becoming a "false prophet" and cast out of the Church.

26 How is it then, brethren? when ye come together, every one of you hath a psalm, hath a doctrine, hath a tongue, hath a revelation, hath an interpretation. Let all things be done unto edifying

...

32 And the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets.

...

36 What? came the word of God out from you? or came it unto you only?

37 If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord.

38 But if any man be ignorant, let him be ignorant. (1 Cor. 14:26, 36-38 KJV)

As the word of God was not in Corinthian prophecy, tongues when interpreted, or knowledge; it was not more inspired than Christian preaching and teaching today, or in any age of the church.

It is clear none of the 120 "founding apostles and prophets" were among those in Corinth, or Paul would have greeted them in this epistle. Except for Tongues which have ceased, what was happening in Corinth happens today in Bible believing churches, when the Word of God is heard through pastors teachers, or in Bible Study. True "prophesying" or "forth telling" is Bible exposition. While it is true God the Holy Spirit guides every believer, its also true we have free will and receive this guidance in earthen vessels. Therefore, we often get it wrong (2 Cor. 4:7). That is why the "spirits of the prophets" must be subject to the prophets (1 Cor. 14:32-33), those who can faithfully exposit scripture, because:

16 All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:
17 That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works. (2 Tim. 3:16-17 KJV)

The canon is closed, God's revelation is contained exclusively in the canon of 66 books that alone are universally received in the Christian Church, whether it is Orthodox, Catholic or Protestant. That is the only "Catholic" or "Universal" canon in existence today.

True prophecy today arises from sound Scriptural exegesis of this universally accepted canon of scripture. Therefore, I do have a "prophetic word" for prophets who sadden God's people (1 John 2:29; 3:7) saying "you must speak in tongues or you don't have the Holy Spirit." It is found in the Book of Ezekiel:

22 "Because with lies you have made the heart of the righteous sad, whom I have not made sad; and you have strengthened the hands of the wicked, so that he does not turn from his wicked way to save his life.

23 "Therefore you shall no longer envision futility nor practice divination; for I will deliver My people out of your hand, and you shall know that I am the LORD."'" (Ezek. 13:22-23 NKJ)

Hear the word of the prophet Isaiah:

*3 Do not let the son of the foreigner
Who has joined himself to the LORD Speak, saying,
"The LORD has utterly separated me from His people";
Nor let the eunuch say, "Here I am, a dry tree."*

*4 For thus says the LORD: "To the eunuchs who keep My Sabbaths, And choose what pleases Me, And hold fast My covenant,
5 Even to them I will give in My house And within My walls a place and a name Better than that of sons and daughters; I will give them an everlasting name That shall not be cut off.*

6 "Also the sons of the foreigner Who join themselves to the LORD, to serve Him, And to love the name of the LORD, to be His servants— Everyone who keeps from defiling the Sabbath, And holds fast My covenant—

7 Even them I will bring to My holy mountain, And make them joyful in My house of prayer. Their burnt offerings and their sacrifices Will be accepted on My altar; For My house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations." (Isa. 56:3-7 NKJ)

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