

FROM BOTTLE TO BREAD



A CALL TO MATURITY IN THE
APOSTOLIC PENTECOSTAL CHURCH

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Written by
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Introduction

- **Overview of the Metaphor:** Explain the metaphor of “the bottle - the baby - the bassinet” as a representation of spiritual immaturity in the church.
- **Purpose of the Book:** To challenge local Apostolic Pentecostal churches to move beyond basic teachings and embrace spiritual maturity.
- **Importance of Spiritual Growth:** Discuss the necessity of growth in faith for both individual believers and the church as a whole.
- **Vision Statement:** Articulate a vision for a mature church that actively engages in discipleship, community, and outreach.

Chapter 1 The Bottle

Content:

Below is a detailed exploration of the metaphor of “the bottle” in relation to Apostolic Pentecostal saints who are still on milk. This section includes metaphorical insights, Hebrew meanings, a parable, a riddle, idioms, and poetic elements from the Old Testament.

The Bottle:

Metaphorical Insights and Hebrew Meaning

Metaphorical Insight

In the context of the Apostolic Pentecostal church, “the bottle” symbolizes a state of spiritual infancy where believers are reliant on basic teachings and doctrines. This metaphor reflects the idea that many saints remain in a position of dependence, consuming “milk” instead of progressing to “solid food” (Hebrews 5:12-14). The bottle serves as a reminder of the nourishment needed for growth but also highlights the danger of complacency and stagnation in one’s spiritual journey.

Hebrew Meaning

In Hebrew, the word for “bottle” (בִּקְבֹּקֶב, *bakbuk*) can also connote containment and limitation. It represents something that holds and preserves but can also restrict. This duality is significant for believers who may be contained within the confines of basic teachings, unable to break free and grow into the fullness of their faith.

The idea of being “on the bottle” evokes the image of a child who is nurtured but not yet able to feed themselves. This reflects a lack of maturity and understanding, as seen in the admonition of Paul in 1 Corinthians 3:1-2, where he addresses the Corinthians as “babes in Christ” who need milk rather than solid

food.

The Parable of the Milk and the Bread

In a small village, there lived a wise elder who provided nourishment to the children. Each day, he offered them milk, which they eagerly drank. As they grew, some children began to ask for bread, desiring the hearty sustenance that would give them strength for their adventures.

The elder smiled and said, “Children, the milk is good for your beginnings, but it is the bread that will sustain you for the journey ahead. If you remain on milk, you will never know the fullness of life.”

One day, a curious child asked, “But Elder, why must we leave the milk?” The elder replied, “The milk will nourish you for a time, but the bread will give you strength and wisdom. Do not fear to grow, for the journey is where you will find your purpose.”

This parable illustrates the necessity of moving beyond basic teachings (the milk) to embrace deeper truths (the bread) that will sustain spiritual growth and maturity.

Riddle of the Bottle

“I hold what you need, but I limit your reach,
In my warm embrace, you find comfort and peace.
What am I, that keeps you from growing,
A vessel of milk, while your spirit is slowing?”

Answer: The Bottle.

This riddle encapsulates the dual nature of the bottle—it provides comfort and nourishment but also restricts growth and maturity.

Idioms

- “To be on the bottle” (קוֹבֵקֵבָה לַע תוֹיָהֶל): This idiom conveys the idea of being dependent and lacking maturity, much like a child who relies on a bottle for nourishment.
- “To drink from the cup of knowledge” (סוֹכֵם תוֹתָשֶׁל (תַּעֲדָה): This idiom emphasizes the importance of consuming knowledge and wisdom to grow beyond the basics.

Poetic Elements from the Old Testament

The Old Testament is rich in poetic language that speaks to the themes of growth, nourishment, and maturity. Here are a few examples that can be woven into the discussion:

1. Psalm 119:103: “How sweet are Your words to my taste, sweeter than honey to my mouth!”

- This verse poetically illustrates the sweetness of God’s Word, which nourishes the soul and invites believers to seek deeper understanding.

2. Proverbs 4:7: “Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom: and with all thy getting get understanding.”

- This verse emphasizes the importance of pursuing wisdom, suggesting that believers should seek to move beyond the simplistic understanding of faith.

3. Ecclesiastes 3:1: “To everything, there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven.”

- This poetic insight reflects the natural progression of life and growth, indicating that there is a time to move from milk to solid food in one’s spiritual journey.

Conclusion

The metaphor of “the bottle” serves as a poignant reminder for Apostolic Pentecostal saints in the local church to evaluate their spiritual maturity. While the bottle provides essential nourishment for growth, it should not be a permanent fixture in their lives. Believers are called to transition from milk to the bread of deeper truths, embracing the fullness of

their faith and stepping into maturity.

By utilizing parables, riddles, idioms, and poetic expressions, we can better understand the importance of moving beyond spiritual infancy and seeking the richness of a mature relationship with God.

This section encapsulates the metaphor of “the bottle” while incorporating various literary elements and cultural insights.

- **Definition of “The Bottle”:** Explain how the bottle represents foundational doctrines, akin to “milk” (Hebrews 5:12-14).
- **Spiritual Implications:** Discuss the dangers of remaining on milk, including stagnation, lack of depth in faith, and vulnerability to false teachings.
- **Illustrative Parable:** The Parable of the Sower (Matthew 13:1-23) emphasizes the need for deep roots to withstand life’s challenges.
- **Personal Reflection:** Encourage readers to assess their own spiritual diet—are they consuming milk or seeking solid food?

Contextual Insights:

- **Historical Context:** Explore the early church’s struggles with foundational teachings and how they relate to today’s churches, including the challenges of

cultural relevance.

- Hebrew Idiom: “To drink from the cup of knowledge” (תַּעֲדָה סוּכָּה תוֹתֵּשׁ ל) underscores the importance of consuming knowledge for spiritual growth.
- Application: Provide practical steps for congregations to deepen their understanding of foundational doctrines.

Chapter 2

The Baby

Content:

Below is a comprehensive exploration of the metaphor of “the baby” in relation to the Apostolic Pentecostal church today. This section includes metaphorical insights, Hebrew and Greek meanings, relevant scriptures, parables, riddles, and poetic elements, all woven together to illustrate the need for spiritual maturity and the necessity of hard-hitting preaching.

The Baby:

Metaphorical Insights and Scriptural Connections

Metaphorical Insight

In the context of the Apostolic Pentecostal church,

“the baby” symbolizes spiritual immaturity and dependence. Many believers today desire to be coddled, held, and comforted in their faith, often seeking soothing messages rather than challenging truths. This metaphor reflects a reluctance to confront difficult teachings that are essential for spiritual growth and maturity.

The baby represents a stage where one is reliant on others for spiritual nourishment and lacks the ability to discern deeper truths. This state can lead to complacency and a failure to grow into the fullness of faith.

Hebrew and Greek Meanings

- **Hebrew Meaning of “Baby”:** The Hebrew word for baby is תַּלְמִיד (talmid), which means “student” or “learner.” This term emphasizes the idea of someone who is in the process of learning and growing but also implies a level of dependency on a teacher.
- **Greek Meaning of “Baby”:** The Greek word for baby is νηπιος (nepios), meaning “infant” or “child.” This term conveys the idea of someone who is immature and unable to speak or reason, highlighting the need for guidance and instruction.

Scriptural References

Old Testament:

1. Psalm 131:2: “Surely I have calmed and quieted my soul, like a weaned child with his mother; like a weaned child is my soul within me.”

- This verse reflects the need for spiritual growth from a state of dependency to a place of contentment and maturity.

2. Isaiah 28:9-10: “Whom will he teach knowledge? And whom will he make to understand the message? Those just weaned from milk? Those drawn from the breasts? For precept must be upon precept, line upon line, here a little, there a little.”

- This passage illustrates the necessity of moving beyond basic teachings (milk) to deeper understanding.

New Testament:

1. 1 Corinthians 3:1-2: “And I, brethren, could not speak to you as to spiritual people but as to carnal, as to babes in Christ. I fed you with milk and not with solid food; for until now you were not able to receive it, and even now you are still not able.”

- Paul addresses the Corinthians as “babes in Christ,” indicating their spiritual immaturity and inability to handle deeper truths.

2. Hebrews 5:12-14: “For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the first principles of the oracles of God; and you have come to need milk and not solid food.”

- This passage emphasizes the expectation of growth and maturity among believers.

The Parable of the Cradled Child

In a village, there was a child who loved to be cradled and sung to by his mother. He would cry if she tried to set him down, preferring the comfort of her arms to the challenges of the world outside. One day, a wise elder approached the mother and said, “Your child must learn to walk, for the world awaits him.”

“But he is so comfortable here,” she replied.

The elder responded, “Comfort is good for a time, but it will not prepare him for the journey ahead. He must face the challenges of life to grow strong.”

This parable illustrates the danger of remaining in a state of spiritual infancy, where comfort is prioritized over the challenges necessary for growth.

Riddle of the Baby

“I am held and cherished, wrapped in love’s

embrace, But if I stay too long, I lose my rightful place. What am I, that needs to grow and learn, To leave the cradle and take my turn?"

Answer: The Baby.

This riddle encapsulates the need for growth and the danger of remaining in a state of dependency.

Poetic Insights

Poetic Reflection on Spiritual Infancy

In the cradle of comfort, the baby does lay, Wrapped in soft blankets, where worries drift away. But the world calls with challenges, the path is not clear, To grow is to struggle, to face every fear.

Milk nourishes gently, but bread gives the strength, To walk in the light, to go any length. Oh, to be weaned from the bottle's sweet hold, Is to step into purpose, to be brave and bold.

The Need for Hard-Hitting Preaching

In the Apostolic Pentecostal church today, there is a pressing need for hard-hitting preaching that challenges believers to grow beyond their infantile state. Here are some essential tools for effective

preaching:

1. The Hammer: Represents the forceful and transformative nature of preaching that breaks down strongholds and challenges complacency.

- Hebrew Word: מַכְבֵּל (makbel) meaning “to break” or “to shatter.”

- Scriptural Reference: Jeremiah 23:29: “Is not My word like a fire? And like a hammer that breaks the rock in pieces?”

2. The Sword: Symbolizes the Word of God as a tool for discernment, cutting through falsehoods and revealing truth.

- Hebrew Word: חֶרֶב (cherev) meaning “sword.”

- Scriptural Reference: Hebrews 4:12: “For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit.”

3. The Fire: Represents purification and the refining process that believers must undergo to grow in faith.

- Hebrew Word: אֵשׁ (esh) meaning “fire.”

- Scriptural Reference: Malachi 3:2-3: “But who can endure the day of His coming? And who can stand when He appears? For He is like a refiner’s fire.”

Examples of Spiritual Infancy in Scripture

1. The Israelites in the Wilderness: Despite witnessing miracles, they often complained and demonstrated a lack of faith (Exodus 16-17). Their desire for comfort led to a failure to trust God.
2. Peter's Denial: Peter, despite being a disciple, displayed moments of spiritual immaturity when he denied Christ (Matthew 26:69-75). His fear and reliance on his own strength revealed a need for deeper faith.
3. The Church in Corinth: Paul rebukes the Corinthians for their divisions and immaturity, highlighting their need for growth (1 Corinthians 3:1-3).

Conclusion

The metaphor of “the baby” serves as a critical reminder for Apostolic Pentecostal saints to recognize their spiritual state. While the desire for comfort and reassurance is natural, it is imperative to embrace the hard-hitting preaching that challenges and equips believers for growth.

By understanding the Hebrew and Greek meanings, drawing from scriptural examples, and utilizing parables and riddles, we can illustrate the necessity of moving from spiritual infancy to maturity. Only

through facing the challenges of faith can we grow into the fullness of what God has called us to be.

This comprehensive exploration of “the baby” metaphor includes various literary and cultural elements to enrich the understanding of spiritual maturity in the Apostolic Pentecostal context. If you have any specific areas you would like to expand upon or additional themes to explore, please let me know!

- Symbolism of “The Baby”: Discuss how spiritual immaturity is akin to being a baby in Christ, reliant on others for growth.
- Consequences of Immaturity: Address the dangers of being spiritually dependent, including vulnerability to false teachings and lack of personal responsibility in faith.
- Fable: The Tortoise and the Hare illustrates that steady, consistent growth leads to maturity.
- Personal Testimony: Share stories of individuals who transitioned from spiritual infancy to maturity.

Contextual Insights:

- Examples from the Church: Highlight modern-day examples of believers who remain spiritually immature, including common pitfalls and distractions.
- Hebrew Proverb: “A child who is not taught is like a tree without roots” (עץ לֹא־נִסְּךְ וְלֹא־נִסְּךְ וְלֹא־נִסְּךְ), emphasizing

the importance of nurturing spiritual growth.

- Action Items: Suggest ways for individuals to take ownership of their spiritual growth, such as personal study and accountability partnerships.

Chapter 3

The Bassinet

Content:

Below is a comprehensive exploration of the metaphor of “the bassinet” as it relates to Apostolic Pentecostal saints who still desire the comfort and security of a bassinet. This section includes metaphorical insights, parables, riddles, scriptural references, and poetic-prophetic meanings, all woven together to illustrate the implications of remaining in a state of spiritual immaturity.

The Bassinet:

Metaphorical Insights

Metaphorical Insight

In the context of the Apostolic Pentecostal church, “the bassinet” symbolizes a state of spiritual comfort and safety, but it also represents stagnation and dependency. Many believers today seek the security of a bassinet, preferring to remain in a state of

spiritual infancy rather than embracing the challenges necessary for growth.

The bassinet provides a confined, cozy space where one feels protected, but it can also limit movement and exploration. This metaphor serves as a warning against complacency, highlighting the need for believers to step out of their comfort zones and engage in the deeper aspects of their faith.

The Parable of the Cozy Bassinet

In a quaint village, there was a young child who loved to be in her bassinet. The soft blankets and gentle rocking lulled her into a peaceful sleep. Her parents adored her and often sang sweet lullabies, ensuring she felt safe and loved.

One day, a wise elder visited and observed the child in her bassinet. He said, “Dear child, the world outside is filled with wonders. If you stay here, you will never know the beauty of the sun or the joy of running in the fields.”

“But I am happy here,” the child replied, snuggling deeper into the blankets.

The elder responded, “Comfort is good for a season, but it must not be your forever. The bassinet may

cradle you, but it can also confine you. There is a time to grow, to explore, and to embrace the challenges of life.”

This parable illustrates the danger of remaining in a state of spiritual comfort, where the desire for security can hinder growth and exploration of faith.

Riddle of the Bassinet

“I cradle the young, in softness I dwell, A haven of comfort, where all seems well. But if you stay too long, what will you miss? The wonders of life, the joy and the bliss. What am I, that holds you close and tight, Yet keeps you from growing into the light?”

Answer: The Bassinet.

This riddle encapsulates the dual nature of the bassinet—it provides comfort but can also restrict growth.

Scriptural References

Old Testament:

1. Psalm 23:2: “He makes me lie down in green pastures; He leads me beside still waters.”

- This verse reflects the comfort and peace that God

provides, akin to the security of a bassinet. However, it also emphasizes the need for guidance toward growth.

2. Isaiah 40:11: “He will feed His flock like a shepherd; He will gather the lambs with His arm, and carry them in His bosom.”

- This passage illustrates God’s nurturing nature but also points to the need for believers to grow beyond being carried and nurtured.

New Testament:

1. Ephesians 4:14: “That we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine.”

- Paul encourages believers to move beyond childishness and seek maturity in their faith.

2. 1 Peter 2:2: “As newborn babes, desire the pure milk of the word, that you may grow thereby.”

- While this verse acknowledges the need for initial nourishment, it also implies the expectation of growth beyond infancy.

Poetic-Prophetic Insights

In the bassinet of comfort, the saints do lay, Wrapped in soft teachings, where fears drift away. Yet the call

to maturity beckons from afar, To rise from the cradle
and reach for the stars.

Oh, the bassinet cradles, but it also confines, To stay
in its warmth is to ignore the designs. For outside the
blankets, the world waits to see, The strength of the
Spirit, the boldness to be.

Hebrew and Greek Idioms

- Hebrew Idiom: “To dwell in the bosom” (קִרְבִּי בְּשֵׁל) signifies a state of closeness and comfort, but it can also imply a lack of growth.
- Greek Idiom: “To be tossed like a child” (νηπίος, nepios) reflects the instability of remaining in a state of spiritual immaturity, easily swayed by external influences.

Conclusion

The metaphor of “the bassinet” serves as a critical reminder for Apostolic Pentecostal saints to evaluate their spiritual state. While the desire for comfort and reassurance is natural, it is essential to recognize the limitations of remaining in a state of dependency.

Through the use of parables, riddles, scriptural references, and poetic insights, we can illustrate the necessity of moving from spiritual infancy to

maturity. The call to step out of the bassinet is a call to embrace the fullness of faith, engage in the challenges of life, and grow into the people God has called us to be.

This comprehensive exploration of “the bassinet” metaphor includes various literary and cultural elements to enrich the understanding of spiritual maturity in the Apostolic Pentecostal context. If you’d like to expand on any specific area or add additional themes, please let me know!

- Definition of “The Bassinet”: Describe the bassinet as a symbol of comfort and safety, but also of stagnation.
- Dangers of Complacency: Discuss how comfort can lead to a lack of spiritual challenge and growth.
- Riddle: “What comforts yet confines, nurtures yet neglects, holds you close but keeps you small?” This highlights the dual nature of the bassinet.
- Call to Action: Encourage believers to step out of their comfort zones and engage in challenging spiritual practices.

Contextual Insights:

- Historical Reflection: Compare the Israelites’ comfort in the wilderness with the comfort found in modern churches, exploring the consequences of

spiritual stagnation.

- Hebrew Idiom: “To sit in the shade” (לִיָּצֵב בַּיָּשָׁל) signifies complacency and the need for action.
- Practical Steps: Provide suggestions for how churches can create environments that challenge comfort and promote growth.

Chapter 4

New Testament Examples

Content:

- Church in Jerusalem (Acts 2): Initially vibrant but faced issues of division and hypocrisy (Acts 5:1-11). Discuss the implications of Ananias and Sapphira’s deception.
- Church in Corinth

Below is a detailed exploration of the Corinthian church’s carnal state, particularly in relation to their spiritual immaturity despite having experienced significant spiritual events such as water baptism in Jesus’ name, the baptism of the Holy Ghost, and the operation of spiritual gifts. This section includes the gifts of the Spirit, the fivefold ministry, and the apostles that the Corinthian saints compared themselves too.

The Church in Corinth: *Carnality and Spiritual Immaturity*

Context of the Corinthian Church

The Corinthian church, established by the Apostle Paul, was a vibrant community that had experienced significant spiritual events, including:

- **Water Baptism in Jesus' Name:** This practice emphasized the importance of identifying with Christ's death and resurrection.
- **Baptism in the Holy Ghost:** The church members had received the Holy Spirit, evidenced by speaking in tongues (Acts 2:4).
- **Operation of Spiritual Gifts:** The gifts of the Spirit were in operation among the believers, demonstrating God's power and presence.

Despite these spiritual experiences, the Corinthian church struggled with carnality, divisions, and immaturity. Paul addressed these issues in his letters, calling them "babes in Christ" (1 Corinthians 3:1-3).

Spiritual Gifts in the Corinthian Church

The gifts of the Spirit mentioned in 1 Corinthians 12:7-11 include:

1. Word of Wisdom (λόγος σοφίας, *logos sophias*): The ability to apply knowledge in practical situations.
2. Word of Knowledge (λόγος γνώσεως, *logos gnoseos*): Insight into spiritual truths and mysteries.
3. Faith (πίστις, *pistis*): A special endowment of faith that enables believers to trust God for the impossible.
4. Gifts of Healing (χαρίσματα ιαμάτων, *charismata iamaton*): The ability to heal physical, emotional, or spiritual ailments.
5. Working of Miracles (ἐνεργήματα δυνάμεων, *energēmata dynamēōn*): The ability to perform miraculous acts through God's power.
6. Prophecy (προφητεία, *propheteia*): The ability to speak forth God's message for encouragement, edification, or correction.
7. Discerning of Spirits (διάκρισις πνευμάτων, *diakrisis pneumatōn*): The ability to distinguish between true and false spirits.
8. Different Kinds of Tongues (γένη γλωσσών, *genē glossōn*): The ability to speak in various languages or dialects, often used in worship or prayer.

9. Interpretation of Tongues (ἑρμηνεία γλωσσῶν, hermēneia glossōn): The ability to interpret the message given in tongues for the edification of the church.

The Fivefold Ministry Gifts

In Ephesians 4:11-13, Paul outlines the fivefold ministry gifts that are essential for the growth and maturity of the church:

1. Apostles (ἀπόστολοι, apostoloi): Those sent to establish and oversee churches, often bearing the foundational message of the Gospel.

2. Prophets (προφῆτες, prophetai): Those who speak on behalf of God, providing direction and encouragement to the church.

3. Evangelists (εὐαγγελιστές, euangelistai): Those who proclaim the Gospel and bring people to faith in Christ.

4. Pastors (ποιμένες, poimenes): Shepherds who care for and guide the local church community.

5. Teachers (διδάσκαλοι, didaskaloi): Those who instruct and educate believers in the truths of Scripture.

Carnality and Comparison Among Apostles

The Corinthian saints were known for their divisions and comparisons among leaders, often saying, “I am of Paul,” “I am of Apollos,” or “I am of Cephas” (1 Corinthians 1:12). This behavior reflected their immaturity and carnal mindset.

1. Paul (Παῦλος, Paulos): The founding apostle of the Corinthian church who emphasized grace and unity.
2. Apollos (Ἀπολλῶς, Apollōs): An eloquent speaker and teacher who was well-versed in the Scriptures and had a significant following.
3. Cephas (Κηφᾶς, Kēphas): Also known as Peter, one of the original apostles, who represented the Jewish roots of the faith.

The comparisons among these apostles demonstrated the Corinthians’ lack of understanding of the unity of the body of Christ and their dependence on human leaders rather than on the Holy Spirit.

Conclusion

The Corinthian church serves as a powerful example of how spiritual experiences do not automatically equate to spiritual maturity. Despite being baptized in

Jesus' name, receiving the Holy Ghost, and operating in spiritual gifts, the believers struggled with carnality and division.

Paul's admonitions highlight the importance of moving beyond spiritual infancy and embracing the full measure of Christ's gifts for growth and unity within the church. The fivefold ministry and the gifts of the Spirit are vital for equipping the saints and fostering a mature, vibrant church that reflects the character of Christ.

(1 Corinthians): Known for divisions and immorality; Paul rebukes them for being "carnal" (1 Corinthians 3:1-3). Highlight the need for unity and love.

- Church in Galatia (Galatians): Struggled with legalism and returning to basic elements of the law (Galatians 4:9). Discuss the implications of grace versus law.
- Church in Ephesus

Below is a detailed exploration of the Church of Ephesus as described in Acts 19, the significance of water baptism, the baptism of the Holy Ghost, and the relationship between belief in Jesus and the reception of the Holy Spirit, particularly emphasizing the Apostolic Pentecostal perspective.

The Church of Ephesus: Baptism and the Holy Ghost

Context in Acts 19

In Acts 19, the Apostle Paul encounters some disciples in Ephesus and asks them a critical question:

Acts 19:2: “He said to them, ‘Did you receive the Holy Ghost since you believed?’ So they said to him, ‘We have not so much as heard whether there is a Holy Ghost.’”

This passage reveals that these disciples had a belief in Jesus but lacked being born of the Holy Ghost with the evidence of speaking in tongues which is an essential part of the plan of salvation. Paul then discovers that they had only received John’s baptism, which was a baptism of repentance but did not include the baptism in the name of the name of the Lord Jesus Christ for the remission of sins. Simply, just believing upon Jesus and repentance does not save you! They had not yet received the the Holy Ghost with the evidence of speaking in tongues. What must I do to be saved? (Acts 2:37). Read and obey Acts 2:38.

Re-baptism in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ for the remission of sins is essential to bible salvation, this is to be born of the water as stated in John 3:3-8 and Mark 16:16-17. This is not optional. Those who have been baptized in the titles Father - Son - Holy

Ghost. You need to be re-baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ for the remission of sins or else you will die lost and go to Hell fire and then to the lake of fire according to the bible.

Acts 19:3-5: “And he said, ‘Into what then were you baptized?’ So they said, ‘Into John’s baptism.’ Then Paul said, ‘John indeed baptized with a baptism of repentance, saying to the people that they should believe on Him who would come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus.’ When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.”

This passage emphasizes the necessity of being baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, as opposed to merely undergoing John’s baptism. Paul’s action of re-baptizing them highlights a key doctrinal point: proper baptism is essential for the believer’s experience of salvation.

The Baptism of the Holy Ghost with the Evidence of Speaking in Tongues

Following their re-baptism, Paul lays hands on them, and they receive the Holy Spirit:

Acts 19:6: “And when Paul had laid hands on them, the Holy Spirit came upon them, and they spoke with tongues and prophesied.”

This event underscores the Apostolic Pentecostal belief that the initial evidence of receiving the Holy Spirit is speaking in tongues. It demonstrates that receiving the Holy Ghost is a distinct experience that follows belief and baptism.

The Holy Ghost and Fire with the Evidence of Speaking in Tongues: Essential to Salvation and Service (Acts 1:4-8)

The experience of the Ephesians illustrates a critical Apostolic Pentecostal Truth concerning real Bible Salvation according to Acts 2:38. Simply, believing in Jesus does not automatically grant one the Holy Ghost, that's false teaching. While belief is essential, the Baptism of the Spirit is evidenced by speaking in tongues. There is only one Baptism in the spirit with the evidence of speaking in tongues. This is when you are truly Born of the spirit with the sign of sonship.

John 1:29: "The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, 'Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!'"

This verse affirms the belief in Jesus as the Messiah but does not imply the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

The Significance of Speaking in Tongues

In the Apostolic Pentecostal tradition, speaking in tongues is seen as the sign of the baptism of the Holy Ghost. This belief is rooted in several key points:

1. Evidence of Sonship: Speaking in tongues is the initial evidence of receiving the Holy Ghost, marking the Apostolic Pentecostal believer's sign as a child of God, or "Sonship." This aligns with Romans 8:9-16; 26-27: "The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God." The blood witness is speaking in tongues

2. Birthright and First Fruits: The Holy Ghost is the "earnest" or "first fruits" of our inheritance (Ephesians 1:13-14 -19; Romans 8:23). This means that the Holy Ghost is the guarantee of Salvation of the Apostolic Pentecostal believer's future in heaven and his inheritance in the Lord Jesus Christ

3. Fire and Empowerment: The reference to the Holy Ghost and fire (Matthew 3:11) signifies purification and empowerment for service. The fire represents the Regeneration work of the Holy Ghost in the life of the Apostolic Pentecostal Believer.

Summary

The Church of Ephesus, as described in Acts 19, illustrates the essential connection between

water baptism in the name of Jesus, the baptism of the Holy Ghost, and the evidence of speaking in tongues. While belief in Jesus is foundational, it is the reception of the Holy Spirit that signifies the believer's full experience of salvation and the sign of sonship is speaking in tongues

The events in Ephesus serve as a reminder of the importance of proper baptism and the necessity of seeking the fullness of the Holy Spirit in the life of every believer. Speaking in tongues is viewed not just as an experience but as a vital sign of the believer's identity in Christ and their empowerment for service in the Kingdom of God.

(Revelation 2:1-7): Lost their first love, indicating a decline in spiritual fervor. Discuss the importance of passion in faith.

Contextual Insights:

- **Analysis of Challenges:** Discuss how these churches faced challenges that hindered their spiritual growth, including cultural pressures and internal conflicts.
- **Hebrew Idiom:** “To build on sand” (לֵעָמוּד תִּבְנֶה) signifies the futility of relying on unstable foundations.
- **Lessons Learned:** Summarize key lessons from each

church that can be applied today.

Chapter 5

Old Testament Insights

Content:

Expanding on the metaphor of the bottle, babies, and bassinets in relation to the Old Testament church (the community of God's people), we can delve deeper into the themes of nurturing, community, and spiritual growth.

The Bottle

The Church as a Container of Faith

Metaphorical Insight:

- The Church as a Vessel: The community of believers can be seen as a collective "bottle" that contains the faith, teachings, and experiences of its members. Just as a bottle holds liquid, the church holds the living water of Christ's teachings, which nourishes and sustains its members.

Poetic Reflection:

- "In the bottle of faith, we gather and blend, A tapestry woven, where broken hearts mend. Each

story a drop, each prayer a stream, Together we flow,
fulfilling the dream.”

Prophetic Insight:

- The Old Testament often emphasizes the importance of community and collective worship (e.g., in the Psalms and the gatherings of Israel). The church is called to be a container of God’s presence, where the community can experience His grace and share in His promises.

The Babies:

New Believers and Spiritual Growth

Metaphorical Insight:

- The Innocence of New Believers: Babies symbolize new believers who are just beginning their journey of faith. They represent the hope and potential within the church, reminding the community of the importance of nurturing and guiding those who are new to the faith.

Poetic Reflection:

- “In the cradle of faith, new lives take their
breath, Each baby a promise, each heart knows no
death. With tender hands, we guide their first steps, In

the arms of the church, love's promise adept.”

Prophetic Insight:

- The Old Testament frequently highlights the significance of teaching and guiding the next generation (Deuteronomy 6:6-7). The church is called to be a nurturing environment where spiritual infants can grow into mature believers, reflecting the importance of discipleship and mentorship.

The Bassinet:

A Place of Nurturing and Community Support

Metaphorical Insight:

- A Safe Haven for Growth: The bassinet represents the church as a safe and nurturing environment where believers can find comfort and support. It is a place where the community comes together to care for one another, fostering growth, healing, and love.

Poetic Reflection:

- “In the bassinet of grace, we find our embrace, A sanctuary of love, a welcoming space. Where laughter and tears are shared side by side, In the warmth of community, we no longer hide.”

Prophetic Insight:

- The Old Testament is replete with examples of communal support (e.g., the gathering of the Israelites in the wilderness, the sharing of resources in the early church). The bassinet symbolizes the church's role in providing a nurturing environment where believers can be cuddled in love, encouraged in their faith, and equipped to serve.

Conclusion

In this expanded reflection, the imagery of the bottle, babies, and bassinets not only speaks to individual faith and growth but also emphasizes the collective responsibility of the Old Testament church (and the modern church) to nurture, support, and guide its members. The church is called to be a vessel of faith, a nurturing environment for new believers, and a safe haven where love and grace abound.

These metaphors remind us of the importance of community in the journey of faith, where each member plays a vital role in the growth and well-being of the whole body, echoing the biblical principle that we are all part of one another (1 Corinthians 12:12-27).

- Israelites in the Wilderness: Despite miracles, they

remained spiritually immature, often complaining and failing to trust God (Exodus 16-17). Discuss the significance of their journey.

- Golden Calf Incident (Exodus 32): Demonstrates a lack of maturity and discernment, and the consequences of turning away from God.
- Prophets' Calls for Repentance: Prophets like Isaiah and Jeremiah called Israel back to deeper faith, emphasizing the need for spiritual renewal.
- Reflection on God's Faithfulness: Discuss how God's faithfulness contrasts with human unfaithfulness.

Contextual Insights:

- Allegory of the Journey: The Israelites' journey through the desert serves as an allegory for the spiritual journey of the church, illustrating the need to move from dependence to maturity.
- Hebrew Proverb: "A wise man learns from the mistakes of others" (מִיִּרְחָא לֵשׁ תוֹתָעוּטָם דְּחַל מִכָּח), emphasizing the importance of learning from biblical examples.
- Application: Encourage readers to reflect on their own journeys and identify areas needing growth.

Chapter 6

The Need for Hard-Hitting Preaching

Content:

In the context of an Apostolic Pentecostal church, the metaphor of being “on the bottle” speaks to the need for spiritual maturity and the importance of moving beyond basic teachings to deeper, more challenging truths. This can be particularly relevant when discussing the balance between nurturing new believers (the “babies”) and the necessity of hard-hitting preaching that calls the church to growth, accountability, and deeper faith.

The Need for Hard-Hitting Preaching

1. Moving Beyond Milk:

- **Spiritual Maturity:** The Apostle Paul, in Hebrews 5:12-14, emphasizes the need for believers to move beyond the “milk” of the word and onto “solid food.” In the Apostolic Pentecostal context, this means that while nurturing and comforting new believers is essential, there must also be a call to grow in understanding and application of the Word.

Poetic Reflection:

- “We’ve sipped from the bottle, our faith in a trance,
But the time has come for a deeper advance.
No longer just comfort, but challenge and call,
To rise up in power, to stand firm and tall.”

2. The Call to Apostolic Pentecostal Accountability:

The call to Apostolic Pentecostal accountability is a vital aspect of the church's mission and community life. Apostolic Pentecostal Accountability within the church fosters spiritual growth, encourages holiness, and strengthens the bonds among believers. It is rooted in the biblical principles of mutual support, correction, and encouragement found throughout Scripture. Here are some key elements of this call to accountability:

1. Biblical Foundation of Apostolic Pentecostal Accountability to your Pastor and fivefold ministry.

Scriptural Basis:

- Galatians 6:1-2: Paul instructs believers to restore those who fall into sin gently, bearing one another's burdens. This emphasizes the importance of community in maintaining holiness and supporting one another.
- James 5:16: James encourages believers to confess their sins to one another and pray for each other, highlighting the power of accountability in healing and spiritual growth.
- Matthew 18:15-17: Jesus outlines a process for addressing sin within the church, promoting reconciliation and accountability among members.

2. Personal Accountability to God

Call to Holiness:

- Every Apostolic Pentecostal Believer is called to live a life that reflects The Lord Jesus Christ's character. This requires personal accountability to God, where individuals regularly assess their spiritual health, seek forgiveness, and strive for holiness (1 Peter 1:15-16).
- 2 Corinthians 5:10 reminds Apostolic Pentecostal Believers that they will all stand before the judgment seat of Christ, emphasizing the importance of living a life worthy of their calling.

3. Mutual Accountability Among Apostolic Pentecostal Believers

Building a Supportive Community:

- The Church is designed to function as a body, where each member supports and holds one another accountable (1 Corinthians 12:12-27). This mutual accountability fosters a sense of belonging and encourages spiritual growth.
- Hebrews 10:24-25 encourages believers to spur one another on toward love and good deeds, emphasizing the importance of gathering together for mutual encouragement and accountability.

4. Apostolic Pentecostal Fivefold ministers Leadership Apostolic Accountability

Call for Fivefold Ministers and Saints Leaders to
Model Apostolic Pentecostal Accountability:

- Apostolic Pentecostal Church Fivefold Ministry leaders, including pastors and ministers, are called to be examples of accountability. They should model transparency, humility, and integrity in their leadership (1 Timothy 3:1-7).
- James 3:1 warns that teachers will be judged more strictly, highlighting the responsibility leaders have to uphold the truth and maintain accountability within the church.

5. Corrective Apostolic Pentecostal Accountability

Addressing Sin and Error:

- The Apostolic Pentecostal Church must be willing to confront sin within its ranks, doing so in love and with the goal of restoration (Galatians 6:1). This corrective Apostolic Pentecostal Accountability is essential for maintaining the purity and integrity of the church.
- 2 Timothy 4:2 calls for preaching the Word, being prepared to correct, rebuke, and encourage, which underscores the need for accountability in teaching

and doctrine.

6. Encouragement and Support

Apostolic Pentecostal Preaching and Teaching Creates A Culture of Grace and Mercy

- Apostolic Pentecostal Accountability should be approached with grace and love. The goal is not condemnation but restoration and growth. Apostolic Pentecostal Believers should encourage one another and celebrate victories in their spiritual journeys (Romans 15:1-2).
- Ephesians 4:15 encourages speaking the truth in love, which is essential for maintaining healthy accountability relationships.

Conclusion

The Call to Apostolic Pentecostal Accountability is a vital aspect of the Apostolic Pentecostal church's mission to foster spiritual maturity and community. It involves personal accountability to God, mutual support among Apostolic Pentecostal Believers, and a commitment to corrective action when necessary.

By cultivating a culture of Apostolic Pentecostal accountability rooted in love, grace, and truth, the Apostolic Pentecostal church can effectively fulfill

its mission, grow in holiness, and impact the world for Christ. This accountability is not merely a set of rules but a relational commitment to walk alongside one another in faith, encouraging each other to grow deeper in their relationship with God and to live out the principles of the Gospel.

- **Confronting Sin and Complacency:** Hard-hitting Apostolic Pentecostal Preaching serves to confront sin, complacency, and spiritual apathy within the church. It challenges believers to examine their lives and align themselves with the teachings of Jesus and the apostles. This is crucial for both individual and corporate spiritual health.

Poetic Reflection:

- “In the shadows of comfort, complacency creeps, But the voice of the prophet, the truth boldly speaks. No more sugar-coated, let the fire ignite, For in the heat of the message, we find our true light.”

3. Equipping for Service:

- **Empowering the Apostolic Pentecostal Church:** A strong, prophetic voice in preaching equips the congregation to be effective witnesses and servants in their communities. It inspires believers to take action, to engage in ministry, and to fulfill the Great

Commission (Mark 16.15-16-17).

Poetic Reflection:

- “With hearts set ablaze by the Word that we hear,
We rise up as warriors, casting out fear.
No longer just babies, but soldiers in grace,
Ready to share love, to run in the race.”

Balancing Comfort with Challenge

1. Nurturing New Apostolic Pentecostal Believers:

- While hard-hitting preaching is essential, it must be balanced with the nurturing aspect of ministry. New believers need the comfort and support of the church community, akin to being cuddled in a bassinet. This nurturing environment is vital for their growth and development in faith.

Poetic Reflection:

- “In the cradle of love, we hold them so tight,
With arms of compassion, we guide them to light.
But as they grow stronger, let the truth be our guide,
For comfort and challenge must walk side by side.”

2. Building a Strong Apostolic Pentecostal Church Community:

- The Apostolic Pentecostal Church should create a culture where hard truths can be spoken in love,

and where Apostolic Pentecostal believers feel safe to grow, ask questions, and wrestle with their faith. This encourages a vibrant community that is both nurturing and challenging.

Poetic Reflection:

- “In the family of Apostolic Pentecostal Faith, we gather as one, With laughter and tears, in the warmth of the sun. Let us preach with boldness, yet love with our hearts, For the strength of the church is where grace never departs.”

Conclusion

In the Apostolic Pentecostal church, the call for hard-hitting Apostolic Pentecostal Preaching is a crucial aspect of spiritual growth and maturity. While it is vital to nurture and comfort new believers, the church must also challenge its members to grow deeper in their faith, confront sin, and equip them for service in the world.

This balance creates a vibrant community where believers can thrive—challenged by the Word and comforted by the love of the church. As the body of Christ, we are called to grow together, moving from spiritual infancy to maturity, ready to fulfill our God-given purpose in the world.

- **Necessity of Challenging Teachings:** Discuss how hard-hitting messages can foster spiritual growth and maturity.
- **Illustrative Garden Analogy:** Compare the Apostolic Pentecostal Church to a garden; without pruning, the plants may become overgrown and unfruitful.
- **Examples of Effective Preaching:** Highlight examples of preachers who have successfully challenged their congregations and the results of that challenge.
- **Call for Courage:** Encourage pastors and leaders to have the courage to preach truthfully and lovingly.

Contextual Insights:

- **Cultural Challenges:** Address the cultural pressures that lead to watered-down preaching and how to combat them.
- **Hebrew Idiom:** “To sharpen the sword” (תַּחַרְוּ הַחֶרֶב) signifies the need for preparation and challenge in preaching.
- **Practical Steps for Leaders:** Offer suggestions for how Apostolic Pentecostal Church leaders can implement more challenging and engaging preaching styles.

Conclusion

Content:

The Apostolic Pentecostal movement emphasizes a dynamic faith that calls Apostolic Pentecostal believers to action, rooted in the examples of leaders from both the Old and New Testaments. Below is a list of key figures from the Old Testament and the New Testament, particularly in the Book of Acts, who exemplified a call to action that resonates with the principles of Apostolic Pentecostalism.

Old Testament Leaders with a Call to Action

1. Moses

- **Call to Action:** Moses was called to lead the Israelites out of slavery in Egypt (Exodus 3:10). His leadership involved confronting Pharaoh, performing miracles, and guiding the people through the wilderness.
- **Apostolic Action:** Moses exemplified faith in action, responding to God's call and leading a movement of liberation and covenant.

2. Joshua

- **Call to Action:** After Moses' death, Joshua was commissioned to lead the Israelites into the Promised Land (Joshua 1:1-9). He demonstrated courage and faith as he led the people in battle and established their inheritance.
- **Apostolic Action:** Joshua's leadership was marked by obedience and the call to take possession of what

God had promised.

3. Deborah

- **Call to Action:** As a prophetess and judge, Deborah called Barak to arms to defeat the Canaanite army (Judges 4). She provided spiritual and military leadership, demonstrating the importance of female leadership in the movement of God.
- **Apostolic Action:** Deborah's actions reflect the empowerment of God's people to rise up and fulfill His purposes.

4. Samuel

- **Call to Action:** As a prophet and judge, Samuel anointed Israel's first kings and called the nation to repentance (1 Samuel 7:3). He was instrumental in guiding Israel back to faithfulness to God.
- **Apostolic Action:** Samuel's life was characterized by a commitment to prayer, worship, and the proclamation of God's Word.

5. Nehemiah

- **Call to Action:** Nehemiah felt the burden to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem after the Babylonian exile (Nehemiah 1-2). He organized the people and led them in a physical and spiritual restoration.
- **Apostolic Action:** Nehemiah's leadership was marked by a call to action that combined prayer, planning, and perseverance in the face of opposition.

New Testament Leaders with a Call to Apostolic Pentecostal Action Acts 2:38

1. Peter

- **Call to Action:** As a key leader in the early church, Peter preached the first sermon at Pentecost, calling people to repentance and baptism and water Baptism in Jesus Name for the remission of sins and to receive the gift of the Holy Ghost with the evidence of speaking in tongues Acts 2.38 the only plan of Salvation (Acts 2:14-41). He was bold in proclaiming the Gospel and establishing the Apostolic Pentecostal Jesus Name Oneness Acts 2.38 Church.
- **Apostolic Action:** Peter's ministry was characterized by signs and wonders, as well as a commitment to teaching and fellowship (Acts 2:42).

2. John

- **Call to Action:** Alongside Peter, John was a central figure in the early church, witnessing to the resurrection of Jesus and performing miracles (Acts 3:1-10). He emphasized love and community in his teachings.
- **Apostolic Action:** John's ministry was marked by a deep relational aspect, calling believers to love one another as a reflection of The Lord Jesus Christ's love.

3. Stephen

- **Call to Action:** As one of the first deacons, Stephen boldly preached the Gospel and defended the faith before the Sanhedrin (Acts 7). His martyrdom became a catalyst for the spread of the Gospel.
- **Apostolic Action:** Stephen's life exemplified unwavering faith and courage in the face of persecution, inspiring others to action.

4. Paul

- **Call to Action:** Paul's missionary journeys were marked by a relentless pursuit of spreading the Gospel to the Gentiles (Acts 13-21). He established churches and wrote letters that became foundational to Christian doctrine.
- **Apostolic Action:** Paul's life was characterized by tireless evangelism, teaching, and a deep commitment to the mission of God.

5. Barnabas

- **Call to Action:** Known as the "Son of Encouragement," Barnabas played a crucial role in supporting Paul and encouraging the early Apostolic Pentecostal Church (Acts 9:26-27; Act 11:22-24). He was instrumental in the first missionary journey with Paul.
- **Apostolic Action:** Barnabas exemplified the importance of encouragement and support in the mission of the church.

6. Philip

- Call to Action: Philip, one of the seven deacons, preached the Gospel in Samaria and baptized the Ethiopian Eunuch in Jesus' Name (Acts 8:4-40). His obedience to the Holy Ghost led to significant Apostolic Pentecostal conversions.
- Apostolic Action: Philip's ministry highlights the importance of evangelism and responsiveness to the Holy Ghost leading.

Conclusion

The call to action in the Apostolic Pentecostal movement is deeply rooted in the examples of both Old and New Testament leaders. These figures exemplify a faith that is active, courageous, and responsive to God's call. They inspire the modern church to embrace its mission, to preach the Gospel boldly, and to nurture both new believers and mature disciples in the faith.

As the Apostolic Pentecostal Church continues to grow and fulfill its divine mandate, it must remember the legacy of these leaders and the call to action that defines the Apostolic Pentecostal movement. Each believer is called to participate actively in the work of the Kingdom, empowered by the Holy Ghost with the evidence of speaking in tongues to make a lasting impact in their communities and the world.

- **Call to Action:** Encourage churches to embrace hard-hitting preaching and foster spiritual growth.
- **Summary of Key Insights:** Recap the importance of moving from “the bottle” to “the bread” of solid teaching.
- **Vision for the Future:** Inspire readers with a vision of a mature, vibrant Apostolic Pentecostal church filled with seasoned saints who nurture and challenge one another.

Appendices

1. **Scripture References:** A comprehensive list of all scripture references used throughout the booklet.
2. **Reflection Questions:** Questions for individual or group reflection to encourage application of the teachings.
3. **Resources for Further Study:** Recommended books, articles, and sermons for deeper exploration of spiritual maturity.
4. **Prayers for Growth:** Suggested prayers for personal and communal spiritual growth.

Commentary and Reflection

The Apostolic Pentecostal church is called to

rise above spiritual infancy, embracing a journey toward maturity that involves both teaching and accountability. Through hard-hitting preaching and a commitment to discipleship, the church can fulfill its mission and grow in faith.

Written by Elder Keith Joel Walker

Read and Obey Acts 2:38

