

The Screwtape Letters ~ Letter 2

September 20, 2020

Before reading the following overview of this Letter, please click on the link above to read the book and for today's Illustrated Message, please read **Letter 2**.

As we studied in the last message, the devil is a liar and there is no truth in him at all. One of the greatest lies he's propagated in the Church is about the baptism in the Holy Spirit not being for this day and age, that the gifts of the Holy Spirit ceased with the Apostles. There are false teachers that teach this and I believe God is going to raise up preachers in the pulpit who will debate with these false teachers to show them the error of their teaching.

In [Sparknotes](#) we read the following summary on Letter 2; *"Screwtape reprimands Wormwood for allowing the Patient to become a Christian still on and Wormwood's side. The members of the Patient's Church will also help them. The Patient expects an ideal spiritual Church, not oily grocers and parishioners who sing out of tune. Wormwood must not let the Patient realize that the images he has of spirituality are stereotypes. He should try to make the Patient feel disappointed. Disappointment, Screwtape says, usually marks major transitions in life. People feel disappointed when their idle dreams turn into active work. But if they get over this initial period of disappointment, Screwtape warns, people become much harder to tempt. If it turns out that the other members of the Patient's Church, in addition to being everyday and ordinary, are really hypocrites, then Wormwood's task is easier. He should try to make the Patient."*

After Screwtape reprimands Wormwood regarding his patient becoming a Christian, he then says the following: *"There is no need to despair; hundreds of these adult converts have been reclaimed after a brief sojourn in the Enemy's camp and are now with us. All the habits of the patient, both mental and bodily, are still in our favour. One of our great allies at present is the Church itself. Do not misunderstand me. I do not mean the Church as we see her spread but through all time and space and rooted in eternity, terrible as an army with banners. That, I confess, is a spectacle which makes I our boldest tempters uneasy. But fortunately it is quite invisible to these humans."*

Who and which is this Church so powerful that he's referring to? It's the Book of Acts Church who were filled and baptized in the Holy Spirit, speaking in tongues and walking in the gifts of the Spirit. That kind of Church is a threat to the kingdom of darkness. But as for the rest, they're no threat. The Church then that this new convert is in is not filled with the Holy Spirit because they're eyes are blinded and the Holy Spirit power is invisible to them.

Who then has made it invisible to them? One for sure would be the pastor in the pulpit who the devil has worked through to teach against the baptism in the Holy Spirit. Don't think that pastors like these will not be held accountable by Jesus for grieving the Holy Spirit in His Church. The religious Church that has rejected the baptism of the Holy Spirit, is not a threat to these demons as much as the Holy Spirit filled Church that was birthed in the Upper Room found in the book of Acts.

Let's read **Acts 1:1-8**; *"1 The former account I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach, 2 until the day in which [a]He was taken up, after He through the Holy Spirit had given commandments to the apostles whom He had chosen, 3 to whom He also presented Himself alive after His suffering by many [b]infallible proofs, being seen by them during forty days and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God. 4 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; 5 for John truly baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from***

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**now.**” 6 *Therefore, when they had come together, they asked Him, saying, “Lord, will You at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?”* 7 *And He said to them, “It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has put in His own authority.* 8 *But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be [c]witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.”*

This is the Church that Screwtape is talking about which is a threat to his kingdom. The Church where the patient is in, is not like the early Church because Screwtape specifically says that it is one of his allies. It’s not like the early Church.

What Jesus promised and said would come to pass did. He told them to wait. Waiting might seem laborious and maybe it was so for the Apostles and disciples as they waited. It was actually around 10 days because from the time of Jesus’ resurrection which was on Passover until the Feast of Pentecost is 50 days and we know that Jesus was with them for 40 of those days revealing himself and teaching his disciples. But the disciples didn’t know that then, they just knew that Jesus commanded them to wait. It was probably laborious and work, just to wait for the Promise. It’s no different with you or I when we’ve needed to wait on the Lord and the Holy Spirit to be poured out on our lives, it’s seemed like work while waiting. It’s also not just a one-time filling, but is to be continually filled with power.

**Acts 2 :1-4** continues saying; “2 *When the Day of Pentecost had fully come, they were all [a]with one accord in one place.* 2 *And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting.* 3 *Then there appeared to them [b]divided tongues, as of fire, and one sat upon each of them.* 4 *And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.”*

All of the waiting was worth it wasn’t it! This is the Church that Screwtape is talking about when he says; “*I do not mean the Church as we see her spread but through all time and space and rooted in eternity, terrible as an army with banners. That, I confess, is a spectacle which makes I our boldest tempters uneasy. But fortunately it is quite invisible to these humans.*”

This Holy Spirit empowered Church makes the chief demons tremble and they don’t like messing around with that kind of Church. But the Church that is weak and not filled with the Holy Spirit, is easy to be led around by demons like Wormwood who even influence their pastors to teach against the Holy Spirit baptism. It’s an easy fight for demons.

Churches that have rejected the baptism of the Holy Spirit and His gifts are an ally to satan and his demons, simply because they have replaced the power of the Holy Spirit with religion and tradition. They’ve aligned themselves with the kingdom of darkness by rejecting what Jesus commanded them to go and receive. Jesus knew what His Apostles and disciples needed and He knows what you need.

When the power of the Holy Spirit and His gifts are removed from the Church, all that remains is the first impression of Church given to the patient upon arriving. Screwtape says: “*All your patient sees is the half-finished, sham Gothic erection on the new building estate. When he goes inside, he sees the local grocer with rather in oily expression on his face bustling up to offer him one shiny little book containing a liturgy which neither of them understands, and one shabby little book containing corrupt texts of a number of religious lyrics, mostly bad, and in very small print.*”

A new convert should never have to walk into a Church with a first impression like that should they. A Church void of the Holy Spirit’s power. Jesus says in **Mark 9:42**; “*But whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in Me to stumble, it would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck, and he were thrown into the sea.*” Jesus is referring to children, but what do you think He will do to those preachers who are

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a stumbling block to the new born Christian telling them that the baptism in the Holy Spirit ceased with the Book of Acts Church? Jesus will hold accountable those who are preaching false teaching like that. It's causing new baby Christians to stumble.

Religious experience without the power found in the baptism of the Holy Spirit will never satisfy a new convert and they will always be missing what Jesus said they would need to overcome the demons assigned to their lives. That's why Screwtape could say: *"One of our great allies at present is the Church itself."*

Again, Jesus said the following prior to His ascension to heaven in **Acts 1:4-5**; *"4 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; 5 for John truly baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now."*

By rejecting the commandment of Jesus to wait and receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit, all that's left are religious, traditional works that ultimately build a Church like the one described by Screwtape. Screwtape says; *"When he gets to his pew and looks round him he sees just that selection of his neighbours whom he has hitherto avoided. You want to lean pretty heavily on those neighbours. Make his mind flit to and fro between an expression like "the body of Christ" and the actual faces in the next pew."*

A new convert that has not been given the opportunity to be baptised in the Holy Spirit, will automatically default to the natural and not the supernatural in a Church fellowship setting, and the devil will amplify everything and anything that the religious Church has built with all its issues to not only discourage Church attendance, but ultimately cause them backslide in their conversion.

We're going back to what the Church is really supposed to be, the Spirit filled Church, not the one that Screwtape describes that his patient has gone into.

After the Holy Spirit was given in the Upper Room, the Church is described in the following scripture, **Acts 2:40-47**; *"40 And with many other words he testified and exhorted them, saying, "Be saved from this [a]perverse generation." 41 Then those who [b]gladly received his word were baptized; and that day about three thousand souls were added to them. 42 And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' [c]doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers. 43 Then fear came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were done through the apostles. 44 Now all who believed were together, and had all things in common, 45 and [d]sold their possessions and goods, and divided[e] them among all, as anyone had need. 46 So continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart, 47 praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added [f]to the Church daily those who were being saved."*

There is a night and day difference between this Church and the one Screwtape finds his patient in. We're only covering a few things that the patient – the new convert – came up against, but there were numerous things as you read. Things to discourage him in his new walk with Christ Jesus.

Screwtape says; *"At his present stage, you see, he has an idea of "Christians" in his mind which he supposes to be spiritual but which, in fact, is largely pictorial. His mind is full of togas and sandals and armour and bare legs and the mere fact that the other people in Church wear modern clothes is a real--though of course an unconscious--difficulty to him. Never let it come to the surface; never let him ask what he expected them to look like. Keep everything hazy in his mind now, and you will have all eternity wherein to amuse yourself by producing in him the peculiar kind of clarity which Hell affords."*

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The Church described in the Book of Acts is to be our example, regardless of it being from a different time and era, it is to be our blueprint for a Church today. So long as the devil can keep a new convert from questioning and comparing the heritage and doctrines of the early Holy Spirit filled Church and the now, non-Spirit filled Churches of today, he knows that his opportunity to cause them to backslide is greater without the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Religion in itself will never satisfy or fill the void.

The devil doesn't want the new convert to question the Church he's in as to; why aren't you casting out devils, laying hands on the sick, speaking with new tongues, operating in the gifts of the Spirit according to I Corinthians 12, and ultimately not praying to receive the baptism in the Holy Spirit that Jesus commanded his disciples to do? The devil wants all of that to be hazy, a blur and shrouded over and above all to not come to the understanding that the Spirit filled Christian has authority in Jesus' name over him.

This is why Screwtape says the following; *“Work hard, then, on the disappointment or anticlimax which is certainly coming to the patient during his first few weeks as a Churchman. The Enemy allows this disappointment to occur on the threshold of every human endeavour.”*

So long as the devil can keep a person from being filled with the Holy Spirit in the first couple of weeks after being born again, he knows that it will be anticlimactic and disappointing and will result in a boring, religious, dead works program.

Screwtape says of God giving man a free will; *“The Enemy takes this risk because He has a curious fantasy of making all these disgusting little human vermin into what He calls His "free" lovers and servants--"sons" is the word He uses, with His inveterate love of degrading the whole spiritual world by unnatural liaisons with the two-legged animals.”*

That's how the devil sees mankind, as animals. God gives you a free will. Jesus will never violate a Christians free will, and just as He told the early Church to wait in the upper room until they were filled with the Holy Spirit, He is doing the same today. It may seem laborious at first, almost like work, having to wait on the Lord for it to come, but it's worth the wait and is far better than a life of dead religious works without it.

So long as the devil can keep a Christian from being filled with the Holy Spirit, he's able to keep them from speaking tongues and operating in the Gifts of the Holy Spirit that are found in **1 Corinthians 12:4-11**; *“4 There are [a] diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. 5 There are differences of ministries, but the same Lord. 6 And there are diversities of activities, but it is the same God who works [b] all in all. 7 But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for the profit of all: 8 for to one is given the word of wisdom through the Spirit, to another the word of knowledge through the same Spirit, 9 to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healings by [c] the same Spirit, 10 to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another discerning of spirits, to another different kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues. 11 But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually as He wills.”*

It's the power of the Holy Spirit that Screwtape does not want this new convert to get a hold of. The devil lies and makes excuses as to why the baptism in the Holy Spirit is not for today by using pastors who lie, because they've been lied to, maybe for generations past. All of this to put a stumbling block before new Christians.

Screwtape says; *“If once they get through this initial dryness successfully, they become much less dependent on emotion and therefore much harder to tempt.”* Just to add to that; once they get through that laborious time of waiting in the upper room, they move beyond emotion because they receive the baptism in the Holy Spirit – which has nothing to do with emotion or the natural, they're a little harder to tempt because they're led by the supernatural power of the Holy Spirit. This is where the battle lies.

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A good question to ask yourself is; are you in a Church that has rejected the baptism of the Holy Spirit and does not allow the gifts of the Holy Spirit to operate in the Church? God's given you a free will to be baptized in the Holy Spirit and operate in the gifts of the Holy Spirit, and you can receive it or reject it. If Jesus knew that His Apostles and disciples needed it to over come the devil and build His Church, what would make you except of it? It's a valid question for you and every preacher in the pulpit who is preaching contrary to what Jesus commanded.

Screwtape said of the patient in Letter 2 "*There is no need to despair; hundreds of these adult converts have been reclaimed after a brief sojourn in the Enemy's camp and are now with us.*"

What are the demons assigned to your life saying about you? Is the devil going to be able to say this about you someday because you backslid; "*he is now safe in our father's house*"?

If you would like to understand more about the Holy Spirit's power in the life of a Christian, you can click on 'The Holy Spirit Power' series on the website.

Here is a great music video, a blast from the past released in 1989 from Carman entitled; "[Revival in The Land](#)". Keep in mind that the stats given are 31 years ago and will be a lot different today.