

The Baptism of the Holy Spirit, Part 2

Scripture: Acts 2:5–13

Code: 1704

We have come in our continuing study to the book of Acts, a wonderful New Testament book that gives us the history of the first church, the first century church. And when I use the term “church,” just for clarification’s sake, I am not talking about a building on a corner, I am talking about a body of believers. When we talk about the church this morning, that is what we are referring to.

Now, we remember from our study of Acts chapter 1 that in the first chapter of Acts, the Holy Spirit gives to us preparation for the church. We learned some wonderful things in regard to what Jesus did to equip His own to really do the job when the church was born. Now, as we come to Acts 2, the church is born and they’re ready to do the job. And as we see this morning, they begin to do it, and it’s exciting. In relation to what happens in Acts 2, Jesus had promised two great events. First of all, Jesus had promised the birth of the church. In Matthew 16:18, Jesus said, “I will build my church and the gates of hell will not prevail against it.”

Then Jesus had not only promised the birth of the church but He had promised the coming of the Holy Spirit. In John 14:16 and 17, He said, “I will pray the Father and He shall give you another comforter that He may abide with you forever, even the Spirit of truth.” And then He said, “He is with you, He shall be in you.” And then He clarified it even further in Acts 1:5 when Jesus said, “Ye shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.” So Jesus made two great promises. The church would be born and believers would be baptized with the Holy Spirit. Both of those events took place at the same time on the same day and are recorded for us in Acts chapter 2.

Now, for those who were not here last week, we would apologize by saying that we began this message last week. And as so often the case, we don’t get all the way through the message. So we will have to pick up where we left off with but a brief review.

Now, the birth of the church, as we learned last week, and the baptism of the Holy Spirit occurred simultaneously. And that has to be so because the theological definition of the baptism of the Holy Spirit is that it is the placing of believers into the church. That’s what the baptism of the Spirit is. The Apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians chapter 12 and verse 13 defines it very clearly when he says, “For by one Spirit were we all baptized into one body.” That is, at the moment of salvation every believer is placed into the church, which is a unit, a closely-knit-together body, so that the forming of the church and the baptism of the Spirit had to happen together because the baptism of the Spirit is placing believers together in the body. And so they did happen on the very same day. The church was born in Acts 2. The believers were baptized with the Spirit in Acts 2 at the same time. That is the baptism of the Spirit.

Now, since that time, naturally you recognize that this was a transition, that this was the beginning of something here, so it didn’t happen here; that is, the baptism and the entering in of the church didn’t happen to these disciples the moment they were saved. They had likely been saved before this. But because the age is changing and this is a transition, it occurs now in the design of God. So though

they were saved, perhaps right after Jesus arose, they would have understood the whole of New Testament salvation. The Spirit does not come until the day of Pentecost, so there's a period of time in there that we see in the transition of the two ages, the Old Testament age and the New Testament.

That does not mean that you receive Christ and 40 or 50 days later you get the Holy Spirit. That's not the norm for all the church age. That's simply what happened here in the transition. From then on, at the moment of salvation, a believer, when he believes in Christ, is baptized into the body, becomes one with Christ - that's Romans 6, we went over that last week, that's Galatians 3, we've been through all of that - but that is the norm for the Christian, the moment of salvation is the moment of Spirit baptism into the body but here, of course, occurring after they believed because of the coming of the new age specifically designed by God to be on the day of Pentecost.

And so we see, then, that what happens here is a new fellowship brought about by the Holy Spirit indwelling all believers. So that if you want to know a definition of the church today, the true church, you would say that it is those who have been placed into a union and those who are individually indwelt by the Holy Spirit. All Christians are part of the body. All Christians are indwelt by the Spirit. And the body was begun to be formed in Pentecost, Acts 2.

Now, that's just a fast review of last time, and we'll continue our review for just a moment. We saw that the passage is divided into three parts, all right? The evidence of the Spirit's coming in the first four verses, the effect of the Spirit's coming in verses 5 to 11, and the explanation of the Spirit's coming, verses 12 and 13. The evidence, the effect, and the explanation. Now, last time we began to talk about the evidence of the Spirit's coming and we'll pick that up this morning. Verses 1 to 4 give us the evidence that the Holy Spirit came.

Notice verse 1 and we'll just review for a moment. "And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place." Now, this is about 50 days after the Passover, 50 days after Jesus Christ died. In fact, it is exactly so. It is on the day of Pentecost. The day of Pentecost was the celebration of a feast exactly 50 days after Passover, the Feast of Harvest. And we showed you last time how that by divine timing, the fact of the birth of the church and the baptism of the Holy Spirit occurring on Pentecost fulfills the prophecy of Leviticus 23 in which we see the Feast of Harvest as a preview or a type of the church and the baptism of the Spirit.

We went into that last time. As Christ, for example, fulfilled the Passover feast by dying on the Passover, as He fulfilled the First Fruits feast by rising on the First Fruits feast day, so the Spirit and the birth of the church occurs on Pentecost to fulfill the meaning of that feast from Leviticus 23. You see, these three feasts are types or pictures prophetically of what is to come. And Jesus died on the right day, He rose on the right day, and the church was born on the right day because Leviticus 23 outlined it in the pictures of the feasts, which we went into last time. So when it says that "when the day of Pentecost was fully come," that is the key to interpreting the passage.

In other words, this has a very basic direct significance for a special day in the calendar of Israel. And for people to come along and say that the Spirit of God comes upon an individual as in Acts, when the preparation is right and when the individual does the right things, is to misinterpret the passage. The Spirit came on a specific day designed by God, the day of Pentecost. It had absolutely nothing to do with the believers there, nothing to do with them meeting any qualifications or any requirements. They were there and it happened because God sovereignly designed it to happen. So

on God's chosen day the church was to be born, just as on God's chosen day Jesus arose, as on God's chosen day Jesus died as pictured as far back as Leviticus 23 in the feasts that He gave to Israel.

The church, then, is baptized in God's good time by God's sovereignty. Notice verse 2, and it tells us the evidence that the Spirit came and the church was born. "Suddenly there came" - still reviewing - "a sound from heaven like a rushing mighty wind and it filled all the house where they were sitting." Notice the sound. We told you it was the Greek word *pnoē*, which means a blast or a breath and it came from heaven. This is the breath of God, the Holy Spirit. God is breathing to earth His Holy Spirit, a blast of breath. It is not a wind, it is not a rushing wind, it is only a sound like a rushing wind. In other words, there is all the noise of a hurricane and absolute stillness.

Then in verse 3, it takes us a step further and says that "there appeared unto them cloven tongues" - or parted tongues - "of fire." Each tongue individually sat upon each of them. Not only were they blended together in verse 2 into the body, the baptism of the Spirit, but in verse 3, the Spirit of God came to indwell every one of them as signified by the fact that the tongues stood over them. And every one of them became the possessor of the indwelling Holy Spirit. And from that time on, beloved, there is no such thing as a Christian who doesn't have the Holy Spirit, no such thing. Romans 8:9, as we told you last week, says, "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His." Every believer possesses the Holy Spirit.

Then, to begin where we begin today, we come to verse 4, and in addition to receiving the baptism of the Spirit, it says, "And they were all" - what? - "filled with the Holy Spirit." Now, you cannot be filled with something that you don't have. And so it is that in verses 2 and 3, they received the Spirit of God. In verse 4, the Spirit of God released His power to fill them. And we believe there is a distinction between the baptism of the Spirit and the filling. Baptism is positional; filling is practical. Baptism grants the power; filling turns it on. Now, for a theological definition of this, you have to go to the Apostle Paul. And you find, as I quoted earlier, that the baptism of the Holy Spirit is placing you into the body and placing the Spirit in you, 1 Corinthians 12:13.

The filling of the Holy Spirit, Ephesians 5:18, is a matter of yielding to the already present Spirit so that He totally controls you. Now, that's the question in the Christian life. Every Christian already possesses the Holy Spirit, it's only a question of whether you yield to His power. Let me just see if I can make a distinction to help you understand it. You hear a lot of people say, "Well, I've accepted Christ as Savior but not as Lord." You heard that? And later on in their life, you know, they bow to the Lordship of Christ. The Bible does not teach that. The Bible does not teach that Jesus Christ is only Christ and then a little while later, He gets to be Lord. Jesus is what? Lord. That's a fact.

You don't decide to make Him Lord, He is Lord. The only issue in the Christian life is not "Who's Lord?" it's "Are you obeying who's Lord?" When you received Christ, at the moment of your salvation, you got Him as He was - Lord. He was Lord of your life. The only issue remaining is whether you are obeying the Lord of your life. And the same question carried over to the ministry of the Spirit. It's not a question of "Do I have the Spirit?" or "Is the Spirit leading me?" or "Is the Spirit guiding me?" It's only a question of "Am I following?" That's all. So the question in terms of this context is not "Have I received the baptism?" Yes. It's "Am I experiencing the filling of the Spirit who's in me?" That's the only issue.

Now, I'm not going to take a lot of time on this since we did a study of the filling of the Spirit and it's

available if you'd like to get the tape on it and study it further. But let me just try to just pin it down for a moment for you. In the New Testament, we have the term "filled" used many times, and it's used when it's talking about something that overpowers everything else. For example, it says that Stephen was full of faith. In other words, in the midst of being stoned, the overwhelming thing was faith. He believed God and it carried him through. It says, for example, that the Pharisees were filled with madness. Now, you don't really share that with any other emotion.

When you're filled with madness, the fury takes over every other constraining thing. The Bible talks about being filled with love, where love dominates. And that's the meaning of the word in terms of the Holy Spirit. When you're filled with anger, that's the dominant thing. When you're filled with love, that's the dominant thing. When you're filled with faith, that's the dominant thing. When you're filled with the Spirit of God, it means that you have yielded to the total dominance of the Spirit in your life.

Now, there are a lot of Christians - frankly, most - who have the Holy Spirit but do not understand yielding to the total dominance of the Spirit, see? Self-will, self-effort, self-design, do your own thing and not yielding certain areas of your life does not mean you don't have the baptism of the Spirit. That occurred at salvation. It only means you're not experiencing total yieldedness to the Spirit. The Apostle Paul said, "Be being kept filled with the Spirit." That means it can come and go. He never said be baptized, he never said go get the Holy Spirit, he only said allow the Spirit who's already there to control. The filling of the Spirit is simply a situation of control. That's all.

If you want a parallel, parallel Ephesians 5:18 with Colossians 3:16 and following, for there you have the same results. For example, in Ephesians 5, it says if you're filled with the Spirit, you'll do this, you'll do this, you'll do this, you'll do this. In Colossians 6, it gives the exact identical list only it doesn't say if you're filled with the Spirit, it says if the Word of Christ dwells in you richly. We make a synonym then if to be filled with the Spirit means the same thing as to let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly. We've been over this before but just a brief review. Now, to let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly means what? It means to be saturated with the Word of Christ, saturated with the things of Jesus Christ. To be dominated, again, is the entire idea.

Let the Word of Christ control, let the Holy Spirit control. It's all the same thing. This is the filling of the Spirit. Now, what happened here at Pentecost? They were baptized into the body in verse 2. The Spirit came to live in each one of them individually with no exceptions and there was a little sign on their head just to prove it in verse 3. Then in verse 4, that resident Spirit filled their yieldedness. They were yielded. They were ready to do whatever God wanted them to do. They were really yielded. I don't think there's any time when an individual is more yielded maybe than at the moment of salvation. And the Spirit of God filled them, and it says at the end of verse 4, He's the One that gave them what? Utterance.

In other words, at that point, their lips were like noodles, you know? Anything that came out would come out from another source. And they began to speak but it was not them, it was in yieldedness to the Spirit of God and He controlled what they said. So when we're talking about the baptism of the Spirit and the filling, we're talking about two absolutely distinct things. And this speaking in languages, beloved, did not occur as a result of the baptism of the Spirit; it occurred as a result of what? Of the filling. It says so in verse 4. It says they were filled with the Spirit then resident in them and then they did this.

Now, to be filled with the Spirit, then, is to be so saturated with Jesus Christ that the controls of your

life are yielded to Him. That's what happened. They had yielded themselves to Christ. They were obediently waiting for what would happen. And when it happened in their yieldedness, they were filled with the Spirit of God and they began to speak in other languages. Now you say, "What are these other languages?" Well, first of all, they're languages. Let's clear that up. The word glōssa always means language, never means anything but language, doesn't ever mean gibberish or a nonsensical talk, ecstatic speech. It always means languages. That's the term for languages.

In fact, if there's any question about that, go through this little section. In verse 6, it mentions the word language; in verse 8, tongue; and in verse 11, tongue. But there's two different words being used. One is glōssa and the other is dialekto. And dialekto (from which we get "dialect") has to do with dialects. So languages and dialects, not gibberish, are the issue here. When people say they have the Pentecostal gift and then they speak something that is non-language, they don't. It is languages that is in view. In case there's any question, it even tells you which ones in verses 9, 10, and 11, which languages they spoke, their languages, and I believe this is the pattern and if ever there is to be a tongues occasion in the New Testament validated, it must be that which is languages.

Now, I want you to remind yourself that the languages came as a result of filling, not of baptism. To connect these languages to the baptism of the Spirit is to err because baptism is simply the placing of the believer into the body. It's a non-experiential thing. It occurs. It's God putting you into the union with Christ and the other believers. But as a result of filling, they began to speak. Now, let me say that it was a special phenomenon for that day. It is not the universal pattern for every Christian. It is not the universal pattern that every time you're filled with the Spirit, you speak in these languages. It can't be. It had nothing to do with the baptism of the Spirit at all, but it isn't even the result always of the filling.

For example, by the time you get to Ephesians 5:18, it says, "Be filled with the Spirit" and you'll do this and it gives you a whole list of things, none of which is speaking in other languages. It says things that are harder than that, like loving your wife and obeying your husband and being kind to your children and obeying your parents and all these things, being a good employee and a good employer, and it goes all through the practical things. By the time Paul defines the filling of the Spirit, it has nothing to do with languages anymore - nothing.

Now, it's interesting, too, that some who claim they are filled with the Spirit and thus speak in the languages don't meet the qualifications of Ephesians 5 that are the real qualifications of being Spirit-filled. There are some people who would claim that they're filled with the Spirit and they speak in languages, but they really don't love their wives as Christ loved the church. There are some ladies who claim to have the gift of languages, but they couldn't really be filled with the Spirit or they'd be submitting themselves to their husbands.

There are some fathers who claim to have the gift of tongues as a result of the filling of the Spirit, but if they were really filled with the Spirit, they wouldn't provoke their children to anger. So you get real practical about it in the Pauline epistles. It's not so ethereal as it is right here because this is a special occasion and wasn't meant to be the universal pattern.

Now, the miracle of languages here was important because of the strategy of the spread of the gospel. And before we're done this morning, I think you're going to see something really exciting about this strategy. Because in Jerusalem at this time there were people from all over the Jewish

world and there could have been as many as one million. You could fit 200,000 of them into the temple courtyard alone. They were jammed into this place. And this specific miracle was specifically for this occasion, for this day, and not to become the pattern or the norm for all Christians. You say, "Well, I don't know about that because it happens again in Acts several times and it's not in Jerusalem and it's not with a bunch of Jews. In fact, it's with gentiles." And I say you're right but I'll show you why. I'll show you why this same thing occurs again in the book of Acts.

Turn to 8:14. I think you'll find this interesting. By this time, the gospel has spread to Samaria. You remember Acts 1:8 said preach the gospel in Jerusalem, Judea, then in all what? Samaria. Well, by chapter 8, it's gotten there. Verse 14: "When the apostles who were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the Word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John who when they were come down prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit, for as yet He was fallen upon none of them, only they were baptized in the name of Jesus. Then laid they their hands on them and they received the Holy Spirit."

Now, here you have a group of Samaritans. Now, do you recall the Jewish attitude toward Samaritans? I'm sure you do. They despised Samaritans, to put it mildly. They loathed them. Why? Because originally they were of pure Jewish stock and they inter-married with gentiles. Nothing more despicable and they were hated and despised by the Jews. In fact, the Jews wouldn't even go through their country. Now, what happens here, the gospel that came to Israel, the Messiah of Israel is believed on. Then all of the sudden some Samaritans believe on Him. Now, the tendency of the Jews is going to be to make the Samaritans second-class Christians, if Christians at all. So to insure that that did not happen, the Spirit of God allowed those Samaritans to be converted.

But at the moment of their conversion, they did not receive the Holy Spirit, they were not baptized into the body. Why? Because the Spirit of God wanted some very important Jews to be there when it happened so they would know that indeed it happened just like it happened to them. And the two most important Jews alive in the world in that time were Peter and John. And so not until Peter and John went up there did the Spirit come. Why? So that Peter and John could come back and say to the Jews, "You'll never believe it. The Samaritans got the same thing we got."

You see, this is bringing together the body. And the important thing is that I believe, although it doesn't say in chapter 8, it's very possible that they spoke in languages. In fact, I believe they did. Why? So that they would have the same sign as the Jews had so there would be no way for the Jew to say, "We got something you didn't get." See? Not at all. Now let me take you a step further. Go to chapter 10.

Chapter 10, verse 44. Now Peter's not talking to Jews anymore, he's gone over to Cornelius who's a gentile. The gospel is really on the move now. "While Peter yet spoke these words the Holy Spirit fell on all them that heard the Word. And they of the circumcision who believed were" - what? - "astonished." Who were of the circumcision? The Jews. They were astonished. They couldn't believe it. Gentiles. The Holy Spirit actually came to a gentile. Shocking. And look what it says, "as many as came with Peter." Why were they so surprised? Because on the gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Spirit.

How did they know it? Verse 46. "For they heard them speak" - with what? - "with languages." You see, it wasn't important there that they speak in languages for the sake of communicating, it was important there that they speak in languages so that those Jews would know they got the same thing

that the Jews got at Pentecost. Do you see? In other words, as the church is being formed in the flow of the book of Acts, the Spirit of God wants everybody to be sure that the church is in fact one body. True? And so He goes to great pains to make sure everybody knows.

And Peter, this really got to him. Chapter 11. I like this. Verse 15, Peter's telling about this, you know, about these gentiles getting the Holy Spirit in the same way. It's something. Verse 15, he says, "And as I began to speak, the Holy Spirit fell on them as on us at the beginning." You know - what a shock, hard for him to handle. Verse 16, "Then remembered I the Word of the Lord how He said John indeed baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit." They got the baptism of the Spirit exactly like the Jews got it. Then he says, "Forasmuch then as God gave them the same gift as He did unto us" - that's the whole point. And then he says, "What was I, that I could withstand God?" In other words, "Any other thing than that and I wouldn't have believed it either."

Then you go over to chapter 15 and Peter's made his way back to Jerusalem to report to the Jerusalem council. And all the Jerusalem council is gathered together to try to decide this issue, whether the gentiles really belong in. And they're going to have a big council about it. Verse 6, "And the apostles and elders came together to consider of this matter." And that's the technical terminology of this committee. And we know they're a committee because the next verse says, "And when there had been much disputing, Peter rose up and said unto them, 'Men and brethren'" - hang onto your hats, I want you to get this - "you know how that a good while ago God made a choice among us that the gentiles by my mouth should hear the Word of the gospel and believe. And God, who knoweth the hearts, bore them witness giving them the Holy Spirit, even as He did unto us, and put no difference between" - what? - "us and them."

Do you see? That's the point. The reason that they received the same Holy Spirit in the same way was to tie them in with the one body that was born at Pentecost, not because there was any significance for languages anymore, only as a connector to Pentecost. It doesn't say that the language had anything to do with anything - simply connected them. Now, there's one other group running around loose that hasn't been included in the body yet and that's a whole - that's a little group of twelve Old Testament saints who are hang-overs from John the Baptist. And they're on their merry way thinking nothing's happened since John the Baptist. They don't even know what's been going on.

And so they run into them in chapter 19 and the Holy Spirit wants to get them in the body, too. "And it came to pass that while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul having passed through the upper borders came to Ephesus and finding certain disciples said unto them, 'Have you received the Holy Spirit?'" See, now he's going to make sure everybody's into the body. These are disciples of John the Baptist, these don't fit either of the other two categories. "Have you received the Holy Spirit since you believed? And they said unto him, 'We have not so much as heard whether there is any Holy Spirit.'" We don't know, we don't know anything. And he says to them, "Unto what then were you baptized?" They said, "Unto John's baptism." "We're disciples of John the Baptist. What's all this?" Then said Paul, "Well, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people that they should believe on Him who should come after him, that is on Christ Jesus."

And then, evidently, you could imply here that Paul may have gone further to share with them concerning Christ Jesus. "When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. And Paul had laid hands on them." That is in apostolic fashion, the Spirit always came in the presence of apostles, the Holy Spirit came on them and they spoke with languages and prophesied.

Again, the same thing, exactly, through an apostle, to tie them together with the first batch at Pentecost.

Now, don't you see the marvelous genius of the Holy Spirit here in putting together the body so that no one part of the body can look at another part and say, "We have what you don't have"? Perfectly designed by the Holy Spirit. But once the body included all the leftover Old Testament saints and all the New Testament Jews and the New Testament gentiles, there wasn't any reason for this phenomenon anymore, because everybody that comes to Christ now is covered under what's already happened to Jews and gentiles. Do you see? We don't need any more special little ditties when we get saved. And from then on, that covered it. There are only Jews and gentiles. And the body was put together, Jew and gentile, Ephesians 2. Isn't it beautiful? The middle wall was broken down and Jew and gentile became one in Jesus Christ. And everybody that came to Christ since that time is just placed in the body at salvation by the baptism of the Spirit. That means you're baptized into the body in union with Christ.

So the Spirit gave the same gift in the presence of the apostles to each unique part of the church, that there might not be any division, that there might not be any question about who belonged where, that the unity of the body was secured. So we are not going to teach patterns of doctrine from these occasions that are endless for the church. That would be like saying, "Well, if you happen to be Samaritan, that means you don't get the Spirit until X number of days afterwards." "If you happen to be this, you might not get the Spirit until X number of days later," so forth and so on. That's not what it's teaching; it's merely showing us what happened in the transition.

By the time you get to the Pauline epistles, you have the doctrines of the Holy Spirit defined very accurately and very clearly. And at the point of salvation, every believer receives the Spirit and is placed into the body by the baptism of the Spirit.

Now, you'll notice at the end of verse 4 - that's a long footnote. But the end of verse 4, it says they spoke "as the Spirit gave them utterance." This is a reminder of who controls the individual who's filled with the Spirit. An individual filled with the Spirit is controlled by the Holy Spirit, and this is exactly, you see, what Spirit-filled life is. It's a Spirit-controlled life where you've yielded everything to the control of the Holy Spirit. You're not running your own show anymore. And it's a momentary thing. You say, "Well, if you get filled with the Spirit, how long does it last?" Just one moment. That's all. It just lasts as long as there's yieldedness.

You say, "Well - and I'm supposed to do that all my life? Go on all my life, just yielding, yielding, yielding?" That's exactly right. And it's no problem. You'll only live right now in this present moment anyway. You've never lived in the future, never lived in the past. You're stuck here, you might as well yield. And don't get confused about the future. You'll never get there. You'll worry about the sweet by-and-by and live in the nasty now-and-now and it'll never be any different than that, see? Because now, this is the moment in which you live and it's just as simple as yielding now, that's all. People say, "Oh, I can't live the Christian life for 80 years." It's not that long, it's just as long as this moment of yieldedness to the Holy Spirit's control. And here we see a picture of those who were yielded and the Spirit moved through them to a special miracle.

Now, when men are filled with the Spirit of God later in the book of Acts, they preach the Word with boldness. In Ephesians, they have the wonderful relationships with everybody around them. They experience joy and evangelism as a result. So we need to be, as Paul said, being kept filled with the

Spirit.

So we see the evidence of the Spirit's coming, don't we? And all the perceptive senses are met. First of all, they heard and then they saw and then their minds comprehended these languages. Fantastic things. No question, the Spirit came. The promise of Jesus Christ came true and every Christian living today possesses the Holy Spirit. You and I have within us a divine dynamic. We have the very presence of the Spirit of God so that we're able to do exceeding abundantly above all we can ask or what? Or think. It's there.

Let me add a couple of notes here. If Pentecostal people - and I hate to let that title go to certain people because it's a wonderful term, but if Pentecostal people want to make this sign, this occasion, the norm for all Christians, and if they want to make tongues the absolute sign of a believer's baptism, then they're going to have to really do it the way it's done here and they're going to have to have the occasion also attended by noise from heaven like a mighty rushing wind, cloven tongues of fire, and be sure that they're in Jerusalem when it occurs. Because this is a special wonder for a special historical event.

And may I add this, friends? And I'm going to show you something really exciting about the strategy of the Holy Spirit. This was not primarily for preaching the gospel. This is not what this is for. It's a sign is what it's for. The preaching comes later. Who preaches later? Peter preaches the gospel. It never says they preached the gospel; it says they spoke the wonderful works of God. Never says anything about the gospel, about Jesus Christ at all. What they did was speak the wonderful works of God, and we'll get to that, as a sign. You see, this was to get the attention of the Jews to something supernatural going on and then Peter would preach the gospel. This is always the apostolic pattern.

The preaching of the apostles throughout the early church was attended by signs, wonders, and mighty deeds. But this did not substitute for the preaching, did it? Because the sermon comes in verse 14 of chapter 2 and there's more sermons after that, all the way through the book of Acts. Let me give you a verse that'll help you to understand that. Second Corinthians 12:12. Don't look it up, I'll read - 2 Corinthians 12:12 says, "Truly" - watch this one - "the signs of an apostle were wrought among you in all patience" - what were these? - "signs, wonders and mighty deeds." They were the signs that belonged to the apostles. Wherever the apostles proclaimed, signs attended them in order to gain the hearing of the people. How do you know the guy's speaking from God? If he's got supernatural things going on along with the message, that's pretty good evidence.

And there's another most important verse in Hebrews 2:3. We've studied this. It says this: "How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord and was confirmed unto us by them that heard Him." That would be the apostles who heard Christ. How did they confirm it? Catch this. "God also bearing them witness with signs, wonders, diverse miracles and gifts of the Holy Spirit." People wonder what are those gifts of the Holy Spirit for, like tongues, interpretation of tongues, and miracles and healing? Those were to confirm the apostolic proclamation of the gospel. That's what they were for. Gifts of the Holy Spirit, Hebrews 2:4, that's what it says.

So you see what happens here, then, is the expression of a miraculous thing to gain the attention of these people so that they would recognize something supernatural is going on. It did not substitute for the preaching of the gospel. The people probably spoke fluent Aramaic, which is probably what Peter preached in, so that wasn't the point. The point was not simply to communicate to them the

gospel but to give them a supernatural sign. And the only way they could really determine that it was a sign was if the language was something they knew and they could verify that Galileans wouldn't normally know how to speak that language unless something was going on.

Now, may I add another note - and we'll pick up some of these pieces in the few remaining minutes. If there is such a gift of languages as in Acts, and if it's still valid today, then something's wrong. Something's wrong in the pattern of the church. In the design of the Holy Spirit, something is missing. I quote from Dr. Barnes, a marvelous scholar of some years back, said this. "The gift of miracles is withdrawn. The apostles, by that miracle simply were empowered to speak other languages. That power must still be had if the gospel's to be preached, but now it requires the toil of many years to speak in foreign languages. It is now to be obtained not by miracles but by slow and careful study and toil. Men must labor for it." End quote.

In other words, if the gift still exists, then God for some strange reason has put unnecessary, crippling strings on the gospel because He makes people go through years of studying languages before they can ever begin to witness. And if people have this so-called gift to speak in foreign languages, it would seem rather unnecessary. And if God had designed such a language miracle for today, it would seem as though it could be put to great use. And if there is a gift of languages, my friends, let me ask this: Why is it only for certain special people in certain special movements who get together in special prayer meetings and speak it to each other who already speak the same language and who already know the truth? And if unbelievers are present, Paul says they will say you're mad because it will only confuse them.

You see, if such still exists, why doesn't it exist for missionaries? Or better yet, why are there some missionaries who claim to have the gift but still go to language school? So, you see, this experience in Acts is by no means the norm. We cannot make it the norm for all Christians. You cannot say that every Christian is supposed to be speaking foreign languages. Wycliffe would be more than happy to accept that since they're in the business of reducing everybody's language to writing and trying to communicate the gospel to them.

So we see here two distinct works of the Spirit. The baptism in verses 2 and 3 and the filling in verse 4, which issued in languages for a special reason, not to preach the gospel primarily, although in a sense they were declaring truths, but to act as a sign that God was moving and you better listen and you better pay attention because the preaching's coming in a minute. And it came immediately after this in verse 14. Peter's standing up among the eleven - wham! - and away he went.

All right, so we see the evidence. Quickly, the effect of the Spirit's coming, verse 5 to 11, and we'll just read through this because - with some brief comment. This is what happened when they started speaking in languages. Verse 5. "There were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven." Now, the final statement, "out of every nation under heaven," is an idiom and we don't need to take it literally but rather idiomatically for many, many lands. And notice the word "devout." That's a really interesting word. Sometime I'll do a word study on that.

But it is very interesting. It comes from a Greek word *eulabēs*, which means cautious. Devout people are cautious insofar as they do not want to offend God. That's the essence of reverence. The essence of a really devout person is that he will do nothing to offend God. Cautious. Very interesting word. And so they were cautious to be present at the feast lest they should offend God. What did Proverbs 9:10 say? "The fear of the Lord is" - what? - "the beginning of wisdom." The beginning of

wisdom. Devout men fear lest they offend God. They're very cautious.

Okay, then Jerusalem then is invaded at Pentecost by a cosmopolitan assembly of Jews from every land. Verse 6, "Now when this was noised abroad, the multitude came together and were confounded." We'll stop there for a moment. It says, "when this was noised abroad." Let me give you an interesting look at that. What was noised abroad? Well, some say, "Oh, this speaking in languages." I don't think so. I think the Greek indicates something else. The literal Greek translation of verse 6 is this: But this sound - *phōnēs* - singular - having come, the multitude came together. Whatever it was they heard, it was a singular sound, *phōnēs*, and it occurred at a point in time which the verb *genomenēs* indicates because that is an aorist verb.

So whatever it is, it's a single sound at a certain time. Now, if you go back in the passage, you find such a single sound at a certain time in verse 2. It says, "And suddenly there came a" - what? - "sound from heaven." Now, I believe that what they heard was the sound from heaven, not sounds, plural, of all these languages. They weren't yelling these languages. They couldn't have heard it all over Jerusalem, but they sure could have heard that sound like a mighty hurricane. And the sound of that wind drew them together and they were confused. Why? There's a sound but no hurricane, no wind.

Verse 6 says they were confounded, which is an interesting word. It's only used in Acts. It comes from a root word, which means to pour together. They were all mixed up. They were all confused and perplexed. What was going on? And what really confused them is when they got together, every man heard them speak in his own language. And this was a shock. Here are all of these guys that had been in that room and they're walking around and they're speaking in everybody's own native language. And they are just absolutely shocked. Verse 7, "They were all amazed." So we know now they were confounded, amazed, and then let's add to that, "they marveled."

Now, do you get the idea that the Holy Spirit's trying to tell us this made an impression? They were really messed up. I mean this is - in our language, we'd have to say they were super, super, super amazed to even get the point across because we've messed up so many words by spilling out expletives so frequently. But here, what you have is the idea that the Spirit is showing us this was truly a massive kind of confusion and perplexity. They were confounded. They were amazed. They marveled. And what really shook them up was this. They said to one another, "Behold, are not all these who speak Galileans?"

Now, you have to understand a little bit of the attitude that they had toward Galilee. Galilee was really Hickville. Galilee was in the boondocks. And the only people that lived in Galilee were hayseed types, you know? I mean people who were uneducated, uninformed - farmers and people who just really weren't in the cultural flow, you know? And you go back, for example, to Matthew 26:69 and Peter, in the denial, says, "Now Peter sat outside in the court and a maid came" and so forth and they kept coming and asking him and he kept denying and denying and denying. Verse 73, "After a little while came unto him they that stood by and said to Peter, 'Surely thou art one of them'" - you're one of those followers of Jesus - "for thy speech betrayeth thee." You've got that Galilean accent.

Now, I don't know what it was but evidently it involved poor grammar. Mark 14:70, same thing, he says - Peter denies again. In a little while "they that stood" came and said to Peter, "Surely, thou art one of them, for thou art a Galilean, thy speech agreeth to this." You sound like a Galilean. And Galileans weren't known for being linguists, to put it mildly. In fact, Nathanael said unto him in John

1:46, "Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?" Nazareth was one of the cities in Galilee, see? And in chapter 7, verse 52, the Jews were saying, when Jesus said He was a prophet from Galilee, the Jews said, "Search and look, for out of Galilee arises no prophet." Nothing ever comes out of there worth anything.

They really had a low view of Galilee. And here, all of a sudden, all these unlearned, uneducated Galileans are rattling off all these languages and they are absolutely dumbfounded. They don't know what's going on. Verse 8. They had no explanation, it says, "And how hear we every man in our own tongue wherein we were born?" Where'd they get all this information? How are they doing this? Doesn't mean the only language they spoke, it means their native tongue in which they were born, and that's very clearly pointed out in that verse. And then it tells us the roll call of the languages: Parthians - now, he starts at the east, I'm not going to take time with all these, but he starts way at the east and comes west, naming these various places. Parthians.

They, incidentally, were probably the worst enemies of the Roman Empire, far to the east. The Medes, formerly part of the Medo-Persian Empire, the Elamites, which inhabited the old territory around Babylonia, the Mesopotamia people, that would be the area between the two rivers, the Tigris and the Euphrates, that's what Mesopotamia means, that which is between rivers, those from Judea, then coming west to Asia Minor, Cappadocia, Pontus, Asia. Asia does not mean the continent as we know it, it means a little Asia Minor territory up there. Ephesus was the capital and Pergamos and Smyrna were both cities there, which we're familiar with. But all of this is Asia Minor.

Then Phrygia, Pamphylia, then jumping across the Mediterranean down to Egypt and the parts of Libya about Cyrene. Libya's North Africa and some Jews, about a fourth of the population of Cyrene, Josephus says, was Jewish, so they were there. Then sojourners from Rome. And we know there was a Jewish population in Rome because by 49 A.D., Claudius threw them out, so they had to be there before then. Then Jews and proselytes - proselytes are those converted who accepted circumcision and adopted Judaism - Cretans from the isle of Crete, 60 miles or so south of Greece, and Arabians from the great Arab peninsula between the Red Sea and the gulf. There they were, all gathered together, all these people, Jews from every place. What a strategic time for the Spirit to do something.

And notice in verse 11, it says this: "We do hear them speak in our languages the wonderful works of God." Now, hang onto this. Here comes some really interesting strategy on the part of the Holy Spirit. Now, I said to you earlier that they did not necessarily preach the gospel. It is not telling us they had an orderly proclamation nor discourse. It doesn't say that they gave out the first century four laws in - right in order, that they just went right down the gospel, doesn't say that. The indication here is very clear that they spoke the wonderful works of Jehovah God. In other words, they spoke in a Jewish context.

Now, watch the strategy of the Spirit. First of all, the Spirit sent a sound like the wind just to make sure they got gathered together. He got them all together, then they had this marvelous miracle of speaking in languages just to make sure He really messed up their minds. And, you see, when they then began to speak the wonderful works of God, then the Jews only had two choices. Either this was a miracle of the devil or it's a miracle of God, but when they started praising God, that eliminated one of those choices. And so what the Spirit was doing was narrowing the whole thing down to the admission that this is of God. Do you see? And then when they were seeing that this was of God, and Peter stood right up out of the midst of that group and started preaching the gospel, the

connection was obvious.

You see what the Spirit is doing? He is just bringing them together, preparing them, breaking down the barriers and then introducing Christ right into the scene. Beautiful strategy. And so they start exalting the wonderful works of God. And every Jew there could have said, "Amen," "Oh, Amen," "Oh, oh" - and they could have joined right in with them because what they were saying was concerning the God of Israel. Declaring His wonderful works. What would that mean? That would mean reciting from creation right through the Old Testament, wouldn't it? All the wonderful works of God. Did you know that Jews always did that? Did you know that that was part of Jewish life, to recite the wonderful works of God? Always.

In Exodus, for example, chapter 15:11, "Who is like Thee, O Lord, doing wonders?" Then you come to the Psalms, and Psalms, one right after the other, does this. Psalm 26, verse 7, "That I make known with the voice of thanksgiving and tell of all Thy wondrous works." Then you go over to Psalm 40 and verse 5 and you read, "Many, O Lord my God, are Thy wonderful works." Then you go over to chapter 77 and verse 11 and you read, "I will remember the works of the Lord. Surely I will remember Thy wonders." Chapter 78, verse 4, the wonderful works that the Lord hath done. Chapter 89, chapter 96, chapter 107, chapter 111, away it goes, constantly praising the wonderful works of God. Isaiah 25:1 is another good one.

So what you have here is a whole lot of Jews just praising God and glorifying God right in the midst of a miracle, therefore connecting the miracle to whom? To God. And this is very hard for these others to handle because they really don't like these disciples of Jesus at all but there in this Jewish context, it's a little tough. And then when right out of the midst of all this praise of God, Peter stands up - and they haven't got any options but to say it's got to be from God, the devil is not about to run around Jerusalem praising God. And the only option they've got left - and all of a sudden Peter jumps right out of the midst of all of them and says, "Now let me speak to you about what this God has to say to you concerning His Son." What a beautiful setup for the message. And that's exactly what happened.

You come over to Peter's sermon for just a minute. I'll give you a preview of it. This doesn't count. We'll get into it next week. But it'll give you a glimpse. Peter takes his text immediately from the Old Testament. Verse 17, "It shall come to pass in the last days, saith God." Hey, this is the same God, the same Word we've been talking about. And then he takes off. And all the way through, he relates it to God. Verse 22, he talks about Jesus but he says "Jesus, a man approved" - of what? - "of God." Verse 23, Jesus "delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God." Verse 24, "God hath raised Him up." Verse 30, God raised up Christ. Verse 32, God raised Him up. Verse 30, promised by God. Verse 33, exalted by God to sit on the throne, declared to be a King by God.

Verse 36, "Therefore, let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, Lord and Messiah." You see what he's doing? You see the beauty of the strategy of the Holy Spirit? Just talk about God, praise God, praise God all the time, establish the fact that your God is the same God as those Jews' and then right out of that context begin to speak about what that God says concerning His Messiah. So you see the preparation of the Holy Spirit right up to the preaching. Do you know what the most important thing is that happens in the first two chapters of Acts? The sermon that Peter preached. And everything else? Just preparation, that's all.

They were baptized into the body that they might be filled with the Spirit, that they might speak in

languages to establish a sign, that through that sign they might declare the wonderful works of God, that they might get the ear of the Jew, that they might preach the gospel. That's the ultimate end of the filling of the Spirit. That's the ultimate design for every believer, is to get to the preaching of the gospel. Everything else was just an adjunct leading to that. And so the Spirit of God in wonderful, masterful technique prepares the soil for the planting of the seed. And wasn't it wonderful what happened? Three-thousand people came to Jesus Christ. Their hearts had been softened and prepared by all the work of the Spirit leading up to the preaching. So we see the evidence and the effect of the Spirit's coming.

Lastly, and just quickly, the explanation of the Spirit's coming. Now, in the midst of this crowd, you got a lot of unbelievers. Now, what are they going to do to explain this? Isn't it interesting how with all the proof in the world some people still aren't convinced? You know, "I've made up my mind, don't confuse me with facts." Isn't it amazing how you can give them all the evidence there is and they don't want to believe it, they won't believe it. That's why we say salvation is not an issue of dialogue, it's an issue of sovereignty. It has not to do with how well we argue, it has to do with how the Spirit draws and breaks down the barrier.

And so here are some who have seen all of this and they're not about to give in and say it's God, not any way, they just block their minds out, which are blinded by Satan. And verse 12, listen to this, "They were all amazed and were perplexed." Here they are, just as confused as ever. What in the world's going on? "Saying one to another, 'What meaneth this?'" Now, do you see this? Just out of the speaking of the wonderful works of God, they weren't getting the message. That was only a sign. The meaning didn't come until the sermon, do you see? What's going on? Well, this is to get your attention, friends. They were amazed and confused. But there are always those who offer the quick answer, you know, the glib, sarcastic, mock - here it comes in verse 13. "Others mocking said, 'These men are full of new wine.'"

And this isn't just an analysis, this is mockery. They're not just saying, "Oh, they must be drunk." That wouldn't be mockery, that would be at least one approach to it. And since Paul does say that oftentimes Spirit-filled people might be mistaken for drunken people and Ephesians 5:18, "Be not drunk with wine, be filled with the Spirit." In other words, you completely let control of your life over to an outside force, or an inside force, better. But what he says here is others are mocking when they say this. Well, what kind of mockery is it? Well, you have to understand the Greek to get it.

There are several words for wine. There's one word for the wine that's fermented and that's the stuff that really belts you, see, that's the stuff that you just, you know, you can't handle that stuff. Too much of that and it's no question about it that you're drunk. But he uses the word that has nothing to do with fermentation, the word for sweet, freshly pressed grape juice and thus it is mockery. It's a slam at them. It's a kind of a feeble slam and a feeble attempt to explain what's going on. They are ridiculing these men by referring to this state as a state of drunkenness under these terms. They're saying this: They are such babies that when they take a little sip of grape juice, they become drunk. They can't handle their grape juice. That's what they're saying. They're prattling babies, drunk on grape juice, look at them.

So with mockery they embrace the theory that drunkenness teaches language. Brilliant. And see, in their eyes, Pentecost is a joke. It's a frolic. It's a drunken frolic. It's amazing how these Jewish people who thought themselves wise in the things of God were so stupid, isn't it? Don't you remember what Jesus said to them in John 8? He says, "I know why you don't understand Me, because I speak

truth.” He says, “You’re of your father, the devil. If I lied, you’d get it.” They did not understand and they tried to explain it away by mocking them and saying, “Look at these babies, can’t handle grape juice.”

This was only the beginning of what their attitude was because in chapter 4, verse 7, they start to question. Chapter 4, verse 17, they start to threaten. Chapter 5, verse 18, they put him in prison. Chapter 5, verse 40, they beat on him. In chapter 7, verse 58, they kill him. This is only the beginning of their attitude. Isn’t it amazing how the preaching of the gospel, how the work of God splits right down the middle and men either come running to Jesus Christ or they come against His own with stones and sticks? We see it all through Acts.

So the church is born. And it’s born in a beautiful strategy of the Holy Spirit, all focusing in on the preaching of the gospel. You know something, beloved, the Spirit of God has been given to you just as He was given to those at Pentecost. The Spirit of God lives within you. The Spirit of God can work through you, maybe not in this miraculous sense, but in a sense that is indeed miraculous. The Spirit of God can work through you as you yield to Him and experience the filling of the Spirit, that through your life He’ll prepare fertile soil for your preaching of the Word of God.

And don’t begin anywhere but at the beginning. If you want to be an effective Christian, begin where the Bible says to begin. Begin by being kept filled with the Spirit. You possess the Holy Spirit. The power is there. Turn it on by a totally yielded life, and then watch God move in all your relationships and through the kind of person you are, prepare the fertile soil so that when you open your mouth, the seed is ready to be received.

You see, if Peter had gotten up to do what he did and preach that sermon without the preparation, he would have been stoned on the spot, and so the Spirit of God moved in a marvelous way to prepare the hearing. And so does the Spirit want to work through your life. You really don’t have any right to stand up and speak until by the life that you’ve lived, you’ve prepared the soil so that they willingly will hear. Let the Spirit of God fill you, that when you open your mouth, there might be reception. Let’s pray.

Father, we’re thankful this morning that you’ve taught us again from your Word some principles to learn in our lives. We’re thankful for what we’ve seen just in the doctrine of the birth of the church and trying to pull these things together in these two weeks. And, Lord, we just pray that we might be true students of the Scripture, those kind not only that know it but that do it; not only hearers, but doers. Father, we thank you that in your marvelous grace you designed to build your church and that you’ve not let the gates of hell prevail against it. And that you’re still building it and even today, this morning, you are baptizing new believers into the body, that you’re indwelling by your Spirit Christians. And Father, that you’re saying to every one of us who are here this morning, “I want to fill your life. I want to dwell within you richly, that is, filling up every area of your life, totally controlling everything.”

Father, may we claim nothing for ourselves, but yield everything to the control of the presence of the Spirit of Christ. That, indeed, we might be the kind of person that attracts the attention of others, the kind of miracle life that draws the eyes and the ears and the hearts of others to us, that when we open our mouth, the soil may have already been prepared by the kind of person we are, that the message we give may bear fruit. So, Father, we know that before the job is to be done, we must be the people who can do it. Start with us to do a great work of conviction, if need be, to bring about sin

that is unconfessed to our attention that we might confess it and begin afresh and aright with you to be controlled by the Spirit. And then, Father, that we may be used for the ultimate glory of Jesus Christ in the winning of men and women to Him.

Thank you for what we've learned today and for what you shall teach us continuously as these things linger in our hearts. In Jesus' name. Amen.

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