

Is the Church Still in Transition?, Part 2

Scripture: Selected Scriptures

Code: 1370

We mentioned this morning that it was very important to discuss among the other issues in the Charismatic Movement that we were discussing, that we needed to discuss the issue of historical transition. We've been in a series now, and this is about the seventh message in the series relating the modern Charismatic Movement to the Scripture. Some very, very amazing things continue to go on in the Charismatic Movement, things that must be brought to the test of the Word of God.

I recently learned of a situation where a local group of charismatic people who are very well known in the southern California area and very substantially influential in their movement made the statement that whenever there were five people who agreed on the same divine revelation they accepted it as the will of God, and that's how they determined how their actions should be. That's pretty scary because I'm sure they could find five emissaries of Satan who would equally agree, and the upshot of it was that five people had had the same revelation that they were to go out two by two to win the world to Jesus Christ, one Roman Catholic and one Protestant, and those two pairing up were to go out in the name of Christ to evangelize.

There are many other things that are disturbing about the movement. Those kinds of decisions based upon supposed agreement and revelation that wind up placing someone who believes in the truth of the Word of God with someone who believes in the truth of the tradition of the church together and in common cause. Those kinds of things, among other things, are very disturbing things, and so we have endeavored in all fairness to the Word of God and with all objectivity and with all great desire to serve you, the body of Christ, to deal with some of the issues in the Charismatic Movement to try to bring them to the light of the Word of God.

Now we've been looking at the issue of revelation, interpretation and apostolic uniqueness, and this morning we began number four in that broad outline, the issue of historical transition. And we pointed to you that basically the charismatics have one cardinal doctrine that distinguishes them from other groups. And that is they say that what occurred in Acts 2:4 where it says, "They were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and began to speak in other languages as the Holy Spirit gave them utterance," that that which occurred there is to occur in the life of every Christian if that Christian is also to have the same Holy Spirit power, the same fullness, and the same capability to see and do the miraculous that the early church manifested. So that what they're saying is that Acts 2:4 is normative for the church, and they say that because it's in Acts 2:4 and because it's recorded there as what happened then it is to happen throughout history to all Christians who would have the same power. And because further

such a coming of the Holy Spirit attended with tongues happens several other times in the Book of Acts they therefore conclude that this is normal procedure. You're saved here, you receive the Holy Spirit here in power and fullness, accompanied by tongues, and there is power that is released as a result of that.

And this second work is something you must seek earnestly and diligently, and all of that is concluded because it happened in Acts. No such word is ever given in the epistles. We are never commanded to have this experience in the epistles, nor are we commanded to have it in the Book of Acts, but what they do is say, "Since it happened in Acts, therefore it must happen now."

That brings me to discuss something that is very little discussed today, and that is this. Just because it happened in Acts, does that necessarily mean that it is for today, that it is for the duration of the history of the church? And we saw this morning that it isn't so because the book is a book of historical transition, and what occurred in the period of the Book of Acts and what was recorded there was not then turned into a command to the church, but was simply recorded as history. And we tried to show this morning that if you accept the fact that everything that happens in the Book of Acts is normal for the Christian, you're really into a deep, deep hole because there are so many other very different things that happen that cannot be and need not be and are not to be reproduced today.

Now, I tried to show you the transition nature of the Book of Acts by two basic illustrations. One was the re-offer of the kingdom to Israel in Chapter 3 and the second was basically the vow of Paul in Chapter 18. Both of those illustrate the fact that this book is a book of transition. Even after the church is founded in Acts 2, you still have the kingdom offered to Israel in Acts 3. There is still an overlap. When you see God working in great ages or dispensations, or whatever you want to call them, one doesn't automatically come to a screaming end and another one begin. There is always sort of an overlap. Even at the time of the kingdom when this age ends and the kingdom begins, there is a period of overlap in there where there is a cleaning up after Armageddon and where there is a reshuffling to establish the kingdom. And so it is not just as clean and clearly broken as we might like to think in our little charts where the line comes straight down.

And so we saw in the re-offer of the kingdom that very truth, and we saw the apostle Paul, who wanted to thank God, and he took a Jewish vow, the Nazarite vow, in Chapter 18, which is very interesting because he is a Christian. He is the apostle to the Gentiles. He is the one who has been given the dispensation of the mysteries to declare the truth of the New Testament Word and the new covenant and all of its clear delineation, and yet he is still acting in an Old Testament way. Again we see the transitional overlap.

And also, one other area that I pointed out to you this morning was the fact that the church never really made a big break from the patterns of Judaism. We saw how that the church met first of all in the temple, and even when it went to the Gentile countries it met in the synagogues; how in Romans

Chapter 14 the Apostle Paul says, "Look, if somebody regards the day, then let him regard the Sabbath." Don't hassle him about it. Let the transition take care of itself. We no longer keep the Sabbath. Today we make a big issue about Seventh Day Adventism, but in those days Paul said, "Just don't worry about it. If he regards the day, he regards it to the Lord. If he doesn't, he does it to the Lord. Don't let it bother you. And if he's still hung up on the dietary laws and doesn't want to eat pork, then don't serve it to him."

And so there were some very clear words in the Book of Acts that are also defined in Paul's letter to the Romans that help us to see that the church was very slow in making a break out of Judaism in terms of its basic cultural forms. So the Book of Acts is transitional, and many things that occurred in the Book of Acts were to help the Jews in understanding this transition that was taking place. We gave you several illustrations of the uniqueness of Judaism this morning and how important it was for God to give them time so that that change could come into their understanding.

Now, I told you after looking at those broad elements of the transitional nature of Acts that I wanted to take you back through and show you how Acts 2, 8, 10 and 19 fit into that transition. Let's go to Acts chapter 2, Act chapter 2 and verse 1, "And when the Day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all in one accord in one place and suddenly there came a sound from heaven like a rushing mighty wind and it filled all the house where they were sitting and there appeared unto them cloven tongues as of fire and it sat upon each of them and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other languages as the Spirit gave them utterance." Now, the charismatic Pentecostal teaching is that the baptism and the tongues that occur here in Chapter 2 are subsequent to salvation. They say these people have already been saved, and now at a later time they are getting the power of the Holy Spirit which released in Chapter 2 began to change the world. Now, I would agree in the initial sense that these are saved people. The 120 disciples gathered in the upper room in my judgment no doubt were saved people. You say, "Why do you think that?" Well, let me show you a couple of Scriptures.

If we are to look for example - well, let's see where we might begin, Luke 10:20. I think this is interesting. Jesus is talking here and sending out the 70, and He says, among other things here, that you're going to go and you're going to carry the message and you're going to heal the sick and you're going to cast out demons and so forth, and so forth, and so forth all the way down. Verse 20, "Notwithstanding in this, rejoice not that the spirits are subject unto you, but rather rejoice because your names are - " what? " - written in heaven." Now already the followers of Christ, those who are disciples, obviously are considered heavenly citizens. So we would say they are regenerate or saved people. Their names are already written in heaven. Also, I would call your attention to John 15:3. Again, we're still before the cross. We're still before Pentecost. In John 15:3 - well actually we could look at 1 through 3. "I am the vine. My Father is the vinedresser. Every branch in Me bearing not fruit He takes away, and every branch that bears fruit He purges it that it may bring forth more fruit. Now you are clean through the Word which I have spoken unto you."

He says “to those who are the true branches,” and in His mind were the 11 and Judas was the false branch. He says, “You are clean. You have been purged.” In verse 5 He says, “I am the vine and ye are the branches. The ones abiding in Me and I in him the same is bringing forth much fruit.”

So here is the idea that they are clean, that they are the ones being purged. They have been spiritually set apart. And so it seems to be clear, and we grant the point at this juncture that these people in Acts 2 were already believing people. They constituted the apostles and some other disciples. I don't have any problem with that.

Now, also I would call you to the 20th chapter of John, 22nd verse. And again this a good indication that these were in God's eyes people who had received salvation, even if it was Old Testament salvation in a sense, salvation by grace in anticipation of the work of Christ. Jesus says to them in verse 21, “Peace be unto you as My Father has sent Me, so send I you, and when He had said this, He breathed on them and said unto them, ‘Receive ye the Holy Spirit.’”

Now, the Pentecostals tell us that they received the Holy Spirit here. So, now listen. Their salvation is indicated in Chapter 10 of Luke, Chapter 15 of John. Here is their initial receipt of the Holy Spirit, and then the Pentecostals say there is a subsequent reception of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, and that's the second thing that really gives you the power, and that's what created the charge that blew through the world in the Book of Acts. There is just one problem with this. I would grant them the fact that these are saved people, but I would not grant them the fact that they received the Holy Spirit in John 20:22. It doesn't say that they received the Holy Spirit. It simply says, “Jesus said to them, ‘Receive ye the Holy Spirit.’”

Now you say, “Well, what did he mean by that?” Well, I am convinced that this was a statement that is a pledge from Jesus that was fulfilled on the Day of Pentecost. All right? That there was no receiving of the Holy Spirit here, but simply the pledge. Jesus was saying in effect “Receive the Holy Spirit.” In other words, because of your faith and because I will commission you and because you will be ones declaring sin and righteousness, according to verse 23, “I grant you My Spirit.” The actual reception yet to come, much like the fact that we are citizens of heaven yet to inherit what that means.

Now, let me show you why I believe that. In John 20:26, same chapter, a few verses further, after 8 days, again, His disciples were inside, Thomas with them, then came Jesus. The door is being shut, stood in the midst and said, “Peace be unto you.” Now notice, 8 days later they haven't gone anywhere. Jesus said in Acts 1:8, “But you shall receive power after the Holy Spirit has come upon you and you shall be witnesses unto me in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria and the outermost part of the earth.” If they had received the Holy Spirit 8 days earlier they wouldn't have been in that room 8 days later.

Look at John 21:4, John 21 and verse 4, "When the morning was now come, Jesus stood on the shore, but the disciples knew not that it was Jesus." Verse 12, "Jesus said unto them, 'Come and have breakfast,' and none of the disciples dared ask Him who art thou, knowing that it was the Lord."

Now, some would argue from this, and it may be a point. I throw it in for whatever it's worth, that since the work of the Holy Spirit is to point out who Christ is, they would not have had to wait to recognize Him by seeing Him at the breakfast table on the shore. They would not have been in ignorance in verse 4. Now, that is possible. That's a possible argument; not as strong as the first one, but the strong argument comes in the 8th verse of the first chapter of Acts, Acts 1:5 would be a place to start. "For John truly baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now." They're still waiting, still waiting, still waiting. He said unto them in verse 8, "But you shall receive power after the Holy Spirit is come on you and shall be witnesses to me in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, the uttermost part of the earth." Still waiting, still waiting. Verse 14, still waiting, continuing in prayer. Finally, in Chapter 2 the Holy Spirit comes.

I don't see any reason to feel that the Holy Spirit came twice. I don't see any reason to feel that the Holy Spirit came in John 20, which was after the crucifixion. I may have said it was before earlier. It was after the crucifixion and after the resurrection, but there is no reason to feel that when He said, "Receive ye the Holy Spirit" it was anything more than a pledge because of the fact they were still waiting all the way till the second chapter of Acts for the fulfillment of the truth that when He came they would be witnesses.

Now another passage that I think we might look at is John 7:39. And in John 7:39 it says, and this is perhaps the weightiest of all the arguments, backing up to 37, "In the last day, the great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out saying, 'If any man thirsts, let him come unto Me and drink. He that believeth on Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart shall flow rivers of living water.' But this spake He of the Spirit whom they that believe on Him should receive for the Holy Spirit was not yet given because Jesus was not yet - " what? " - glorified."

And the indication of that passage is that the Spirit cannot come until Jesus has ascended, until the prayer that He made in the garden has been fulfilled. "Father, give Me back the glory that I had with You before the world began." And when he ascended to receive His glory, then the Spirit could come and not before, according to John 7:39. So what you have in John 20 is simply a pledge.

Now I would draw you also to the 16th chapter of John and the 7th verse. "Nevertheless, said Jesus, I tell you the truth. It is expedient for you that I go away, for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you, but if I depart, I will send Him unto you, and when He is come," and then He goes on. Now, what condition had to happen before the Holy Spirit could come? Jesus had to leave. And that's why we say it isn't because we want to argue with the charismatic people. It is because it is clear in

the Word of God. The Spirit of God came for the first time with fullness of power upon all the believers on the Day of Pentecost. Yes, they were saved earlier, but in this period of transition it was obvious that the distinctions between the old and the new covenant would allow for some overlap. And though they believed in Christ and the fullest sense were Old Testament saints, they never knew the meaning of the New Testament era of the Spirit until the Day of Pentecost when the church was born. There is subsequence there, but there is no reason to believe they had received the Spirit minimally in John 20 and maximally in Acts 2. That was only a pledge on Jesus' part.

So, now we go back to Acts 2, and what we find in Acts 2 is the one coming of the Holy Spirit, the one coming of the Holy Spirit, and I want you to notice something right off the bat here. There is no asking. There is no seeking. There is no pleading. There is no yielding. There is no nothing on the part of the people. It simply says, and catch this, "And when the Day of Pentecost was fully come they were all in one accord in one place." That's it. They were having a wonderful time in one room, and that's all it said. No spiritual qualification at all. They were never told to seek this thing. They were never told to tarry for it. They were never told to yield to it. They were never told to plead. They were there and God's sovereignty acted upon them and it was time for the birth of the church. It had nothing to do with their pleading. It had to do with the Day of Pentecost because the Day of Pentecost was a significant day in God's plan. It was a special feast that had a relationship to the Holy Spirit in the Old Testament. And when that day came the Spirit came and it was all God's plan and had nothing to do with what they were doing.

And yet, the *Pentecostal Evangel*, which is the major American Pentecostal journal puts in every issue this statement, "We believe that the baptism of the Holy Spirit, according to Acts 2:4, is given to believers who ask for it." That's in every one of their magazines, but that is not what it says here, and that is not what they did here. In fact, they don't ask for the Spirit in Chapter 2. They don't ask in Chapter 8. They don't ask in Chapter 10. They don't ask in Chapter 19. In none of the 4 occasions in this entire book where the Spirit of God comes is there any asking. This is sovereign.

Now, is this normal for all believers? No. This is simply the birth of the church, people. This is simply the first coming of the Holy Spirit. I mean, take Adam. Is it normal for everybody to be created full grown? No, but you have to begin somewhere. If you want to go back to the book of Genesis and say, "Genesis is normative. If you were born as a baby, you're not human. Human beings are created, and women, they are made from men's ribs. That's the way it is." No, you see, when you have a beginning you never, ever make a norm out of a beginning. That isn't the way it works. It was simply the first coming, the birth of the church. It didn't happen in Antioch. No. It didn't happen in Galatia. It didn't happen in Philippi. It didn't happen in Colossae. It didn't happen in Rome. It didn't happen in Thessalonica. It just didn't happen. It was the beginning.

From then on the coming of the Holy Spirit happened at the moment of faith, and in fact in Romans 8:9 it says, "If any man has not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His." That's clear enough. If you are

a Christian, you'll have the Spirit. If you don't have the Spirit, you're not a Christian. So the conclusion is all Christians have the Spirit. And in 1 Corinthians 12:12 and 13 it says that we have all been baptized by the Spirit into the body, and we have all been made to drink of that one Spirit, and we all have what Jesus was talking about out of us flowing those rivers of living water. All of us. Every Christian. The only thing that is ever told us, the only statement that is ever made to use relative to that is in Ephesians 5:18 where it says, "But be being kept filled with the Spirit." That's all. He's there. His fullness is there. All you have to do is be being kept filled. I don't even think you have to seek the filling of the Holy Spirit. I think the filling of the Holy Spirit is automatic when you are righteous, when you are walking in the Spirit.

So, there isn't any seeking going on here, and just because it happened in Acts 2, there is no reason to make it the norm for every single person's experience throughout the history of the Church. There's just no reason for that. Let me show you again in Acts 2 something that I think is interesting and helpful. "When the Day of Pentecost was fully come, they were with one accord in one place. Suddenly there came a sound from heaven like a rushing, mighty wind." Notice, it wasn't a wind. It was a sound like a wind. Okay? Like means like, not a wind, but like a wind, a sound like a wind would make, a whooshing sound, and it filled the house where they sitting. Everywhere in the place it was shoo shoo, like that. "And there appeared unto them cloven tongues - " watch this one " - like fire." There wasn't actual fire. It was like it, and it was a little tongue on everybody's head. A little tongue would look like a little flame, wouldn't it? Just a little tongue on people. I'm just telling you what it said, and it sat on each one of them.

Now, let me help you to see what's going on here if you want to segment this. What I believe happens, verse 2, is the Holy Spirit comes. He comes, and the spirit is often compared, particularly in John 3, with the wind. You could even translate it like a rushing, mighty spirit. Same word. Same in Hebrew, *ruach*. Same in the Greek *pneuma*. So the Spirit comes, and in verse 3 there is the actual reception of the Spirit by every individual. That's why there is a cloven tongue as it were, or a little flame of fire on the head of every individual to show that when the Spirit comes who receives? Everybody. As a result of that, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, the receiving of the Spirit. First He comes. Then they receive, and then comes the outflow, and then they began to speak in other languages.

Now, this happened subsequent for them, and the languages had a very definite purpose, very definite purpose, as a sign to Israel. "They spoke the wonderful works of God. The people of Israel came together and said, 'What is this? It must be God.' Peter stood up and preached and 3,000 people were saved." Not by the tongues or the languages, but by the preaching. Is this to be the norm for every Christian? No. We don't all get in a room somewhere and sit there until this happens. We believe that Paul clearly indicates that the Spirit of God comes upon every believer, Romans 8:9, 1 Corinthians 12:12. How about this? What? "You don't know your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, which you have of God?" You know who he said that to? Carnal Corinthian. The cruddy Corinthians.

Sure, they were the temple. They had the Spirit. All Christians do.

What happened here was very unusual. Now, the tongues, as I said, and we'll get into this in Chapter 14, were a special sign to Israel prophesied in the Book of Isaiah. A special sign just for Israel, a judicial sign. A sign that is clearly illuminated in the 14th chapter of 1 Corinthians, and I'll show you just a brief verse so you'll understand the meaning here. In 1 Corinthians 14, and we'll get to this in a while. In verse 21, Paul helps us understand tongues and why they happen. "In the law it is written," and that's Isaiah 28. "In the law it is written with men of other tongues and other lips will I speak to this people – " and this people refers to Israel " - and yet for all that will they will not hear Me, says the Lord, wherefore tongues are for a sign, not to them that believe, but to them that believe not." Stop there.

Tongues are a sign to unbelieving Israel. What they really were was a judicial sign. It was as if God was saying, "I've spoken the language you understand so long and you haven't heard. I'm going to start speaking in one you don't understand." And this will be in a sense an active judgment upon you. It's kind of like saying, "When you could hear Me you wouldn't, and now when you perhaps would, you can't." And so there is a sign here to Israel, and we'll cover that in more detail.

And that's the uniqueness of the situation. These people were still Old Testament saints. This is the birth of the church. The Spirit comes. There are unique signs because this is the first time this has ever happened, and God wanted them to know something unusual was happening. So there was a noise, and there was something to see, and then there was something to hear because they needed to be sure the Spirit of God had come. It would have been easy if there was no wind and no tongues and no little cloven tongues of fire for everybody to say, "Well, did anything really happen? Did something happen to you?" "I don't know." "I didn't see or hear nothing." So God made sure there wasn't any doubt about something happening, because that was the way to get it all started.

Now let's go to chapter 8 and see the second incident. Acts 8. Now here, charismatics will say that there is a second subsequent reception of the Holy Spirit. Early in the 8th Chapter of the Book of Acts people are being saved in Samaria. But when you come to 14, Acts 8:14 we read this, "Now when the apostles who were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the Word of God, they sent to 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 on none of them, only they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. Then laid they their hands on them and they received the Holy Spirit." Now notice, these people, according to verse 16, had been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. They were Christians, but they had not yet received the Holy Spirit. He had not fallen on them, so the apostles came, laid their hands on them and they received the Holy Spirit.

Pentecostal people say, "You see this is subsequent." I say, "Of course it is." They were saved here, but there was an interval of time until they received the baptism of the Holy Spirit, if you will, and the

reason was simple. This is historical transition. You know who these people are? It's very easy. Go to verse 5. Phillip went down to the city of what? Samaria. What do you know about the Jews and the Samaritans? Yeah, they didn't like each other, did they? For 500 years the Samaritans and the Jews hated each other. And the reason was the Samaritans had intermarried with Gentiles and were a half-breed race, and the Jews because of their strong nationalism and their strong Jewish feeling resented those people who would intermingled, and so there was a terrible racial religious rift between the Jew and the Samaritan.

In fact, when a Jew would travel to the North, he would go around Samaria so he wouldn't have to get Samaritan dirt on his feet. And that's what was so amazing when it says, "And Jesus said, 'I must needs go through Samaria.'" That was the straight line. That was the best way to go, but no Jew would go that way because he wouldn't soil himself on the ground that belonged to the Samaritans.

So there was a terrible rift, and listen, if the Samaritans had received the Holy Spirit at the same time they had believed, it would have perpetuated the same dichotomy. They would have had their own little Samaritan thing, and the Jews would have had their own little thing. And the two would have perpetuated a separation, and God never wanted that because Jesus' prayer was "Father, I pray that they may be – " what? " - one." John 17.

So God withheld the giving of the Spirit until the time that the apostles who were Jewish could come and see with their own eyes and be instrumental with their own hands, in including the Samaritans in that one body. So you see, we're in the transition again, people. God didn't want to start little individual churches, and so He made sure that the Samaritans' real conversion and real reception of the Spirit was visibly seen by the apostles.

Now, listen to the second thought. It was also important to God that the Samaritans understand the power and the authority of the apostles. You understand that? Because what was it that the early church studied? The apostles' what? Doctrine. If it was important for the Jew to know the Samaritan was in the church, it was important for the Samaritan to know that the apostle was the source of divine truth. And so because those two things had to come together, God allowed it to happen this way so that the Samaritans would say, "This apostle, these men are the messengers of God, and we will hear their word, even though they're Jewish." And the Jew would say, "The Samaritans are in the church, even though they're half-breeds, because they got the same thing we got."

Apostolic authority was at stake and so was church unity. I'll show you a little interesting grammatical issue here that could be developed. It says, "For as yet – " verse 16 " - the Holy Spirit was fallen on none of them." Literally, for not yet was the Holy Spirit or was He fallen on them. Not yet is *oudep*. It's an interesting word, and as I studied that word, because I thought it would be important to look at it, the word basically means that something that should have happened didn't. That's interesting. In other words, the idea of the word is that the two are components of one event. It would be like saying

they were saved, but for some strange reason the Holy Spirit hadn't come. See? The "not yet" implies something else that is about to happen and should have happened. It pulls together two components to make one event, and so even the implication of the language here is that these two things normally occur together. Now you say "Why was the gap?" Simply to allow the Samaritans to see they were under apostolic authority, and to allow the Jews to see that the Samaritans were in the same church they were in, had the same experience and received the same Holy Spirit. It puts that unity together.

Let's go to the third one, chapter 10. Here is the third time this happens, and in Chapter 10 we don't have Jews being saved. We don't have Samaritans being saved. We have Gentiles. And now we're really going out there. If you think there was bitterness between the Jew and the Samaritan, just imagine the bitterness between the Jew and the Gentile. When a Jew came in from traveling in a Gentile country he shook the dust off his feet and his clothes because he didn't want Gentile dirt dragged into his country. A Jew wouldn't enter the house of a Gentile. They believed that Gentiles threw their aborted babies down the drain, which they had in the center of any house and the dead body polluted the house, and they believed the Gentiles did that all the time so they wouldn't go in a Gentile house.

They wouldn't eat a meal cooked by Gentile hands. They supposedly, some of them wouldn't even buy meat cut by a Gentile butcher. They wouldn't use Gentile utensils. There was such an unbelievable rift that no one of us in this society today could ever conceive of what it was like. Imagine what went on during the slave era in the United States and then multiply it 100 times, and you'll have the understanding of what it was like between the Jews and the Gentiles. We think it was bad between the blacks and the white in America. Multiply it 100 times and you'll be close. Intense animosity. And you can see that all the way through the Old Testament in certain portions.

Now, let's see what happens. God comes to Peter in Chapter 10, and He says, "Peter, I've got a hard job for you. I want you to go lead a whole bunch of Gentiles to Me." Peter was in the same place Jonah was, but he didn't quite do what Jonah did. He was at the same port, same place on the coast, but he didn't quite take off. He just went up on his balcony and lay down for a little while and verse 10 says he fell into a trance, and we discussed this briefly this morning. Heaven opened, a certain vessel descending to him like a big sheet, looped at four corners and let down by some big super-rope, and he's got a vision here, like Zechariah or any other prophet.

And he saw in the middle of the sheet all kinds of four-footed beasts of the earth and wild beasts and creeping things and fowl of the air. He saw all this animal stuff up there, and there came a voice saying, "Rise, Peter, kill and eat." Peter said, "Not so, Lord, I've never eaten anything common or unclean."

Now, the Jews had dietary laws, didn't they? I'm telling you they did. Read Leviticus. Certain birds they couldn't eat. Certain other deals they couldn't eat. They could eat animals that split the hoof and

chewed the cud. Right? You know what they are. They are listed there. In fact, I'll give you an interesting footnote. I was telling some of the staff. I won't get into it in great detail, but there is an interesting thing because one of the animals listed that chews the cud is the rabbit. Do you know that? Do you know anything about rabbits? They multiply. Yeah, you know that. But you know, if people used to wonder for years how come they said the rabbit chewed the cud, and the best explanation that came from the old Hebrew scholars was that the reason that rabbit was said to chew the cud was because he rotates his jaw like this when he chewed, but he doesn't have those multiple stomachs.

Well, they found out that the rabbit has the way of chewing the cud that is absolutely incredible. It's just been recently discovered in this century. It's not a real pretty thing, but the rabbit actually passes the food through his body once, takes it back and puts it back through again. The Bible is absolutely accurate. It just took it until the 20th Century to figure it out. By the way, rabbits are terrific. If you can find them to eat, you'd have a very low fat content, probably better for you than chicken. That's right. Certainly better for you than beef and other things. However, they don't taste that good. Anyway, it's been a long time since I had rabbit, believe me.

But anyway, you see God had given them these dietary laws, not because certain animals were different than other animals. That is not the issue. The issue is because God wanted them to be a separated people. God wanted them to be a people like no other people who could never intermingle, but they pushed the thing so far it got ridiculous. They had all these dietary laws, and now in the vision the Lord says to Peter, "Go ahead and eat anything you want." Peter says, "I can't handle it, Lord." Are you kidding me? And Peter said, "I'm not going to do it," and the voice spoke to him the second time and said, "What God has cleansed, don't you call common." And this was done three times to get the message across.

Peter got up and went downstairs and ran into some people who said, "Come on. The first uncommon thing you're going to touch is Cornelius. You're going over to a Gentile house." Righteous man," verse 22, fears God. Good report. Warned from God by a holy angel to send for you into his house and to hear words of you. Dear old Peter swallowed his Jewishness and walked into Cornelius' house, and you know what happened? Wonderful things happened.

Verse 43. After his sermon, he preaches a great - verse 38. I can't resist part of his sermon. He says how, "God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power who went about doing good and healing all that were oppressed of the devil for God was with Him, and we are witnesses of all things which He did, both in the land of the Jews and in Jerusalem, whom they slew and hanged on a tree, whom God raised up the third day and showed them openly." He just covered the life of Christ, the death of Christ, the resurrection. "Not to all people, but under witnesses chosen before by God, even to us who did eat and drink with Him after He rose from the dead, and He commanded us to preach to the people. Testify that it is He who was ordained by God to be the judge of the living

and dead and to Him give all the prophets witness that through His name whosoever believeth in Him shall receive forgiveness of sin.” That’s His invitation.

You know what happened? They all believed. Cornelius was just sitting there waiting to hear the information, and instantly they believed. The result in verse 44, “While Peter yet spoke these words the Holy Spirit fell on all them who heard the Word.” Now listen to me. There is no Pentecostal doctrine of subsequence here. Do you see? It’s not here. They believed they received, and the result – look at verse 45, and this is they key – and they of the circumcision. Who is that? The Jews who believed were what? Astonished! And as many came with Peter because on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Spirit. How did they know that? Because they heard them, what? Speak with tongues and magnify God. Wow.

Now do you know why God allowed the Gentiles to speak in tongues? Not for the same purpose as Pentecost, but to show the Jews that the same Holy Spirit had come in the same way. If there had been no visible manifestation, they never would have been convinced, you see? This is transition, people. There is no subsequence here, but there is the evidence of tongues here where there is subsequence in Chapter 8, but no indication of tongues. 40:70 says, “Can any man forbid water that these should not be baptized who have received the Holy Spirit?” Now listen to this, one of the most important statements in the Book of Acts. Listen, people who receive the Holy Spirit should be what? Baptized. Did you get that? That equalizes receiving the Holy Spirit with what? Conversion. Salvation. You are to be saved and then what? Baptized. Peter just says it this way, “Hey, these people have received the Holy Spirit. Shouldn’t they be baptized?” You see, Peter is equating those two. They’re inseparable. He knows that, and he knows that if there is any delay in the case of Samaria, he knows that this was purposeful on God’s part, and here it was very clear. The sign was convincing to the Jews that the Gentiles were in the church, and the Gentiles had received the same Holy Spirit. They were absolutely astonished.

Go over to Chapter 11, verse 15. Well, after this amazing experience, Peter went back to give his report and in 11:15 it says, he’s telling them all about it. He’s saying, “Boy, guys I got to tell ya what happened up there at the house of Cornelius.” He’s back in Judea and he’s reporting in with the apostles and the brothers. Chapter 11:1. He says, “Listen to this, guys. You won’t believe it. As I began to speak,” and he’s reporting the whole thing we just read, “The Holy Spirit, can you believe it, fell on them the same way as on us at the beginning.” They had their own little Pentecost. And then I remembered. Yeah, I remembered the Word of the Lord, how he said, “John, indeed baptized with water, but you’ll be baptized with the Holy Spirit, forasmuch then as God - ” I love this “ - gave them the same gift He did us who believed on the Lord Jesus Christ. What was I that I could withstand God?” That last line. It was really kind of funny. He says, “I’m sorry guys. I couldn’t stop it. I mean, God was doing it. I couldn’t help it. I’m really on your side. I was the victim.”

“And when they heard these things they held their peace.” They were in a state of shock, and then they glorified God and said, “Well, God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life.” Isn’t that great? Now do you understand the reason for the wait and the transition and the tongues? Not that this is normal for everybody in every church, but that this tied the Gentiles to the one church, the Samaritans to the one church. That was the point.

In chapter 15, verse 8, reporting to the Jerusalem council, Peter says, “God who knows the hearts bore them witness, giving them the Holy Spirit even as He did to us, and put no difference between us and them.” In other words, the reason they received the Spirit with tongues, the reason that it happened the way it did with the apostle Peter there was so that the Gentiles would know apostolic authority was to be submitted to and the Jews would know the Gentiles were in the same church with the same Holy Spirit they had. So you can see why it happened.

Now there is one other occasion in Acts 19, Acts 19:1. This morning we discussed the transition of Paul in 18 and the transition of Apollos briefly. Now we find 12 other people in transition, and here the charismatics are going to say again, “Well you see. Here we are again. The Holy Spirit baptizes them in tongues,” but there is no subsequence here. These people are saved, received the Holy Spirit all at the same moment, just like Cornelius. So the idea of getting saved here and the Holy Spirit later - it’s only in Acts 2 and Acts 8, and even into Acts 10 and 19 that thing has changed.

Watch 19. “It came to pass while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul having passed through the upper borders came to Ephesus and finding certain disciples said to them - ” certain learners, certain *mathths* . He said, “Have you received the Holy Spirit since you believed?” And they said to Him, “We have not so much as heard whether there is any Holy Spirit.” That’s a poor translation, and I’ll correct that in a minute. He said unto them, “Under what then were you baptized?” and they said, “Under John’s baptism.” John the Baptist. “And said Paul, ‘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 Messiah Jesus. “When they heard this they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus, and when Paul had laid his hands on them the Holy Spirit came on them. They spoke with tongues and prophesied and all the men were about 12.” That doesn’t mean they were all 12 years old. It means there were 12 of them.

Now, a study of the passage is very important. Remember the church is already one. Right? It’s already one; Jew, Gentile, half-breed. That’s all you could have in the church. Right? That’s it, that covers everybody. So there’s no subsequence here, but there is this evidence element. Incidentally, there’s no seeking either is there? No asking. We start out and we learn that they’re not even Christians. Not at all. Verse 2, He said to them, “Have you received the Holy Spirit since you believed?” Isn’t that interesting? You know, when I first read that as I was studying through this some years ago when we taught the Book of Acts that just hit me like a rocket. Have you received the Holy Spirit since you what? Believed. Well, what is the implication of that statement? Paul is saying, “Say,

are you folks still in transition? The normal thing, of course, is to receive the Holy Spirit when you believe." He doesn't say, "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you tarried? Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you prayed? Have you received the Holy Spirit when you emptied yourself? Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you obeyed? Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you yielded?" No. He says, "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?" That tells me that in Paul's mind when you believed, you what? Received the Holy Spirit, unless you happened to be one of those unusual groups still in transition.

The question assumes that when faith comes, so does the Holy Spirit. And they said - here's the literal. "We did not so much as hear whether the Holy Spirit was given." Of course, they knew of the Holy Spirit. Why, John had announced the Spirit, hadn't he? Of course, Luke 3:16. They knew of the Spirit, followers of John the Baptist, but they did not as much as hear whether the Holy Spirit was yet given. Why? Because they hadn't even heard that much about Jesus Christ yet. They were just like Apollos. And he said unto them, "Well, under then what were you baptized?" and they said, "Under John's baptism." "Oh now, he says, "I understand. You're followers of John the Baptist. You are folks in the transition."

This is the last remnants of the Old Testament saints. This is 20 years after John. Did you know that? Twenty years later. These are pretty loyal folks, aren't they? Hanging on, looking around for the Messiah up there in Ephesus, tucked away who knows where. Haven't gotten the word yet. Now he says, "Oh, you haven't received the Holy Spirit? You've only had the baptism of John the Baptist, which was the preparation baptism for the coming of the Messiah? That's all you've had?" Hmm. Now watch this. Then said Paul, "John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people that they should believe on Him who would come after Him; that is, on Christ Jesus."

Let me ask you a question. When Paul found out that they hadn't received the Holy Spirit, who did he tell them about? Christ. Did they tell them about the Holy Spirit? Did he say, "Now guys, here's how, here's how to get the Holy Spirit. Do this and do this." No. He didn't say, "Oh, my, you don't know about the Holy Spirit. He didn't say, "What faulty teaching have you had?" No. He said, "Unto then what were you baptized?" He knew the right answer because if they had believed and been baptized, confessing faith in Christ, they would have had the Holy Spirit. Right? Because it comes at the same time, so he is simply saying, "What kind of baptism have you had that you haven't received the Spirit?" He knew it was normative, and he proceeded immediately in verse 4 to teach Christ. The subject is Christ. It isn't the Holy Spirit. He doesn't teach them how to press on to the second level.

So the missing link with Ephesians 12 is not information about the baptism of the Holy Spirit. The missing link is information about Christ, so he presents Christ. When they heard it, oh, they believed and were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. And then he laid his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came, and they spoke with tongues and prophesied.

Now notice, they received the Holy Spirit right then when they believed. Why did Paul lay hands on them? To show them that it was no longer John the Baptist's teaching they were to follow, but the teaching of whom? The apostles. That's the point. And why were they granted the same marvelous experience that everybody else was granted? So that they would know that even though they were way back connected to the Old Testament, to that old prophet of God, John the Baptist, they were still a part of the church with everybody else. The whole theme of the Book of Acts, people, is to show you that the prayer of John 17 is being answered. "Father, I pray that they may be – " what? " - one."

Bruce Thompson gave me a good illustration of how this works. He's got a lot of good illustrations. He said, "The way I see this is like a smog device." He said, "When they made the law," he goes, "you had to have a smog device. A lot of us had cars already, but we had to go get a smog device put on. But after that it comes automatic when you get a car." See? Now I don't know whether equating the Holy Spirit to a smog device is an analogy that should be pushed too far, but you understand? Some people get caught in the transition. That's all. And the subsequence of 2 and 8 can be explained by that simple illustration. And the reason the tongues are in 10 and 19 and the apostles are there laying their hands is so that there will be a sense of the same thing happening to them that happened in the beginning. And there will be a commitment to apostolic authority so that the church will have the same doctrine and the same sense of love and unity and common life, you see?

It's really not that complex, is it? But, if you make everything that happens here the norm for everybody, then you missed the whole point, don't you? Because once the apostolic doctrine is penned and laid down and granted, those things are done. We don't need those signs. And once every segment you've got Jew, Gentile, Samaritan and some hangovers from the Old Testament, and they're all thrown in; there aren't any other groups left, and the whole purpose is accomplished.

Listen. You can't take these transitional events and make commands out of them. The Bible doesn't do that. It doesn't say, "This is the norm. This is the standard. This is what you should do." Listen, now listen carefully. If charismatics are going to take tongues as absolute and normal, why not wind noise and flames on top of everybody's head? Why would they have only one of the three authenticating signs? Why don't they take the other two? See? If the events of Acts 2, 8, 10 and 19, listen to this now, were all in the presence of an apostle, why is not this the pattern today so that we have to wait for John, Peter or Paul to show up to get the Holy Spirit?

If in every case in Acts, now mark this, if in every single case in Acts the Spirit came on a group, never an individual alone; why don't the charismatics make this the norm? If no one in the Book of Acts ever sought for the Spirit, yielded or prayed for the Spirit or prayed for tongues or sought tongues, why do they if that's the norm? And why do they want only the miracles and the signs and wonders in the Book of Acts and not the rest of it? And why are we not still offering the kingdom to Israel like in Acts 3? And why is the church not meeting in the temple at the hour of prayer described

by for the Jews? Why aren't we at the synagogue? Why are we here? And why don't we meet every day in houses and break bread from house to house and have communion every day of the week like they did in Acts 2? And why are not all conversions like Paul's conversion on the Damascus road? Why don't we all see Jesus and go blind for three days and wait for some Ananias? Can't we have that if want it?

And if the church is run the apostles in Acts 6, why is it now to be ruled by the elders? And if we accept this book as normal, are we still carrying out the instructions of Acts Chapter 15 which tells us whenever we meet a Jew there are several things we have to avoid. We have to avoid pollutions of idols, fornication, things strangled, and any blood. You say, "That's not for today." You're right. Well, why not that not for today and everything else for today? We can't pick and choose.

Listen. There were no church buildings in Acts. Is that the absolute? There were no choirs in Acts. Is that the absolute? There were no Sunday school teachers in Acts. Is that the absolute? Are evangelists still flowing around like Phillip without airplanes? Do we execute people who don't put as much in the offering as they promised? It's a thought. I always remember the guy who invented the offering plate, that you put in a coin, and then it rings a bell. You put in a dollar bill, and it rings a buzzer. You don't put anything in, and it takes your picture.

But anyway, if Acts is normative, why aren't we all taking Nazarite vows? If Acts is normative, why aren't we all in a big hurrying like Paul was to get back to the feast in Jerusalem? Anybody here ever made it a big point in life to hustle back to Jerusalem for the Passover? You see, you just can't do that with the Book of Acts. It's history.

Joseph Dillow says in his book, and I thought this was a helpful statement. He says this - the book is titled *Speaking in Tongues*, I think. He says, "We must not make the tragic mistake of teaching the experience of the apostles, but rather we must experience the teaching of the apostles." He goes on, "The experience of the apostles is found in the transitional book of Acts; while the teaching of the apostles is set forth clearly in the epistles, which are our guide for our Christian experience today."

Listen. The whole point of Acts is to make us aware that we don't have to seek anything. Everybody receives the Spirit; Jew, Samaritan, Gentile, Old Testament leftover, anybody. When you believe, what happens? You receive the Spirit. That's the message of the book. The book is trying to say there's a new age. There's a new era. And here it is. It's the era of the Spirit, and you receive Him and He is a gift from God. That's the whole point of it, not to make everybody think that you've got to wait and seek some super zap that comes later on.

I want to close by looking at Acts 8:18. Let this be a serious statement in conclusion. Acts 8:18, "And there was a man there." And it says that, "When Simon -" and this is not Simon Peter. This is Simon, verse 9, who was sorcerer. He was a magician. He was a medium. He spoke with demons. "When

Simon the sorcerer saw that through laying on of the apostle's hands, the Holy Spirit was given, he offered them – "what? - money." Now watch this, saying, "Give me also this –" what's the next word? " - power. Give me also this power."

I'll ask you a simple question. What did Simon want? What? Power. What is it that charismatic people are always, always, always seeking? The power. They say you'll never have the power. You'll never have the power. You can have the Spirit, but you don't have the power without the baptism. Listen. They are doing exactly what Simon did. Look it, he desired power. He was willing to sacrifice to get it. His thing was money. And today charismatic people will spend time praying and yielding and surrendering and anything they can do to get the power, and the power is there. And Peter really takes off on this. Verse 20, "Peter said to him, 'Your money perished with you.'" Why? Listen to this. "Because you thought that the –" what? " - gift of God could be purchased." Listen. You will never get the Holy Spirit by human effort. He comes free. That's the point.

People who seek the power are seeking to get something by their own effort that God gives by His free grace. That's the whole point of the book, people. That's the Book of Acts, and Peter blasts him. He says, "You have neither part nor lot in this matter, for your heart is not right in the sight of God. Repent of this wickedness, and pray God if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee, for I perceive you are in the gall of bitterness and you are in the bond of iniquity." And Simon says, "Pray the Lord for me."

Listen. It is an iniquitous position to be seeking by human effort to gain what God has given by grace because it denies His marvelous and graciously gift. It's like saying to God, "You didn't give me the Holy Spirit," and God says, "I did, in all its fullness." "He giveth not the Spirit by measure." Simon sinned by presuming to seek power by human effort that God gives free. Michael Green writing in the book, *I Believe in the Holy Spirit*, says this, "The charismatics were always out for power. They were elated by spiritual power. They were always seeking shortcuts to power. It is the same today. Paul's reply is to boast not of his power, but of his weakness through which alone the power of Christ can shine. Paul knew all about the marks of an apostle and signs and wonders and mighty deeds; but he knew that the power of an apostle or of any other Christian came from the patient endurance of suffering, such as he had with his thorn in the flesh or the patient endurance of reviling and hardship, such as he was submitted to in the course of his missionary works. The charismatics had a theology of the resurrection and its power, but they needed to learn afresh the secret of the cross and its shame, which was really what produced the power of God." He's right. He's right.

Listen, beloved, Jesus put it simply at the beginning of the book. "You shall receive power –" when? " - after the Holy Spirit is come upon you." And when does He come? When you believe. To deny God that is to deny His word, to question His promise, to seek by human effort to gain what He has given. Instead of always seeking the power, let us seek the suffering that releases the power that's there already. Well, let's pray.

Father, thank you for a good time tonight. Thank you for speaking clearly to us in your Word, even if the human words were not so clear. Tie all this together in our thinking. May we realize that we're not trying to fight a movement or defend a theology. We're just trying to understand the revelation of God that we might rightly worship by rightly dividing. Thank you for these people, precious ones who come with hunger for your truth, thirsting after righteousness. Fill them, Father. Fill them, fill them with Your Spirit. May He who is already there find, as their hearts are purified, that His presence fills and dominates their thinking and their acting, and we'll give You the praise in Jesus Name. Amen.

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