What Was Happening in the Early Church?
Scripture: Selected Scriptures
Code: 90-59

Tonight, we're gonna go back to our study of this matter of Charismatic chaos. The message tonight will be a bit more technical and deal more closely with the text of Scripture than some of ours in the past in which we've been assessing the movement from a somewhat theological point of view. Tonight, we wanna look a little more tightly at the book of Acts because the book of Acts is basically the location for most of the Charismatic defense of their doctrine. Experience is the foundation upon which much of the Charismatic system is built, and it's very important to identify that. Experience is the authority that Charismatics most frequently cite to validate their teachings. They have an experienced centered approach to truth that even influences the way they approach the Bible. In fact, the book of Acts which is a journal of the apostles' experiences is where Charismatics usually turn in search of Biblical support for what they believe.

Now, I want you to look with me at the book of Acts tonight. We're gonna be looking at a couple of chapters just giving you a feel for some very key ones in light of the Charismatic theology. The book of Acts is a historical narrative in contrast, for example, to the Epistles of the New Testament which are didactic or doctrinal or instructive to the church. This is a chronicle. It is a story really of the early church experiences. The Epistles, on the other hand, contain detailed instruction for believers throughout all the church age. So, in the Epistles, you have the rather permanent instruction and doctrine for the church. In the book of Acts, you have a chronicle of the history of the early church experiences. Historically, Christians committed to a Biblical perspective, have recognized the difference, and it is an important difference to recognize. Evangelical theologians through the years have drawn the heart of their doctrine from Bible passages intended to teach the church. They have understood that Acts is an inspired, historical record of the apostolic period, not necessarily viewing every event or every phenomenon that occurs there as normative for the entire church age.

But on the other hand, Charismatics who have an insatiable craving for experiences and particularly for the experiences described in the book of Acts, have assembled a doctrinal system that views the extraordinary events of the early apostolic age as necessary and continuing hallmarks of the Holy Spirit's work. They view the book of Acts as normative or what should be normative for all Christians in all ages. They see the working of the Holy Spirit in the book of Acts as tokens of spiritual power that are to be routinely expected by all Christians living in all times.

Now that is a rather serious interpretive error. In fact, it undermines the Charismatics' comprehension of Scripture. It muddies several key Biblical issues crucial to a right understanding of Scriptural

doctrine. Gordon Fee, a writer who himself is a Charismatic, commented in the hermeneutical difficulties posed by the way Charismatics typically approach the book of Acts with these words, and I quote, "If the primitive church is normative, which expression of it is normative? Jerusalem? Antioch? Philippi? Corinth? That is why do not all the churches sell their possessions and have all things in common. Or further, is it at all legitimate to take any descriptive statements as normative? If so, how does one distinguish those which are from those which are not? For example, must we follow the pattern of Acts 1:26 and select leaders by lot? Just exactly what role does historical precedent play in Christian doctrine or in the understanding of Christian experience?" Now, he introduces a very important point. If we're going to take the book of Acts as normative, then we must take the book of Acts in its total as normative and we're gonna have some immensely difficult issues to deal with.

The fact of the matter is that Acts was never intended to be the primary basis for teaching doctrine to the church. The book of Acts records only the earliest days of the church age and shows the church in tradition coming out of the old age into the new. Coming out as it were, the Old Testament into the New Testament. The apostolic healings and miracles and signs and wonders evident in the book of Acts were not even common to all believers even in those days, but were uniquely restricted to the apostles and those who worked alongside of them. They were exceptional events, each with specific purposes, and always associated with the ministry of the apostles and their frequency can be seen decreasing dramatically even from the beginning of the book of Acts to the end. It seems as though at the opening of the book of Acts there is flurry of the miraculous and toward the end it's absent.

The book of Acts was written by Luke the physician as you know. Acts covers a crucial period that started with the beginning of the church at Pentecost and ended about 30 years later with Paul in prison following his third missionary journey. Transitions are seen from beginning to end in the book of Acts, changes come in almost every chapter as the old covenant fades away and the new covenant comes in all its fullness. Even the apostle Paul is caught in some of those changes which can be witnessed as you look into chapter 18 of Acts chapter 21 and see him although he is fully under the new covenant, still exhibiting ties to the old as indicated by his taking certain Jewish vows which were prescribed in the Old Testament.

In the book of Acts we are in transition which moves from the synagogue to the church. We are in a transition which moves away from an order of law into an order of grace. The church has transformed from a group of Jewish believers to a body made up of Jews and Gentiles united in Christ. Believers at the beginning of Acts were related to God under an old pattern. By the end, all believers were in Christ, living under a new patter, indwelled by the Holy Spirit in a new a unique relationship.

Acts, therefore, covers an extraordinary time in history, a time of transition from the old to the new, and the transition it records, listen carefully, is never to be repeated. There is only one time frame in which you move from the old to the new. That history does not come again, never will come again. And those elements that are true of that transition are not repeatable. For the transition itself needs

not repetition. Therefore, we must say, the only teachings in the book of Acts which can be called normative for the church are those that are explicitly taught elsewhere in Scripture.

Now, as you look at the book of Acts from the Charismatic viewpoint, looking at it as it were, through their eyes, the major theological distinction of that movement has to be supported in the book of Acts, and they think they can do it. It is what I would call the doctrine of subsequence. That's a term that others have used, the doctrine of subsequence. What that basically means is that you get saved and sometime subsequent to that, some later date, hopefully, you get the baptism of the Holy Spirit. That is primarily the distinctive doctrine of Pentecostal Charismatic theology, that when you're saved, you receive the Lord, Jesus Christ, you are redeemed. At some later time, you get the baptism of the Holy Spirit subsequent to that saving work.

They will also say secondly, that it is often, some of them will say always, associated with speaking in tongues. Old line traditional Pentecostalism, for the most part, said, "The baptism of the Spirit is subsequent to salvation and is always identified by speaking in tongues." Some will say, "Often identified by speaking in tongues."

The third component is that the baptism of the Holy Spirit often manifests of always manifest by speaking in tongues is something to be earnestly, zealously and passionately sought for. Now that is really the essence of the distinctive kind of Charismatic doctrine that so many of us are familiar with. They go to the book of Acts to endeavor to prove this subsequence doctrine, this tongues as an attendant proof of the baptism of the Holy Spirit, and for some strange reason, to even verify the seeking after the gift or the baptism. The doctrine of subsequence that there is for Christians, a baptism in the Spirit, distinct from and subsequent to the experience of salvation and that that is somehow associated with the matter of tongues is at the very heart of their theology.

And so we must be able to deal with this and I want us to do that tonight because we are really cutting in to the very core of what they historically have taught. In his rather thorough investigation of Pentecostal theology, Frederick Dale Bruner wrote, "Pentecostals believed that the Spirit has baptized every believer into Christ's conversion, but that Christ has not baptized every believer into the Spirit, Pentecost." Not only do most Charismatics believe that the baptism of the Spirit happens at some point after salvation, but that it only happens to those who seek after it diligently, passionately and zealously. And then, as I said, that when it does come, it is usually, if not always, attended by speaking in tongues.

Now they're very definitive, may I say, about this doctrine. May I also say, they're very vague about most other doctrine. In most other areas of theology, they're vague, but in this one, they usually speak a clear word regarding what they believe. Now some of them attempt to support their doctrine of subsequence from the book of Acts because they really can't go anywhere else. Some of them don't attempt to support it at all. They just say it's true. But the ones who attempt to support it have to go to

the book of Acts because there's nowhere else to go. Let me show you why. Maybe you say they oughta go to 1 Corinthians. Doesn't that talk about the Holy Spirit in tongues? It does. Open your Bible for a moment to 1 Corinthians 12, and let's see how well they would fair with that doctrine in 1 Corinthians 12. 1 Corinthians 12:13 says, "For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves of free and we were all made to drink of one Spirit." Now there you have the Holy Spirit as an agent in baptism. There you have the baptism with the Holy Spirit. But you have absolutely nothing about subsequence. You have absolutely nothing about tongues, and you have absolutely nothing about seeking. It's a fact that is stated. There is no indication that it is subsequent to salvation. In fact, the very statement that it has happened to all of us indicates that it is concurrent with salvation. It cannot take place at some point after salvation or Paul couldn't say it was true of all Christians, but he does. You say, "Well, maybe they oughta go to 1 Corinthians 14, doesn't that talk about tongues, and doesn't that talk about the Holy Spirit?" Yes, but if you go to 1 Corinthians 14, you're not gonna find any subsequence there. You're not gonna find any discussion of the baptism of the Spirit. You're not gonna find any connection of tongues with the baptism of the Holy Spirit, and you're not gonna find any authorization to seek after tongues or to seek after the baptism. You can't find any of that in 1 Corinthians 12 or 14.

And if you've exhausted that section, there isn't anything else in the New Testament that mentions tongues except Acts. So, they are stuck with Acts even though the clear teaching of 1 Corinthians 12 is that every believer has been baptized by the agency of the Holy Spirit, Christ using the Spirit to place the believer into the body, and that occurs at salvation and is true of every Christian. There's no connection to tongues and it isn't something you seek for. It's something God does for you at your salvation.

And so, they're left with nowhere to go but Acts. And so they violate the nature of the book of Acts which is a historical record of the early church and the unique transitional apostolic period and make it normative for everybody because that's the only place they can go to defend their unique theology.

Now, when you go into the book of Acts and I want you to go there with me, Acts 2 to start with. When you go to the book of Acts, you go to four chapters, chapter 2, chapter 8, chapter 10 and chapter 19. Obviously, we can't cover all of that. That would be an absolute impossibility, but those are the places that they go to support their view. And I wanna give you a little bit of a feeling for this because you need to be able to understand and grasp this. The truth of the matter is that even the book of Acts fails to support this Charismatic theology of subsequence, proof by tongues and the need to seek. For example, they wanna go to Acts 2, 8, 10, 19 because those record four different occasions in which the Holy Spirit came. In some of those occasions, there's tongues. In some of those occasions, there is the coming of the Holy Spirit subsequent to salvation. But those four occasions are not uniform.

The first one describes the coming of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost. The second one, the coming of the Holy Spirit to the new group of believers in Samarian. The third one, Acts 10, the coming of the Holy Spirit to the Gentile converts, Cornelius and his house. The fourth one, chapter 19, the coming of the Holy Spirit to some hangover disciples of John the Baptist who were still living under an Old Testament economy because they didn't know the Gospel yet. Somehow, it had missed them. All four of these groups have unique experiences of receiving the Holy Spirit, but their experiences are different. For example, in Acts 2 and Acts 8, believers do receive the Holy Spirit after salvation. In Acts 10 and 19, believers received the Holy Spirit at the moment of salvation, so they're not in agreement on that issue. The doctrine of subsequence then cannot be convincingly defended even from the book of Acts because it isn't consistent.

So, what about tongues? In chapter 2, chapter 10 and chapter 19, tongues are mentioned, but in chapter 8, they're not. So, you can't even find anything that's normative at that point, at least that is written in Scripture. You say, "Well, what about seeking after it?" The believers in Acts 2, they say, were in the upper room seeking the baptism of the Holy Spirit. There is no seeking in chapter 8, there is no seeking in chapter 10 and there's no seeking in chapter 19. The truth of the matter is there isn't any seeking in chapter 2 either. They were in the upper room doing nothing but patiently waiting. It doesn't tell us they were seeking. No seeking is mentioned.

Now the point is clear. To say that the book of Acts presents a normal pattern for receiving the Holy Spirit attended by tongues and fore seeking that presents a major problem because these separate accounts of four different groups who received the Holy Spirit are all different. So, if you're gonna make the book of Acts normative, which group is the normative group?

It is true that Christians at Pentecost in Acts 2 and the Gentiles in Cornelius' household in chapter 10 and the Jews at Ephesus who had only the baptism of John did receive the Holy Spirit and tongues, or languages followed. But because those three events occurred doesn't mean they are to be the standard for every other Christian. In fact, none of these passages, 2, 8, 10, or 19 give any indication that they are to be the norm for all believers for all time. In fact, there's plenty of indication that they're not. If tongues were to be the normal experience, then why aren't they mentioned in chapter 8 when the Samaritans received the Holy Spirit? And why does the text of Acts 2 not say that everyone who believed following Peter's sermon and received the Holy Spirit, spoke in tongues? You remember when Peter preached on the day of Pentecost, 3,000 people believed? It says in Acts 2:38 that, "They received the Holy Spirit," remember that? Why didn't they speak in tongues? In order for something to be normative, it has to be common to everybody. And if the Holy Spirit wanted to say that tongues was a normative attendant to the coming of the Holy Spirit, the normative time for it to happen would have been among the 3,000 that were converted, right?

John Stock reasons, "The 3,000 do not seem to have experienced the same miraculous phenomena, the rushing might wind, the tongues of flame or the speech in foreign languages. At least nothing is

said about these things, yet because of God's assurance through Peter, they must have inherited the same promise and received the same gift, that is the Holy Spirit. Nevertheless, there was this difference between them. The 120 were regenerate already and received the baptism of the Spirit only after waiting upon God for 10 days. The 3,000 on the other hand, were unbelievers, received the forgiveness of sin and the gift of the Holy Spirit simultaneously and it happened immediately. They repented and believed without any need to wait at all. This distinction between the two companies, the 120 and the 3,000, is of great importance. For the norm for today must surely be the second group, the 3,000, and not as if often supposed, the first group. The fact that the experience of the 120 was in two distinct stages was due simply to historical circumstances. They could not have received the Pentecostal gift before Pentecost. But those historical circumstances have long since cease to exist. We live after the event of Pentecost like the 3,000 did. With us, therefore, as with them, the forgiveness of sins and the gift or baptism of the Spirit are received together."

Without question, Acts 2 is a key passage from which Pentecostals and Charismatics develop their theology of the baptism of the Holy Spirit and it would be worth our while just to look briefly at it. Look at the first four verses of Acts 2. "When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place and suddenly there came from Heaven a noise like a violent rushing wind and it filled the whole house where they were sitting and there appeared to them tongues as of fire, distributing themselves, and they rested on each one of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues or languages as the Spirit was giving them utterance." Now, that describes what happened on the day of Pentecost. As noted before, the Pentecostals and Charismatics say that's the doctrine of subsequence. They say, "Look, these people were already believers. They had already been saved and so they were saved first at some earlier time and here they are sitting around waiting for the Holy Spirit," but the obvious answer to that is, "Well, of course," because the Holy Spirit hasn't yet come at all, and doesn't come until the day of Pentecost.

Certainly there is subsequence here and certainly we would agree with the Pentecostal theology that they had experienced salvation. I mean, you can go all the way back into Luke 10:20 where Jesus tells His apostles, "Rejoice that your names are recorded in Heaven." You can go back to John 15:3 where Jesus says to the same apostles, "You are already clean because of the Word which I have spoken to you." So, He affirms that they have a right relationship with God. We could call them saved. And so, people say, "Well, they were saved way back then and see, the Holy Spirit comes later." But how much insight do you have to have to realize that of course, it's subsequent to their salvation because they were really saved prior to the arrival of the Holy Spirit. Once the Holy Spirit came, there is no need for a waiting for Him to come again because He already comes to indwell His church on the day of Pentecost and from then on continually indwells His church from the moment of salvation forward.

Most Charismatics, we even go a step further. They would suggest that not only were the disciples saved before the day of Pentecost, but watch this, that the disciples also received the Holy Spirit

before the day of Pentecost. But they just got a little bit of Him. You need to remember this, if you confront a Charismatic sometime and you say you don't believe that when you're saved you receive the Holy Spirit, they'll say, "Yes, we do, oh, yes, we do." It's true, they do. They believe that you receive the Spirit in some small measure, but the baptism of the Spirit is an explosion of the Spirit's power in fullness that comes into your life.

So, you don't wanna accuse Charismatics of denying that a Christian has the Holy Spirit. They would say you have the Holy Spirit in a limited way, but you don't have the fullness of the Spirit and the power of the Spirit. They would go back, for example, to John 20 and in John 20:21-22, Jesus looks at His disciples, and the Scripture says, "Jesus breathed on them," and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit." Wow, that's interesting. Way back in John 20, He's saying that to them, receive the Holy Spirit. That's before the Holy Spirit is even sent on the day of Pentecost. And according to standard Charismatic interpretation of that text, they say, "Jesus then was giving them the Holy Spirit in a limited way. They had to wait for the higher level explosion of the baptism of the Spirit that gave them their real power." We have to ask the question is that really correct? When in John 20:21-22, Jesus said, "Receive the Holy Spirit," was that a statement of fact? If you look very carefully at that text, the Charismatic view doesn't really hold up under scrutiny. The passage doesn't say the disciples actually received the Holy Spirit, doesn't say that. It simply said that Jesus blew on them, a graphic sort of illustration and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit." We would have to conclude that it was a pledge, that it was a promise that wasn't fulfilled until the day of Pentecost. In fact, all you have to do is look at them to know they hadn't received the Holy Spirit. Ensuing statements in John 20 seem to confirm the disciples didn't receive the Spirit in the upper room because eight days later, he came to where they were. They were hiding, they were full of fear, they were in a locked room. This is more than a week after He breathed on them and more than a week after He promised them and they hadn't gone anywhere and done anything.

They would manifest the Spirit's presence. The strongest arguments however, appear in the early verses of the book of Acts verse 4, "Gathering them together, He commanded them not to leave Jerusalem, but to wait for what the Father had promised, which He said you heard of from Me, for John baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now." Jesus says it hasn't happened yet. It's been promised, but it hasn't happened. It's yet to come. That goes all the way back to John 14:16 where Jesus said, "I'll ask the Father and He'll give you another Helper that He may be with you." They're still waiting. He gave them the promised when He breathed on them, but it hasn't yet been fulfilled. Acts 1:8, "You shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you," which means He hasn't come yet. If the Spirit had come upon them in John 20, he wouldn't have said He hasn't come yet.

Two other passages demonstrate very clearly that the Holy Spirit wasn't come until the day of Pentecost, John 7:39. Listen to what Jesus said, "This He spoke of the Spirit," you know when He said, "Out of your belly shall flow rivers of living water," this He spoke of the Spirit writes John, "Whom

those who believed in Him were to receive," but listen to this, "for the Spirit was not yet given because Jesus was not yet," what? Glorified, that means ascended. That passage explicitly states that the Spirit would not come until Jesus had been glorified and He wouldn't be glorified until He had ascended into Heaven. So, until Jesus ascended there in Acts 1, went into Heaven and then sent the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost, the Spirit had not come.

In John 16 in verse 7, Jesus told the disciples, "I tell you the truth, it is to your advantage that I go away. If I do not go away, the Helper shall not come to you, but if I go, I'll send Him." Same thing. He's not comin' til I get there. So, the Holy Spirit had not come. They did not receive a little bit of the Holy Spirit only later to get an explosion. They didn't receive any of the indwelling of the Spirit of God until the day of Pentecost. At that point, the Spirit of God took up residence in them and they were baptized by Christ through the agency of the Holy Spirit into the body.

So, we're in transition period, obvious transition period between the old economy and the new, and these apostles are caught right in that transition with the others who made up the 120. Now, what about the Charismatic idea that the Holy Spirit is to be sought, eagerly sought? We have no indication in the upper room that anybody was seeking anything. There's no evidence that they were pleading or seeking anything. They were just waiting. Nor is there any indication throughout the entire book of Acts that anybody was seeking after some baptizing work of the Holy Spirit. There is not one incident, not one incident, even where the phenomena of the coming of the Spirit and tongues occurs that indicates that anybody in the early church ever sought such an experience. This must affect somehow the Pentecostal doctrine.

When the Holy Spirit came at Pentecost, a new order was established, and since that time, the Holy Spirit comes to every believer at the moment of faith and indwells in that believer in a permanent, abiding relationship. That's why Romans 8:9 says, "If anyone doesn't have the Spirit of Christ, he doesn't belong to Him. Conversely, if you belong to Christ, you have the Holy Spirit." Paul even says to the Corinthians who were so fouled up, "What? Know you not that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit which you have of God? You're not your own. You're bought with a price," chapter 6. We've all been made to drink of the same Spirit, every Christian.

So, what you have in Acts 2 then is the initial reception of the Holy Spirit. "The disciples were baptized by the Spirit accompanied by a sound from Heaven like the mighty rushing wind, cloven tongues as a fire rested on each of them. At that point, they being filled with the Spirit, began to speak in other languages." The miraculous ability to speak the languages of the people who gathered for Pentecost to declare to them the wonderful works of God had a definite purpose. It was to be a sign of judgment on unbelieving Israel. It was and unfolded to be a sign of inclusion of the other groups into the one church, and we'll see that in a moment. It confirmed the apostle's spiritual authority. It had a very distinct purpose. First of all, as I said, it was a sign to unbelieving Israel.

You remember the prophet Isaiah had said, "If you don't listen to God when He speaks the language you can understand, the day is going to come when He speaks a language you can't understand." That's a judgment, and when they began to speak languages that were foreign to the dwellers of Jerusalem, God was saying, "It has come, the time has come. You have committed the ultimate atrocity in the crucifixion of the Messiah. You didn't listen when I spoke in you language. Now here's a language you won't understand," and this was an indication of God's judgment about to fall on them as a nation which judgment fell in no small way in 70 A. D. Also, this unique gift of tongues acted as a verification sign of the legitimacy of each new group that was added to the one body of Christ, as we shall see.

And so it had some very specific and wonderful purpose. It was a unique wonder associated with Pentecost. Pentecost is not repeatable, and so neither is the necessity of such a sign, except on very rare and unique occasions also recorded in the book of Acts. By the way, an interesting footnote. In 1976, Pentecostals held a world conference in Jerusalem, a world congress in Jerusalem, and I'm quoting the program, "To celebrate the ongoing miracle of Pentecost. Delegates came from all over the world and had to use interpreters and headphones," now, just think that one through, "so they could understand in their own language." That is not the ongoing miracle of Pentecost.

Now, let's go to chapter 8 and see what happens in Acts 8 and why that's important. They use this as a proof text. It discusses the persecution of the church in the early part of the chapter and the scattering of the disciples out of Jerusalem, throughout Judea and Samaria. Now the result comes down in verse 14. They go into Samaria. Samaria receives the Word of God. They believe. You remember there was a choice preacher in Samaria. Who was He? Phillip, and when the word came back to the apostles in Jerusalem, verse 14, that Samaria had received the Word of God, they sent them Peter and John. They're gonna send the apostles to find out about this. "They came down and prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit, for he had not yet fallen upon any of them. They had simply been baptized in the Name of the Lord Jesus. Then they began laying their hands on them and they were receiving the Holy Spirit."

You say, "Now, wait a minute. This proves their point. There's subsequence here." Yes, I didn't say there wasn't. There's subsequence in chapter 2, there's subsequence in chapter 8. There just isn't any in chapter 10 or chapter 19, so it's not normative, but here it has a very distinct purpose. The Charismatics would say, "See? Here's subsequence. They had been baptized, they'd been saved and later on they get the Holy Spirit. They were baptized in the Name of the Lord Jesus, but they hadn't received the Holy Spirit. That proves the point." It does not. There's a reason for this. Let me tell you what it is. The Jews hated the Samaritans. Will you understand that to be true from your knowledge of New Testament times? A Samaritan was a half breed. A Samaritan was a Jew who thought so little of being Jewish that he intermarried with a Gentile and polluted, from the Jewish viewpoint, his racial identity. Samaritans were hated. It is said that Jews traveling from the South to the North would go

clear around Samaria just so they wouldn't have to walk through it and pollute themselves by being there. That's what made it so unique when it says in Scripture, "Jesus must needs go through Samaria." Jews didn't do that. They looked down on Samaritans. And the reason for this little interval between the Samaritan salvation and the coming of the Spirit was in order that the apostles might get there. Why? So that the apostles would see that Samaritans had been saved and that they would see that the Spirit of God came upon them. Now it is possible that they spoke in tongues and it's not recorded here. It is possible that there was some other phenomenon that occurred which made it manifest to the apostles that they indeed were receiving the Holy Spirit. The point is God didn't want those Samaritans receiving the Holy Spirit til two Jewish apostles were there because if the Samaritans had their own little private Pentecost, it would be very hard for the Jews to accept them as one in the same body and the same church, the hatred of the Jews toward them being so great. If the Samaritans had received the Holy Spirit at the moment of salvation without any supernatural sign or fanfare, without the visible presence of the apostles to mark it and see it and note it and report it, if it had been purely a Samaritan event, the church born at Pentecost of the Jews would never have accepted it as bona fide or with great difficulty done that. If the Samaritans had started their own Christian group, the age old rivalries and hatreds could have been perpetuated with the Jewish church competing against a Samaritan church. And so God waited until the Jewish apostles, the most significant ones, Peter and John, showed up and then he demonstrated that these had truly been converted and they were being baptized by the Holy Spirit into the same body as the Jews were in, the same body of Christ, the same church.

It was also important that the apostles be present so that the Samaritans would understand the power and authority of the apostles, for they needed to be subject to the apostles' doctrine. Now because of all of these matters, in the transition, there was subsequence and there was an interval between the time they received Christ under the ministry of Phillip and the time they received the Holy Spirit when the apostles could be there because the crucial transition going on in the early church was so essential, the church unity and apostolic teaching and authority.

The amazing thing, first of all, was a revival among the Samaritans, and even more amazing, the outcast half breeds received the same Holy Spirit we have and were placed into the same body and now we have to love 'em and accept 'em as brothers and sisters. That's why the Holy Spirit delayed that. It was an audio visual lesson, if you will, that the middle wall of partition that Paul talks about in Ephesians 2 was broken down. I say there must have been some powerful demonstration, I don't know what it was, otherwise Simon wouldn't have come along, tried to buy the power. So, when the Holy Spirit came upon them, there must have been some visible manifestation of that and it could well have been similar to what occurred on the day of Pentecost. That would make sense. What was really crucial though was that everybody understand the weren't two churches, there was just one, both had received the same thing.

Now, go to chapter 10. Chapter 10 takes us the next step in the unfolding of the book of Acts. It starts in Jerusalem, goes to Samaria and then it begins to move out to the utter most part of the world. Now we meet the first Gentile _____ in Acts 10, and you know the wonderful story about Cornelius? God gives a vision to Peter, tells him, "I'm no respecter of persons," and after the visions, three men came to the house where Peter was staying and explained they had been sent by Cornelius, this Gentile, and that Peter was supposed to go and teach Cornelius about God. Now Peter had just had a vision in which God had set him up for this. Peter swallowed his Jewish prejudice which had already been dented severely by Samaritan conversions, and now he agrees to accompany these Gentiles to Caesarea where Cornelius lived. Now you gotta understand that for a Jew to get near a Gentile is a serious thing. They didn't ever want a meal cooked by a Gentile, they didn't want to eat with the utensil touched by a Gentile. They didn't go into a Gentile house. They didn't even want Gentile dust on their feet. When they came back into Jerusalem, they shook the dust off their feet so they wouldn't carry Gentile dirt into the holy land. They looked down on Gentiles.

Peter goes there. It says, "The Holy Spirit," verse 44, "fell on all those who were listening to the message, and all the circumcised believers who had come with Peter were amazed." They couldn't believe it. What's happening? Gentiles are getting the Holy Spirit. And they said, "The gift of the Holy Spirit is being poured on a Gentiles also." You know, they're kinda like Jonah. They're looking for somewhere where they can cry. "For they were hearing them speaking with tongues and exalting God. And then Peter answered," I love this answer. "Well, surely no one can refuse the water for these to be baptized who have received the Holy Spirit just as we did, can he?" It's almost like he said, "I wish there was some way out of this, guys, but there isn't. It's happened. It's tough to swallow, but it's happened." "And he ordered them to be baptized in the Name of Jesus Christ." Would you please notice here there's no subsequence? They were saved, the Spirit came, they were placed in the body. There's no subsequence here, but again, they received the Holy Spirit attendant with tongues why? So that Peter and John and all the circumcised, that's all the Jewish Christians would know that Gentiles got the same thing the Samaritans got and the Samaritans got the same thing we got. Guess what? We're all what? We're all one. We're all one. Gentiles are now a part of the body of Christ.

Peter, I love it, in chapter 11, Peter goes back to give his report. It's almost comical. He goes back to give his report. Here's his report, verse 15, he says, "Well, as I began to speak, the Holy Spirit fell upon them just as He did upon us at the beginning." Can you believe that? Same thing, and I remember the Word of the Lord, how He used to say, "John baptized with water, but you should be baptized with the Holy Spirit. If God therefore, gave to them the same gift as He gave to us also after believing in the Lord, Jesus Christ, who was I that I could stand in God's way?" And you could know why He said that. As soon as he said, "He got the same thing we got," somebody on the counsel would have said, "Well, why didn't you stop them? Peter, how could you let it happen?" And then he says, "I couldn't stop it, I couldn't stop it. It just happened. I'm sorry, fellas. God was doing it, I couldn't stop it." Shocked as they were, they couldn't deny what happened. They held their peace, they

glorified God, they acknowledged that God had graciously granted life and salvation to the Gentiles. Verse 18, "When they heard it, they quieted down," and you know there was noise goin' on in there? "And the glorified God saying, 'Well, then, God has granted to the Gentiles also the repentance that leads to life." God made sure the apostles were there to see it, the Jewish apostles. God made sure the Spirit came. God made sure the tongues were there so nobody would think it was any different than Pentecost, so that everybody would understand, Jew, Gentile, Samaritan, one in Christ. But these Gentiles received the Holy Spirit at the moment of conversion. They were baptized with the Spirit of God at that very moment. Then they spoke with tongues to prove there was no difference. They were part of the church and there was no subsequence here at all, none whatsoever. The norm then from here on out is at the time of salvation, the reception of the Spirit comes at the same time.

Now, there's one final group in the book of Acts, that's chapter 19. We can briefly look at this group. This is a fascinating group. These are just some loose people roamin' around who missed the whole deal that was goin' on. This is another group in transition, this a fascinating group. Verse 1, "Came about while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul having passed through the upper country, came to Ephesus. He found some disciples. There were some people around Ephesus. He said to them, 'Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?' And they said to him, 'No. We've not ever heard when there is a Holy Spirit. What are you talkin' about?' 'Well, into what then were you baptized?' And they said, 'Into John's baptism.'" Oh, we know who they are, they were when John the Baptist was preaching in the wilderness, baptized by him, in preparation for the Messiah, but they didn't have television, radio, newspaper. They hadn't heard the Messiah came and went. They were, "We were baptized into John's baptism." Paul said, "Well, John baptized with the baptism of repentance, you know, turning from your sin, telling the people to believe in Him who was coming after Him, that is in Jesus. And when they heard this, "and by the way, a lot more," they got the whole Gospel, they were baptized in the Name of the Lord Jesus, and when Paul laid hands upon them, the Holy Spirit came upon them and they began speaking with tongues and prophesying. And there were in all about 12 men." Fascinating, fascinating, just a loose group of Old Testament saints roamin' around waitin' for the Messiah to arrive, and He had come and gone and they didn't know about it. Now they weren't seeking the Holy Spirit. They weren't seeking the baptism of the Holy Spirit. I'll tell you something else. They weren't even saved in New Testament terms. They said, "We don't even know anything about a Holy Spirit." They certainly knew there was a Holy Spirit, but what they were saying was, "We didn't know about His coming. We don't know what you're talking about." They hadn't even heard about this because they didn't even know about Jesus Christ. And Paul began to probe and he realized they were disciples of John the Baptist, not Jesus Christ. Old Testament saints in transition, still hanging on, looking for the Messiah 20 years after John the Baptist had died. He says, "You're to be commended," Paul does, "you're to be commended. You repented as John _____, but now you gotta go the next step and that is you gotta receive the one that John predicted was coming, Jesus Christ. He spoke about Christ." By the way, didn't speak about the Holy Spirit, he spoke about Christ. They received Christ and God gave them the Holy Spirit. You don't seek the Holy Spirit, you seek Christ and He gives you the Holy Spirit.

Paul wasn't trying to teach them how to get to a second level. There's no subsequence here. What was missing from them was not information about the baptism of the Holy Spirit as some Charismatics would want us to believe. What was missing was information about Jesus Christ. When they believed, they were immediately baptized. Paul laid his hands on them making an apostolic identification with them. They received tongues, why? So that they would also be included as sort of the last group. They had Jews, they had Gentiles, Samaritans, and even had a little group of Old Testament hangover saints, and they were all in one church.

You might even say that the whole theme of the book of Acts is to show how Jesus' prayer in John 17 was answered. Remember His prayer in John 17? Jesus prayed, "Father, that they may be one even as Thou, Father, are in Me and I in Thee, that they may also be one in Us." That was His prayer and I really believe you see in the book of Acts the answer to that prayer, as the Lord puts the church together, baptizing by the Spirit into the body Jews, Samaritans, Gentiles and these wonderful Old Testament saints. That brought everybody together.

Now these events, beloved, are not to be the pattern for the church's life as a whole. As I said it a long time ago, there's no specific pattern in any one case that is air tight. They don't reflect the normal experience of Christians today. Get this. They don't even reflect the normal experience of Christians in the early church. After the few who had that experience on the day of Pentecost, and the few in Samaria, and the household of Cornelius and this small group of 12 people, we don't know about any other believers that had that same experience even during the book of Acts. And Paul goes many places, and Peter and John went many places, and we don't see the pattern of this being repeated over and over and over again. We can't make the tragic mistake of teaching the experience of the apostles, but rather, you must experience the teaching of the apostles.

Acts reveals a new era, a new epic, a new age and not what is to be the constant pattern for every Christian throughout history. Are we supposed to seek the baptism of the Holy Spirit? No. Simon tried that. He wanted the power, he wanted to buy it. Still people do that. They want the power, they wanna buy it. We're not to seek it. Charismatics seem always out for more, and Paul was always insisting that Christ was enough, wasn't He? Any doctrine that adds something to Christ as some Charismatics, seem to desire, stand self condemned.

Michael Green wrote, "The Charismatics were always out for power. They were elated by spiritual power and were always seeking short cuts to power. It's 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 apostles and signs, 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 work." Green goes on, "The Charismatics had a theology of the

resurrection and its power. They needed to learn afresh the secret of the cross and its shame which yet produced the power of God." Further he says, "The Charismatics were always out for evidence. That's why tongues and healings and miracles are so highly esteemed among them. But Paul knows that we walk by faith while we're in this life, not by sight. There are many times when God calls upon us to trust Him in the dark without any supporting evidence."

Charismatics today of course share those same shortcomings that Michael Green points out. The thirst for something more, the quest for greater power, the desire to see evidences is familiar today as in the apostolic time. They are more compatible, by the way, I think, with the spirit of Simon than they are with the Spirit of God. Instead of seeking for power and miraculous evidences and the repetition of the unique events of a transitional apostolic era, all Christians, Charismatic and non Charismatic should seek to know Christ. The fellowship of His suffering, the conformity to His death because that is what releases resurrection power that is already resonant in the indwelling Holy Spirit.

I just wanna say this. I don't wanna be misunderstood. I don't for one moment disregard the fact that the Spirit of God can, while indwelling the believer, uniquely fill, empower, direct, lead, touch the Christian. I don't wanna use my own experience as a basis for that, but I am very confident by reading the New Testament that the resident Spirit of God who lives within you, longs to fill your life, Ephesians 5:18, and what that tells me is though you have the Holy Spirit, you may not be experiencing the fullness of His power, and there are those times in our Christian experience when, by our obedience and by the Word of Christ dwelling in us richly and by our yieldedness to the will and the way of God, the Spirit of God's power is released and we feel the unique touch of His power in our ministry, in our witness and in our life. And we seek those times. They're not mystically apprehended. They come as we yield ourselves to Him and He works His sovereign way with us. And so, I don't wanna be misunderstood as if to say that the Spirit places you into the body of Christ as it were, at the moment of salvation and then just hangs around to watch what's goin' on. He doesn't. He's active and ministering in marvelous and thrilling ways, enabling and ennobling you to do those things which otherwise would be impossible, giving victory over your flesh and accomplish the purpose of God through ministry. And so we seek the full expression of the Spirit of God in the life of every believer. We're not seeking Him, we're seeking to know His fullness as we yield ourselves to Him.

Well, I hope that helps you to get a grip on a very important issue. There is more I could say. Time is gone. Let's bow in a word of prayer. Father, thank You for the clarity with which the Word of God yields its truth. That if we simply read it and look openly and honestly at it, it will show us the truth. Father, we do pray for dear brothers and sisters who get caught up in wrong theology and the great tragedy of it is two fold. One, they therefore, cannot glorify You for what You're truly doing, and secondly, they cut themselves off from the genuine means of sanctification, and so they forfeit the true power. Father, how deceptive this process is of operating under illusions about how You work, about Your truth and about the ministry of the Holy Spirit. How dishonoring to you and debilitating to

the believer to so live and try to order his Christian experience. We pray, Lord, that you'll give us clarity of mind, that you'll help us to discern Your truth and walk in it for Your glory. In the Savior's Name, Amen.

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