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The Sermons of S. Lewis Johnson

Systematic Theology

“The Holy Spirit in the Age of the Acts of the Apostles” TRANSCRIPT

[Prayer] Father, we thank Thee for the privilege of the study of the Scriptures and we ask, again, that as we consider the ministry of the Holy Spirit that Thou wilt teach us the things that we need to know. And enable us, Lord, to respond to the word in a positive way so that through the Spirit, the spiritual truths that he wants to make real in our lives, may be made real. Enable us through his ministry to be submissive and responsive to the Scriptures. And give us enlightenment, we pray, tonight.

For Jesus' sake. Amen.

[Message] Now, we are, tonight, to study The Holy Spirit in the Age of the Acts of the Apostles. And for Scripture reading, I'm going to ask you to turn with me to Acts chapter 1, verses 4 through 8. Acts chapter 1, verses 4 through 8. And Luke writes:

“And being assembled together with them, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith he, ye have heard of me. For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence. When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?” [Incidentally,

the important prepositional phrase is at this time. They did not question the fact of a restoration; nor did he in his answer. It was a question of the time. And so he said to them, in verse 7]

“It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power. But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.”

Now, since we are going to read a large section of the passages that pertain to the Holy Spirit tonight, I’m not going to read any more, for the beginning of our study.

Let me begin with a few words of introduction. We have, as you know, been studying the ministry of the Spirit in the Old Testament, then in the life of our Lord and in the period of the Synoptic Gospels, or gospels. And now, we want to turn to The Holy Spirit in the Age of the Acts of the Apostles. And then, beginning next Monday night, we shall undertake the specific ministries of the Holy Spirit. And this, of course, is really the heart of our study. Everything, in a sense, has been somewhat introductory to that.

Now, tonight, we are trying to do a broad study of the Book of Acts and consequently, it is not possible for us to deal minutely with individual passages. We shall do that with most of these important passages at various times in our consideration this spring of the ministries of the Spirit. Since many of these theologically important passages have to be considered, such as the doctrines of the filling of the Spirit, the doctrine of spiritual gifts, including the teaching of the New Testament on tongues. Tonight, we just want to survey the theology of the Book of Acts in connection with the ministry of the Holy Spirit.

We must first comment, however, on the unusual prominence of the Holy Spirit in the Book of Acts. If you have read the Book of Acts through, and I presume that most of you in this room have, you have no doubt noticed that there is a tremendous

concentration of information about the Holy Spirit -- the third person of the Trinity -- in the Book of the Acts.

Now, I took down my Greek concordance last night because I was reading something on the Spirit, and it said that the Holy Spirit was mentioned seventy times in the Book of Acts. And that amazed me that it was seventy times. I’m not going to say I thought it was sixty-nine, but -- [Laughter] But I really did not think it was that many times. And so I took down my Greek concordance and went through every reference in the Book of Acts and looked at the interpretation of the passages and sought to make up my mind about how many of the references to the word “spirit” are references to the Holy Spirit; for some are not references to the Holy Spirit but individual human spirits of men. And I counted from my own interpretation that there were -- I counted at least fifty-seven references to the Holy Spirit. There may be, if we interpret several passages in a different way from the way that I interpret them, there may be about sixty. But there are not seventy. However, sixty is a very large number itself.

And, in fact, because of this great stress on the Holy Spirit, many have even thought that the Acts ought to be entitled not “the Acts of the Apostles” but “the Acts of the Holy Spirit.” And Arthur P. Pearson, who is one of my favorite writers of several generations ago now, has a little book out on the ministry of the Holy Spirit and the Book of Acts. Or the Book of Acts, I should say, and he calls it, “The Acts of the Holy Spirit” because the Spirit is so prominent in the Book of Acts.

Now, in spite of that, I still think that this book should be called not “The Acts of the Apostles.” That’s an even poorer title for a book than “The Acts of the Holy Spirit.” Because, as those of you have listened to me in the exposition of Acts over the past year will remember, I commented on the fact that actually the acts of a minority of the Apostles are referred to in this book.

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Peter’s acts and Paul’s acts are prominent and some of John’s appear, but that is about all. It is really a book about the ministry of Jesus Christ and Luke says that right in this first chapter because he says,

“The former treatise [that’s Luke] have I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach Until the day in which he was taken up, after that he through the Holy Ghost had given commandments unto the apostles whom he had chosen:”

And it is evident that what Luke intends for us to understand by the Book of Acts is that he is writing an account of the things that Jesus continues to do and teach. Luke tells us, in his gospel, what Jesus began to do and teach. Acts, the second volume, which we might call “The Life and Ministry of Jesus of Nazareth,” Acts tells us what he continues to do and teach.

And it is significant, as you know from reading the Book of Acts, that there is no conclusion to the Book of Acts. Acts ends very abruptly. Paul -- Luke does not, at the end, give us any list of greetings to people. He does not say my book comes to an end here. He just stops with Paul preaching in Rome, unhindered, because he wants us to understand that the Acts which our Lord continues to do and teach after his resurrection are still going on. He wants us to realize that, actually, we, in our own Christian experiences -- if we had a gospel writer and historian like Luke here to write them down - - we are actually in our Christian experience contributing to the things that Jesus continues to do and teach.

So I still say that the title of the Book of Acts ought to be, “The Acts of Our Lord Jesus Christ Done in the Power of the Holy Spirit Through the Apostles and Others.” But now, how would it sound on Sunday morning if I said, “Now, will you please turn to *The Acts of Our Lord Jesus Christ Done in the Power of the Holy Spirit Through the Apostles and Others Including Ourselves?*” By the time I said the book two or three times, I’d have to

pronounce the benediction. So I cannot get everybody us to follow my title for the Book of Acts and so I’m going to keep calling it the Acts of the Apostles and realize it was poorly named.

Now, I know some of you are thinking, “Well, Dr. Johnson, what do you mean criticizing something that’s right in the Bible, The Acts of the Apostles.” Now, those enlightened members of the congregation will know by now that those titles of the books of the New Testament were not written by the authors of the books. They were added in the 2nd Century. Luke did not write this scroll with the heading of “The Acts of the Apostles.” He didn’t give it any title. This was the title that the church gave it in the middle of the 2nd Century. So the title is not a part of the inspired book. Now, of course, most of you know that, and you didn’t have to tell me that. But in case there was someone here who was not knowledgeable in that particular fact, maybe that helps a little.

Now, if we look at this book as a whole, from the standpoint of the ministry of the Holy Spirit, I think we could probably say that the theme of it is the mission and ministry of the Spirit in Acts. In other words, it is Luke’s account of how, through the Holy Spirit, that commission that we read about in Acts chapter 1 in verse 8 is carried out. “Ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.” And Acts is the story of how the Holy Spirit came upon those in that room in Acts chapter 2, the Apostles and others -- the 120 -- how the Holy Spirit came upon them, endued them with power and led them to a ministry of the word that not only covered Jerusalem, Judaea, and Samaria, but actually has gone out to the ends of the earth.

If we were to divide Acts into three parts, from that standpoint, the ministry of the Spirit in Acts, we might do it this way: the first chapter, the expectation of the Spirit. Our Lord had said in Luke chapter 24, he repeats it through Luke in Acts chapter 1, that the Disciples are to “await the coming of the Spirit.” Then in Acts chapter 2 through chapter

12, we have the story of the inception of the ministry of the Spirit; an inception that began at Pentecost. Now, I know that’s not entitled exactly as I would like to do it, but I did this somewhat hurriedly. The inception of his ministry at Pentecost and the continuation of it, primarily, to Jerusalem, Judaea, and Samaria.

And as you know, in these chapters, beginning with chapter 2 and closing with chapter 12, the prominent character is Peter. The prominent city and the headquarters for the movement is Jerusalem. And the sphere of the ministry is primarily Palestine. Jerusalem, Judaea, and in the 8th chapter, the ministry goes out to Samaria. It is true that in chapter 11 it goes a little beyond it, but it is obviously not an emphasis of Luke at that point.

Then, at chapter 13 through chapter 28 -- chapter 13 is something of a watershed in the book. We have the continuation -- or, perhaps, the expansion, we might call it -- of his ministry at Antioch. For, it is there in the Church at Antioch in Syria, the Holy Spirit signified to the Church gathered there that he wanted Paul and Barnabas to institute a work that would go to the uttermost part of the earth.

And so in the latter part of the book, it is Paul not Peter who is prominent. It is Antioch and not Jerusalem, which is the prominent city. And it is the world and not simply Palestine, which is the sphere of the ministry of the word.

Now, for a change of pace in our studies, I’m going, tonight, to read every passage in Acts in which there is a reference to the Holy Spirit. So will you get your Bibles out. And we’ve already read: Chapter 1, verse 4 through verse 8, and I alluded a moment ago to chapter 1, verse 2. And the first references are chapter 1, verse 2; chapter 1, verse 5; and chapter 1, verse 8.

Now, let’s read the remaining reference in the 1st chapter of the Book of Acts. By this, I hope that you will get some idea of the -- not only the many occurrences of the mention of the Spirit but will you notice, particularly, as we read the various phases of his ministry. Verse 16 of Acts chapter 1, is our fourth reference:

“Men and brethren, this scripture must needs have been fulfilled, which the Holy Ghost by the mouth of David spake before concerning Judas, which was guide to them that took Jesus.”

Now, you can see that the authors -- the author of this book, giving the words of Peter, seems to acquiesce in Peter’s statement that it is the Holy Spirit who is the author of the word of God. Let’s turn to chapter 2, verse 4. Here we have two references to the Holy Spirit.

“And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.”

Verse 17: “And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams:”

Verse 18 is the next: “And on my servants and on my handmaidens I will pour out in those days of my Spirit; and they shall prophesy:”

Verse 33, Peter’s sermon: “Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear.”

Verse 38: “Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.”

Now, chapter 4, verse 8: “Then Peter, filled with the Holy Ghost, said unto them, Ye rulers of the people, and elders of Israel,”

Verse 25: “Who by the mouth of thy servant David hast said, Why did the heathen rage, and the people imagine vain things?”

Now, you can tell from the English text here that the word Spirit is not here; but it is in the Greek text of that verse that David has spoken by the Spirit. Again, a reference to the Old Testament inspiration by the Spirit.

Verse 31: “And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with boldness.”

Notice the stress now, beginning in the Book of Acts on the “filling” of the Holy Spirit.

Chapter 5, verse 3: “But Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back part of the price of the land?”

You’ll notice that it is possible for a man to lie to the Holy Ghost.

Verse 9: “Then Peter said unto her, How is it that ye have agreed together to tempt the Spirit of the Lord? behold, the feet of them which have buried thy husband are at the door, and shall carry thee out.”

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It’s a serious thing to sin against the Holy Spirit.

Verse 32: “And we are his witnesses [Peter said] of these things; and so is also the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey him.”

Well, you can see here that the Holy Ghost is a witness to the truth through the Apostles.

Chapter 6, verse 3: “Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business.”

If there are the initial deacons, and there is good reason for believing that, one of the qualifications for a deacon is not simply that he should be a good businessman, but that he should be a spiritual man. Filled with the Holy Spirit -- Full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom --

Verse 5: “And the saying pleased the whole multitude: and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Ghost, and Philip, and Prochorus, and Nicanor, and Timon, and Parmenas, and Nicolas a proselyte of Antioch:”

Verse 10: “And they were not able to resist the wisdom and the spirit by which he spake.”

Now, in your authorized version that’s a little “s”. That could be simply the disposition of Stephen; rather than the Holy Spirit. I, personally, felt that it is the Holy Spirit that is referred to there, but I could not prove that. You see, in the Greek text, the

word simply appears as *pneuma* and since they did not use capital letters, we have to look at the passage and interpret it. I think it should be a reference to the Holy Spirit. The translated of the Authorized Version thought it was a reference to the mood and disposition of Stephen’s own spirit. The resultant meaning is not a great deal different theologically.

Chapter 7, verse 51, Stephen is speaking and he says: “Ye stiff necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye.”

Now, many of you will remember that in referring to this passage, I said that there are different attitudes that people may have to the Spirit. A believer may grieve the Spirit when he sins. The local church may quench the Spirit when it refuses to allow the gifted men to exercise their ministry in the local church. That’s the context of 1 Thessalonians, chapter 5. The unbeliever may resist the Holy Spirit; and Stephen refers to that.

Verse 55: “But he, being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up steadfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God,”

Chapter 8, verse 15. Now, here, the ministry of the Spirit has stretched out to Samaria. And Simon the Sorcerer is there when Philip comes to preach the word.

Verse 15: “Who, when they were come down, prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Ghost:”

Those who had believed -- These are the Apostles who are to pray --

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Verse 17: “Then laid they their hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost.”

Notice, now, in Samaria there is an outpouring of the Holy Spirit.

Verse 18: “And when Simon saw that through laying on of the apostles' hands the Holy Ghost was given, he offered them money.”

This is Simon Magus not Simon Peter. He was a man who had quite a reputation in Samaria. As a matter of fact, they called him the great power of God. But when Philip came and preached the gospel and men were saved through the ministry of the Spirit, he performed mighty works of power and peoples' lives were transformed and Simon Magus said, I think I'd like to have a little bit of that, too. And so he joined the Church. He joined the movement. It says he believed. It's obvious that he didn't.

What he did was to profess his belief. And when the apostles came and the apostles laid hands on them and they received the Holy Spirit and apparently -- this is not stated in the text. I want to warn you. We'll talk about it later, a little. But it is not stated they spoke in tongues. It does say, in verse 18: “And when Simon saw that through laying on of the apostles' hands the Holy Ghost was given,” I presume that something outward happened. And it may well have been speaking in tongues. Well, that really intrigued Simon Magus, and so he went down to Holiday Inn where Peter was staying and he walked in and he took a bag of money out of his back pocket. And he plopped it down on the table and he said, “I'll give you this for the Holy Ghost.” And let's listen to what Peter says.

Verse 19, he says, “Give me also this power, that on whomsoever I lay hands, he may receive the Holy Ghost.”

Now, Peter said, To hell with you and your money. Now, that’s Johnson’s translation -- [laughter] -- but that is much more to the point than this text. Look at it. It says, “Thy money perish with thee.” Now, if that isn’t to hell with you and your money I don’t know what is. Now, that’s the way Peter replied. Now, it’s obvious that Peter did not regard him as a Christian man, and then he goes on to say that he ought to pray God. By the way, he didn’t say you ought to pray to me. You ought to come on Sunday morning to confession and recite your sins, and I will give you absolution. He said, you better pray God perhaps your sins may be forgiven. Well now, in verse 29, we have another reference to the Spirit and this time in the Ethiopians and Philip.

“Then the Spirit said unto Philip, Go near, and join thyself to this chariot.”

Verse 39: “And when they were come up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip, that the eunuch saw him no more.”

Now, you, I think, are beginning to see one of the ministries of the Holy Spirit is to guide the men who are responsible for the preaching of the word of God through the period of the Book of Acts. It is He, in a sense, who is superintending the spreading of the word of God. Now, chapter 9, verse 17. Here we come to the chapter of the conversion of Paul.

“And Ananias went his way, and entered into the house; and putting his hands on him said, Brother Saul, the Lord, even Jesus, that appeared unto thee in the way as thou camest, hath sent me, that thou mightest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost.”

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Verse 31: “Then had the churches rest throughout all Judaea and Galilee and Samaria, and were edified; and walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, were multiplied.”

You can see here that there is a ministry of the Holy Spirit to whole Church, comforting and encouraging the church. Chapter 10, verse 19. Here, now, Peter is being led by the Spirit to open the door of the good news to Gentiles. And we read:

“While Peter thought on the vision, the Spirit said unto him, Behold, three men seek thee.”

And finally, Peter reaches Caesarea and the house of Cornelius and in verse 38 we have the next reference.

“How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him.”

This, of course, is a reference back to the Spirit in our Lord’s ministry. The coming of the Spirit upon him, remember, when we talked about the Spirit in our Lord’s life, the coming of the Spirit upon him was the time in which he was inaugurated into his Messianic ministry. It was the power given him by which he should carry out his mission as the Messiah in accordance with Old Testament prophecy. Verse 44. Now, Peter had gotten through the introduction of his message and we read in verse 44:

“While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them that heard the word.”

In verse 45: “And they of the circumcision which believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost.”

Notice that express.

Verse 47: “Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we?”

It is evident, by the way, from this text that baptism by water follows salvation. They had already received the Holy Ghost. Then he said, “Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost just as we?”

Now, chapter 11, verse 12. Peter is telling the story in Jerusalem and he said,

“And the Spirit bade me go with them, nothing doubting.”

Verse 15: “And as I began to speak, [I told you he was just at his introduction.] And as I began to speak the Holy Ghost fell on them, as on us at the beginning.”

Now, when was “at the beginning?” Well, that was Pentecost.

Verse 16: “Then remembered I the word of the Lord, how that he said, John indeed baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost.”

And so here we have another fulfillment of Acts 1:5; the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

Verse 24, speaking now of Barnabas, “For he was a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost.” And in verse 28: “There stood up one of them named Agabus, and signified by the Spirit that there should be great dearth throughout all the world: which came to pass in the days of Claudius Caesar.”

Now, you can see here, that here is a prophet who rises up in the midst of the Apostles and the others who were with him and prophesied. Now, you will notice, his prophesy has to do with the future.

And I said yesterday, if I may -- Some of you weren’t here -- I said yesterday that it is claimed by many, I think, very sincere sometimes Christians, sometimes not, but many sincere people today that God is still giving the gift of speaking in tongues and the gift of prophesy. And when I say to them -- and I will have many conversations with them -- They love to talk this over with me, cause they are always trying to convert me.

Yesterday, after the message, two people cornered me out in the hall there. They’re from another church over in Oak Cliff, and they wanted to tell me that those very things that I talked about were happening over at their church. So we had a very pleasant little conversation. They were not too knowledgeable in the word, fortunately, so they didn’t embarrass me at all. [Laughter] And but they are always trying to convert me. Anyway, so when I talked with them, I simply asked them these questions, like, “Do you believe, then, that all the gifts are available for us today?” “Yes, we do.” I say, “Well, where are the Apostles today?” Well, that usually stumps them because they can’t think of anybody who has seen the Lord, recently, and who has a ministry like one of the Apostles.

And then, I think, it’s fair to say to them, “Well, now, you believe in the gift of miracles?” “Yes.” “It’s here with us today? Well, who has raised anybody from the dead recently?” They always want to point me to somebody who had some particular form of illness that some doctor said he had. Now, the first principles of medicine is to -- the first principle of medicine is, pardon me Jesse, is to recognize that a doctor can be wrong in

his diagnosis. And I think all doctors who are truly doctors, real good doctors will shout, hallelujah at that, thinking of course of other doctors, naturally. [Laughter] But nevertheless, it’s true. It’s true.

Now, I think it’s fair to have a test, which would settle the question, one way or the other. Who’s raising people from the dead? If the gift of miracles were here, that should be evident.

Now, also they say to me that prophets are prophesying today. They even say, “We have prophets in our church.” I remember one particular one, just a few years ago, from Oklahoma City. They said to me, “We have prophets in our church. They prophesy every Sunday.” I say, “What do they say?” “Well, they don’t say anything particularly, Dr. Johnson, that you might be interested in. It’s more exhortation.” And I said, “Oh,” and sensing that I’m not following too well, they say, “Of course, you know, Dr. Johnson, that prophesy is of two kinds.” I say, “Yes, I do.”

Prophecy is a telling forth of the word of God in the sense that you express the mind of God. But prophecy is also in the Bible a prediction of something in the future, too. Now, they want to hide behind the fact that prophecy is of two kinds, in order that they might, under the term “prophecy,” include all of their exhortations.

Well, now, that may be fine but it would seem to me that a prophet should not just prophesy in one half of prophecy -- in the sphere of one half of the prophesy. That is, just telling forth the word of God, rather than prophesying something of the future.

Because, you see, it’s easy for a man to stand up and say, “I have a message from God. God wants every one of us here to be full of the Holy Spirit. He wants us to give ourselves wholeheartedly to him.” And then sit down. Well, that’s good scriptural information, of course, but who could ever test it as coming from the Holy Spirit? But if I should say, standing up, “When Bill McRae goes to Canada next month to preach the word” -- this is purely made up. He’s not going so far as I know. But “When Bill McRae goes to Canada next month to preach the gospel, I predict that he shall fall sick and be

seriously ill.” Now, if that came to pass, then you might say, “Maybe he has the gift of prophecy.” And if I was able to do that a number of times, you might pay attention to me.

Now, you see, that is the test of a prophet. Does what he prophesize come to pass? Now, Agabus -- New Testament prophets, in those days, they got up and predicted the future, and it came to pass. So there is no one prophesying today. No one. The gift of prophecy does not exist today. There are no prophets today. When you hear a man say, “He’s a great preacher. He’s a prophet.” Now, what they usually mean by that is he preaches with a great deal of power.

But there are no prophets today. No one today is predicting the future, and it’s coming to pass. If it were, I’d have one question for him right now. Who’s going to win the Super Bowl? [Laughter] But now, I was kidding -- but you’ll notice, you see, as you read these texts, if you’ll just pay attention, you won’t be misled by people who have not sufficiently studied the Scriptures, in my opinion.

Now, chapter 13, verse 2 -- I’m having a good time reading the Bible tonight. This has taken longer than I thought, however. It’s my Southern drawl, I believe -- 13:2:

“As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them.”

Verse 4: “So they, being sent forth by the Holy Ghost.”

Now, you can see that this new movement in Antioch began by the Spirit and his work in the hearts of the men there.

Verse 9, when they were on Paphos -- At Paphos -- Here we read, “Then Saul, (who also is called Paul,) filled with the Holy Ghost, set his eyes on him.”

Verse 52: “And the disciples were filled with joy, and with the Holy Ghost.”

Chapter 15, verse 8. We’re now in the Jerusalem Council, so called. Peter is standing up and he’s saying, referring back to the day in Cornelius’ house, in verse 8:

“And God, which knoweth the hearts, bare them witness, giving them the Holy Ghost, even as he did unto to us.”

Now, chapter 15, verse 28, as they reach their decision, they say,

“For it seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and to us.”

You see it is the Spirit now who is beginning, primarily, to guide in the expansion of the Christian movement and to guide the individuals in the decisions that they make. That appears, now, in chapter 16, verses 6 and 7, where we have two more references. Verse 6, Paul is on his second missionary journey.

“Now when they had gone throughout Phrygia and the region of Galatia, and were forbidden of the Holy Ghost to preach the word in Asia, After they were come to Mysia, they assayed to go into Bithynia: but the Spirit suffered them not.”

Now, chapter 18, verse 25 has been thought by some to be a reference to the Spirit. I’m not sure. But I’ll read the verse, 18:25 says:

“This man was instructed in the way of the Lord; and being fervent in the spirit.”

Now, you can see the translators of the Authorized Version didn’t think that was a reference to the Holy Spirit, but it might be. Apollos may have been a man who was fervent in the Holy Spirit. Surely, the Holy Spirit was the ultimate sources of his fervency for God.

Chapter 19, verse 2: “He said unto them [Here we have two references] “He said unto them, Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed? And they said unto him, We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost.”

We’ve been talking about that recently on Sunday morning.

Verse 6: “And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied.”

Now, notice, they spoke with tongues; they prophesied, in Ephesus on Paul’s second missionary journey.

Verse 21: “After these things were ended, Paul purposed in the spirit, when he had passed through Macedonia and Achaia, to go to Jerusalem, saying, After I have been there, I must also see Rome.”

That may be a reference to the Holy Spirit or it may be a reference to Paul’s human spirit. He purposed in his human spirit. Of course, being guided by the Holy Spirit, ultimately. Same thing is true of verse 22 of chapter 20.

“And now, behold, I go bound in the spirit unto Jerusalem.”

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That may be the Holy Spirit or it may be Paul’s human spirit guided by the Holy Spirit. Now, we’re coming near the end chapter 23 -- no, verse 23 of chapter 20:

“Save that the Holy Ghost witnesseth in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions abide me.”

Now, this is a reference to the Holy Spirit through the prophets in the cities when Paul met with the saints. Men got up who had the gift of prophecy and said, “Look Paul, bonds and afflictions away you.” And those prophecies were fulfilled.

Verse 28, now Paul, speaking to the Ephesians’ elders says,

“Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.”

Now, let me ask you a question. Who appoints elders in the local church? Who appoints elders in the local church? Look at the text, the Holy Spirit. See! “Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers.” And so it is the ministry of oversight, which the elder has, and it is given to him by the Holy Spirit. You don’t appoint elders by the present elders gathering together and looking over the members of the congregation and saying, “Now, it would be helpful to us if we had so-and-so on our board. He’s a very influential man in this city. It would do us good. And so and so and so and so -- and this man could help us, perhaps, because he’s spiritual. So on a month from now, after we’ve asked them whether they will serve, we will lay hands upon them in a public ceremony and we will make them elders.”

“The Holy Spirit in the Age of the Acts of the Apostles” by S. Lewis Johnson
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Now, that is not the teaching of the word of God. They are appointed to the office by the Holy Spirit. Now, the elders who are elders may recognize the Spirit’s appointment; but elders are appointed by God. That is very clearly taught in God’s word.

Now, chapter 21 in verse 4: “And finding disciples, we tarried there seven days: who said to Paul through the Spirit, the he should not go up to Jerusalem.”

See? They are warning him of what is before him.

Verse 11: “And when he was come unto us, he took Paul’s girdle, [this is Agabus again] and bound his own hands and feet, and said, Thus saith the Holy Ghost, So shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man that owneth this girdle, and shall deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles.”

Now, and of course, his prophecy came true. Why? Because Agabus was a true prophet. And you’ll notice, he prophesied about the future; something that you could test him on. And did you know, that that is the next to last reference to the Holy Spirit in the Book of Acts. In other words, from chapter 21 to chapter 28, we have no reference to the Holy Spirit and the last reference is in verse 25 of chapter 28.

And here we read, “And when they agreed not among themselves, they departed, after that Paul had spoken one word, Well spake the Holy Ghost by Esaias the prophet unto our fathers.”

Referring again to the fact that the Holy Spirit is the author of the Scriptures.

Now, you can go home tonight and tell your wife or your husband “I have read all of the passages in the Book of Acts in which the word “spirit” occurs.”

Now, I haven’t done that just accidentally. I have done that because, I think, if you are to understand in the weeks to follow the things that I’m going to say about the Spirit, the first requirement is that you have at least read the passages where the term “spirit” occurs.

Now, for a few moments, let’s try to go through our outline. That was our introduction. [Laughter] Forty minutes of introduction. You will notice that there are three great broad features in the book’s teaching on the Holy Spirit. Let’s divine it up into these three ways: The Spirit and the Lord’s post--resurrection ministry, Acts chapter 1; the Spirit and the day of Pentecost, Acts chapter 2, and then, the Spirit in the life of the early Church, which begins in Acts 2 and does not conclude until Acts chapter 28.

So the Spirit and the Lord’s post resurrection ministry, and we’re going to turn back to chapter 1, again. You will notice from the statements that are made in these opening verses; particularly verse 2, “Until the day in which he was taken up, after that he through the Holy Ghost had given commandments unto the apostles whom he had chosen” that these factors emerge in our Lord’s post-resurrection ministry.

First, Jesus did this ministry through the Spirit. Now, that may not be a startling thing to you, but do you know that that is the only place in the Bible in which it is said that Jesus did something through the Spirit?

Now, you remember that when we were talking about our Lord’s ministry in his life, we said that he performed his works of power in the Spirit, by the Spirit. But the expression is not precisely this. This is the only place in the New Testament that I can remember -- I think I’m right on this. I should check it completely to be sure. But it’s rare under any circumstances that the expression through the Spirit occurs.

Jesus, even in his post-resurrection ministry, carries it out through the Spirit.

Now, I think the second thing that emerges here is that the promised Spirit would be the sphere of a baptism soon to come. That’s verse 5: “For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence.” The Greek says, Baptized in the Holy Spirit. So they will be plunged into the sphere of the Holy Spirit in a special way, not many days hence. Now, “not many days hence,” of course, can only be a reference to Pentecost. We shall later, when we talk about the baptism of the spirit, prove that point.

And third, the third fact that emerges from our Lord’s post-resurrection ministry is that as a result of this baptism of the Holy Spirit there should be available to them a power. That is particularly evident from verse 8: “Ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you.” So those are the things that characterize our Lord’s post-resurrection ministry. It is through the Spirit. It concerns the baptism of the Spirit that is to come on the day of Pentecost. And it also contains a promise of power for the disciples.

Now, it is evident from this that our Lord said and believed that the work of God should only be carried out in the power of the Holy Spirit. That means that if we have become Christians, and we have become members of the Christian church and seek to do things for God. We are not to do them in our own power. We are to do everything that we do in the Lord’s work in the power of the Holy Spirit. That means that when men usher on Sunday morning, it should be done in the power of the Holy Spirit. When the elders oversee the local church, it should be done in the power of the Spirit. When teachers teach the word of God, of course, we know that. They should do it in the power of the Holy Spirit. Every Christian activity, that simple witness that you have with your neighbor, your friend, your relative, is only effective if it is through the Spirit and his power. We can never do the work of God in the flesh.

Roman II, the Spirit and the Day of Pentecost. And first of all, a word about the time -- Notice verse one, “And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place.”

Now, I want to say something here, which may take me a few minutes, but it is extremely important. May I tell you a story, which I’ve often told? Some of you, no doubt, can tell it as well as I now, but it illustrates this point so well. Maybe some of you haven’t heard it.

H. A. Ironside was one of our wonderful Bible teachers of a generation ago. And I had the privilege of hearing him many times preach. Consequently, I’ve always been interested in everything that he wrote. In one of his books on the Holy Spirit, he tells of an experience that he had with a man who said to him, “Dr. Ironside, I’ve just come from a great tarrying meeting. Hundreds of people have been tarrying for many days at San Jose, California, waiting for the Holy Ghost.”

And Dr. Ironside said to his friend, “What authority do you have for such a thing as that?” He said, “Well, Jesus said, ‘tarry in Jerusalem until ye be endewed with power from on high.’”

Dr. Ironside said, “Well, my friend, are you not confounding locations and times? You’re over 10,000 miles too far away and over 1,800 years too late?” Now, he had, when he made that reply, a very important point to make.

And that is Pentecost occurs once in the history of God. It never occurs again. There are stages in the fulfillment of the coming of the Spirit, as we shall see in Acts, when others become partakers of the significance of Pentecost. But we can never have another Pentecost. Do you know why? Well, for the same reason that we can never have another cross. The Old Testament sets forth a series of feasts for Israel. There were seven of them. They are called the Feasts of Jehovah. The first, you will remember, was the Passover Feast. This is all set forth in Leviticus chapter 23.

The first is the Passover because, for Israel as a nation, the Passover feast was designed to represent the beginning of their life. It was then that they slew the lamb. It was then that they escaped from the power of Pharaoh and Egypt. That, of course, is illustrative of our belief in the cross of our Lord, Jesus Christ, by which we escape from eternal judgment and are free from Satan and his power.

Well, those feasts begin there. Now, the fourth of the feasts -- After we have the Feast of Passover and the Feasts of First Fruits and the Feast of Unleavened Bread second -- The Feast of First Fruits -- then we have the Feast of Pentecost. It occurs fifty days after the Feast of First Fruits.

Now, our Lord is the First Fruits of the work of God in his Resurrection. He is called The First Fruits of Them That Sleep. His Resurrection is illustrated in the Old Testament by the Feast of First Fruits.

The Feast of Pentecost is designed to illustrate the Day of Pentecost when fifty days later, the Holy Spirit comes and forms Jew and Gentile into one body. And so what did they do on the Feast of Shaboath? Or the Feast of Weeks? Or the Feast of Pentecost?

You know what they did? They baked two loaves, and they baked them with leaven -- not without, with leaven. The Passover lamb was to be without blemish and without spot, because it represented Christ, who was sinless.

But in the case of the two loaves, leaven in the Bible is often figurative of sin. Those loaves were to be baked with leaven. And the two loaves were to be offered to God. That was the attempt of God to illustrate the fact that when, on fifty days after the day of resurrection, there should be formed a group of two people who should become one. They are sinners, but they should become one. The one loaf, apparently, representing the Jews, the other loaf, representing the Gentiles. But in through the ministry of the coming of the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost, they would become one body. Though sinful, one body.

Now, that, in other words, what happened on the Day of Pentecost was a fulfillment of prophecy. And that prophecy came to pass at a particular time, fifty days after the Resurrection, forty days our Lord taught. They he ascended. Ten days they waited. On the fiftieth day, He came.

Now, if the Apostles had been waiting in Babylon, two weeks beforehand, would the Holy Spirit have come there? No. If they had been waiting in Rome, three weeks later, would he have come there? No. He was to come, according to prophecy, fifty days later in Jerusalem.

Now, that is why it is foolish for us to get together and have a tarrying meeting and wait for the Holy Spirit to come. How ridiculous can you get? The Holy Spirit has come. It’s just as ridiculous, as we’ve often said, as if I were to go home and say to my wife, “You know, we’ve lived together for so long, I think I’d like to marry you.” It has happened.

Now, let’s turn to Acts 2. This is the fulfillment of prophecy.

“And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. [Not the best of them, each of them] And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.”

Now, the wind and the fire are phenomena that are designed to appeal to the ear and to the eye, and they are designed to portray the spiritual. The wind suggesting, of course, the power of God. Nothing is more powerful than wind. And then the fire suggesting the presence of God; for if there is one thing in the Old Testament that is the symbol of the presence of God, it is fire.

Abraham, when he was in the presence of God, saw the burning furnace approach the pieces of the sacrifice, which he had made, in Genesis 15. Moses when he came into contact with God on the backside of the desert he saw a burning bush. That was the symbol of the presence of God. Israel, of course, was led in the wilderness by the pillar of fire.

And so the wind and the fire are designed to be visible symbols of the presence of God, the Holy Spirit. I would think that the filled with the Holy Spirit in verse 4, represents the spiritual reality. So the wind and the fire are symbols. The filling is the theological explanation of what happened to them.

So there was a violent blast, like a tremendous downdraft from above, and there was the appearance of cloven tongues of fire, this fire seemed to come out and little tongues of it, slivers of it seemed to sit upon the head of each one of the believers in token of the fact that they each were included. And suddenly, they were so under the control of the Holy Spirit that they began to speak in other tongues. And Peter began to speak in the Parthian tongue. And John began to speak in the Median tongue. And Andrew began to speak in the tongue of Mesopotamia. And Nicodemus began to speak in the tongue of Cappodocia, whatever those tongues were, and so on.

They were standing around, all of these people from all of these communities -- apparently, this happened in the temple, the house is the temple. And there were people standing around and they saw these 120 people had been meeting together and suddenly they were standing up.

And some fellow from Cappodocia said, “Look, there is a native of mine.” But he looks at him and recognizes, no, he’s not. This man is from Judaea. But he’s speaking my language, and he’s telling the great works of God.

And they all gave testimony to this. They were speaking in known languages. They weren’t speaking in gibberish. They weren’t speaking ecstatic speech. They weren’t

just mumbling sounds, like I’ve heard people do in these meetings called speaking in tongues.

They were speaking known languages. And that’s why we read here that the multitude, verse 6: “The multitude came together, and were confounded, because that every man heard them speak in his own language.” And so the phenomena were these.

Now, the Cardinal features of that. And let me just conclude with this. What did Pentecost really mean? Well, I think that we can say this, first of all, it meant the inauguration of a new age. We have said the Old Testament was the age of the Father. The day of the incarnation of Lord, Jesus, was the age of the Son.

Well, when Pentecost came to pass, there was inaugurated the age of the Holy Spirit; the Spirit was now given. He was given at a certain time; he was given in a certain place as the Old Testament and the New Testament had prophesied. It was also the vindication of the life and ministry of Jesus of Nazareth. And Peter makes special reference to that. He says, verse 36, in his sermon:

“Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made the same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ.”

And the fact that he has ascended to the heaven, received the gift of the Holy Spirit and poured it out is a token of the fact that he was God’s Son and you were wrong in crucifying him. So it was the vindication of the life and ministry of Jesus Christ.

It was, thirdly, the inception of a new order of life in power among humanity. Never, until the Day of Pentecost, had men been indwelt by the Holy Spirit. They had been under his power at points in time. Never until this time had anyone outside of our Lord been completely and permanently -- and this was universal among all of the Christians, it said, upon each of them, universally indwelt by the Holy Spirit. You know,

that’s the most tremendous fact. I don’t think I can ever get over the fact that I am indwelt by the Holy Spirit of God.

Now, that is a tremendous fact, isn’t it? Just think of it? The third person of the Trinity indwells me permanently. And not only me, but every Christian; even the simplest babe who was just born again a few moments ago when somebody spoke to him out on some street corner.

And finally, it was the inception, the beginning, of a new body of believers: the church. We hear of the church in Scripture only in the future tense. Jesus said, “I will build my church.”

But now, in the Day of Pentecost, with the coming of the Spirit and the forming of the loaf of the Jew and the loaf of the Gentile into one body, by the baptism of the Holy Spirit, the Church comes into existence. This body of people composed of Jew and Gentile who are united to Jesus Christ by the common presence of the Holy Spirit. And it’s not surprising that in Acts chapter 5 in verse 11, which is the first reference of the Holy Spirit - of the church in Acts, that we should read: “And great fear came upon all the church.” It’s in existence now because of what happened on the Day of Pentecost.

Now, we don’t have time to finish tonight, but next Monday night, the Lord willing, I’ll finish the remainder of this outline, and we’ll go on from there. Let’s close in a word of prayer.

[Prayer] Father, we thank Thee for the word of God; for the wonderful teaching that it contains. And as we consider the things that Thou hast done, give us clarity of thought and understanding so that we may serve Thee in a way that would please Thee, for we know, Lord, that Thou hast given us the word of God to direct us in our daily life. So guide and direct us.

We pray in Jesus’ name. Amen.