



BELIEVERS CHAPEL

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Sermons of S. Lewis Johnson

Acts 2:1–13

“The Day of Pentecost, or the Promise Given”

TRANSCRIPT

I apologize to you for my voice this morning, and I hope you're able to hear. I'm not going to be able to raise my voice at all, because it's just barely with me, and that accounts for the way I'm speaking.

Will you take your New Testaments, and turn to Acts chapter 2. We'll read verse 1 through verse 13 for our Scripture reading. Acts 2, verse 1 through verse 13.

The Lord Jesus has promised that he would give the promise of the Father to them on the Day of Pentecost, and that they were to wait in Jerusalem until that promise should be given, and here we read of the giving of the Holy Spirit for this age, for the entire church. Luke records it this way:

“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. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance. And there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven. Now when this was noised abroad, the multitude came together, and were confounded, because that every man heard them speak in his own language. And they were all

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amazed and marveled, saying one to another; Behold, are not all these which speak Galileans? And how hear we every man in our own tongue, wherein we were born? Parthians, and Medes, and Elamites, and the dwellers in Mesopotamia, and in Judea, and Cappadocia, in Pontus, and Asia, Phrygia, and Pamphylia, in Egypt, and in the parts of Libya about Cyrene, and the strangers of Rome, Jews and proselytes, Cretes and Arabians, we do hear them speak in our tongues the wonderful works of God. And they were all amazed, and were in doubt saying one to another; What meaneth this?” (That expression, incidentally, “and were in doubt,” means perhaps a bit more accurately, “were in perplexity.” And then verse 13 records a third response.) “Others mocking said; These men are full of new wine.”

May the Lord bless this reading of his Word.

[Prayer] ... And we thank Thee, that this universal indwelling, which had never occurred before the Day of Pentecost, has come to pass. And down through the centuries since then, the members of the Church of Jesus Christ have been indwelt by the third person of the blessed Trinity. What a magnificent gift Thou hast given to us who live in this age, and specifically, to the members of the body. We are grateful Lord, and we pray that it may be true, that in our experience, we know the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

We ask, Lord, Thy blessing upon each one present in this meeting. We pray for any who may be here, who may not yet have come to know Jesus Christ as their own personal Savior, and we pray that through the work of the Holy Spirit, and conviction, and conversion there may come faith in him, which leads to eternal life.

We are grateful for the promises of the Word of God. We know, Lord, that Thy Word does not return unto Thee void. We call upon Thee Lord today, to bring forth fruit as the Word of God is preached. We pray for our country and its leadership. We pray for this United States of America. We ask, Lord, that Thy sovereign providence may superintend in the affairs of this nation. We thank

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Thee for the whole Church of Jesus Christ. Wherever its members may be now, Lord, bless each one of them. Wherever the Word of God is proclaimed in accuracy and harmony with the Word of God. Lord, bless that Word. Bring forth fruit.

We know there are many people who proclaim the Word of God in earnestness and sincerity, who may not agree with us on every point of biblical doctrine, but who, nevertheless, represent the Lord Jesus Christ, and honor him, his person and work. Bless their ministry. Bless the whole ministry of the body of Christ today. And, Father, if it be Thy will, bless in this meeting. May we have a sense of Thy blessing upon us.

We pray for the sick, for those who are perplexed, in need of divine guidance, in need of sustaining in trials of life. Especially remember those named in our Calendar of Concern. We commit them to Thee. Pray Thy blessing upon them. Richly bless them, and supply the needs that exist Lord. And as for the outreach of the Chapel, Lord we thank Thee for it. We pray that it may continue, and use that richly to glorify the Savior. And we pray for those who participate in it. We are thankful for their faithfulness and for the zeal with which they seek to please Thee.

So, Lord, bless the radio ministry. Bless the tapes, the Bible classes, the publications, the other things that make up the ministry of this assembly of believers. We commit the elders to Thee, with their responsibilities, and the deacons. O God, we pray that Thy hand may be upon them and that we may sense Thy guiding hand over all that we do, that the Lord Jesus may be exalted. We worship Thee through him. We give Thee thanks and praise today.

For Jesus' sake. Amen.

[Message] I apologize for my voice this morning, but there is nothing I can do about it. This past week, I went to Chicago to teach for one week in the theological seminary. About fifteen young preachers who had graduated from a number of schools on the subject of doctrinal preaching, or preaching on doctrinal themes, and when I arrived on Monday morning—began Monday afternoon—it was a whole semester in one week, and so it began at one—one to five—and then the

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next days from nine until five, straight through. But when I arrived, I was getting sick at that time, and there was no way to get out of it, and so I had to go ahead and teach. And by the end of the week my voice was just barely audible. Some people, of course, would rejoice in that, but I—I had to finish, and by the grace of God I finished and—and that accounts for the fact that I’m not able to speak too well.

It was an encouraging thing for me to address the young men. They are all out of seminary and preaching for some years. It was in the Doctor of Ministry program, and we had men from the Christian Reform denomination, from the Presbyterian denomination, from the Baptists, from the Nazarenes, from some of the Assemblies of God, from the Baptists, and others. And one of the nicest things about the week was, that at the end of the week, one of the Christian Reform men came up to me and said, “I just liked you to know, that I have grown up in an environment in which these great doctrines of the faith were constantly preached to us, but I must confess that they have not really affected me too much until this week, and I am dedicating myself anew, to the preaching of the great doctrines of the faith.” Well, that was really an encouraging thing; fine young man who will, no doubt, do a very good work for the Lord preaching these great truths. It’s not uncommon at all, for preachers to forget one of the major reasons why they have been called of God, and that is to preach the great truths of Christianity.

Well, one of the greatest of the truths is the truth that we look at here in Acts chapter 2, verse 1 through verse 13: “The Day of Pentecost, or the Promise Given.” The Lord Jesus had been promised the promise of the Father, and he had told the disciples, that they were to tarry in Jerusalem until they should be endued with power from on high, and that he would send the promise of the Father to them. We know from the New Testament, that our Lord was crucified, buried, resurrected, ascended, and as he ascended he received from the Father, the promise of the Holy Spirit, and he shed forth the Holy Spirit upon the whole church on the Day of Pentecost. And through the ministry of the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost, the believers at that time were baptized by the Holy Spirit into the one body of Christ. It is a magnificent day. It was the fulfillment

of the Old Testament Scripture, and all that was suggested by Israel’s observance of the Feast of Pentecost down through the centuries.

The more I read the New Testament and the Old Testament, I—the more significant I see the nation Israel to be, and those great feasts of the Old Testament which they observed were feasts that find their fulfillment in the New Testament and in the ministry of the Lord Jesus. Just as he is the Passover who was crucified for us, so the other feasts are representative of various ministries of our Lord. And this one, the Day of Pentecost, is representative of our Lord’s reception of the Spirit from the Father, as reward for his saving work, and then the outpouring of the Spirit upon the people of God is the giving of the great promise.

The presence of spirit-filled men in the Church today is sometimes a cause for surprise. When we see an individual who seems to be under the control of the Holy Spirit in a remarkable way, we seem to think that that is something unusual, and we speak about individuals who are spirit-controlled as if it were an unusual thing. But actually, in the New Testament, the pattern is for all of us who belong to the body of Christ, to be under the control of the Holy Spirit. It’s fair to say, that in the lives of each one of us, there should be the manifestation of the power of the Holy Spirit.

Now, that does not mean just simply those who stand behind the pulpit, or those who teach Sunday School, or those who have some specific kind of Christian ministry. It means every single believer, regardless of who he is, should have in his life and experience, the manifestation of the Holy Spirit.

Paul, when he met those disciples and wondered about their salvation said, “Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?” for he didn’t see any evidence of the fact, that they really belonged. Paul said also to the Romans, “He that hath not the spirit of Christ is none of his.” The test of Christianity is the possession of the Holy Spirit, and while we cannot—we cannot say, “I must see his manifestation in your life, and you must see his manifestation in mine,” there must be that manifestation of the Holy Spirit there. The chances are, from time to time, we will see it. The life of the church today is weak and impotent, largely because human organization and human machinery

has taken the place of the Spirit. And we're more interested in programs and methods and little tricks and fads that we can learn, than in really coming to understand what it is to be one with the Spirit of God.

There is a story of a preacher who once was about to deliver a message, which he had very carefully prepared, to his congregation, and as he was approaching the time when he would stand before them, the Holy Spirit seemed to say to him, “This is not the message that you are to deliver today.” And so he felt led, to simply read a passage from the Word of God, and he thought that maybe by reading this passage from the Word of God, he would find the message that God desired for him to give. So he read John 14. When he came to the seventh verse he read, “If ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also, and from henceforth ye know him, and have seen him.” And as he read those words, “ye know him,” the Spirit seemed to impress upon him that thought, “ye know him, the Father.” In verse 9 he read, “Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip?” And the Spirit again pre—impressed upon him that clause, “yet hast thou not known me, Philip?” The reference is to the Son. And he read on until verse 17, and there he read, “Even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him, but ye know him.” The reference to the Spirit. And he thought, “I know the Father. I do know the many good things the Father has given to me, and I know the Son who has redeemed me. I know of his mediatorial work. I know how my sins have been cared for in the work that he has done, but do I know the Holy Spirit in a personal way?” And it was through this, that he was challenged to present to others who heard him, the message, “Do you really know the Holy Spirit who has come to indwell you?”

I dare say, that many of us really need the exhortation that D. L. Moody was given by an aged saint who said to him, “Young man, honor the Holy Ghost.” We forget that this age that—in which we are living, is the age which has been called by many sound Bible students, the “Age of the Holy Spirit,” for we have the “Age of the Father” in the Old Testament days, the “Age of the Son” in the life and ministry of our Lord, but on the Day of Pentecost, the third person of the Trinity has

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come to be the administrator of our Lord’s saving work. And it is his responsibility, under our Lord, to see that all that which Jesus Christ secured, by the blood that was shed, should be his really. So this is the “Age of the Spirit.” This is the age in which the Spirit works, and this is the age in which Christians should know what it is to be indwelt by the Spirit, and to have daily fellowship with him, and through him, with our Lord, and through our Lord with the Father.

Now, the Day of Pentecost is important in the history of the Church. It was important in the history of Israel. In fact, if an Israelite had been a real good student of the Old Testament, he might have been able to predict that something unusual was going to happen on the Day of Pentecost, because something unusual had happened on the other feath—feast days that had preceded it. At Passover, Jesus Christ had been crucified, and then on First fruits, our Lord had been raised from the dead, and now fifty days later, he might have suspected that something unusual is to happen here too. And he might well have been ready for something unusual to happen, but so far as we know, they were not ready; did not anticipate what was going to take place, even though Jesus had said, “Tarry at Jerusalem until ye be endued with power from on high.”

Now, Luke begins the second chapter by saying it was “the Day of Pentecost” that all of this happened. We are in—sometimes inclined to think, and occasionally people teach this way, that “when the Day of Pentecost was fully come, and they were all with one accord in one place,” that the reason the Holy Spirit came, was because they were so beautifully united. After all, all those believers were gathered together there. They were all in one place. The Lord blesses us, does he not, when we are in a state of unity, one with another? Of course, we should be united. But the reason the Holy Spirit came on the Day of Pentecost was not because they were all with one an—in one accord, and one place. The reason he came on the Day of Pentecost, was because this is part of the divine prophetic program.

Remember the old story which I’ve repeated once or twice in years past about H. A. Ironside, who labored for a long time in California, where strange things happen. And he was met by a man many years ago who said to him, “I’ve just been San Jose at a great tarrying meeting, and we’re

waiting—we’ve been waiting on the Holy Spirit.” And Dr. Ironside said, “On what justification have you been waiting for the Holy Spirit to come?” He said, “Well, Jesus said; Tarry ye in Jerusalem until ye be endued with power from on high.” Mr. Ironside said, “Well, aren’t you confusing locations and times? After all, you’re ten thousand miles away from Jerusalem, and eighteen hundred years or so too late. The Holy Spirit came in accordance with prophecy on the Day of Pentecost at the specific location of Jerusalem. If those disciples had been waiting in Bethany, or in Caesarea, or in Bethlehem, or some other place, they would not have experienced the coming of the Spirit. The Spirit came according to the divine prophetic program, and only those who were at harmony with that program, and therefore, in the Temple area on the Day of Pentecost were those who experienced this remarkable manifestation of the Spirit of God.”

Now, of course, as far as the effects of his coming are concerned, all of those who since that time, have come to faith in Jesus Christ, enter into a relationship with the Spirit. But the visible manifestation of the Spirit marking his coming for this age, was experienced by those who were in harmony with the word of God. The physical phenomena we may pass over without too much comment. The wind and the fire are designed to appeal to the ear and to the eye, and they’re designed to portray the spiritual fact that lies behind what happened.

Luke says, “Suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting.” Wind is symbolic of power. Anyone who has ever been in a tornado, a hurricane, will soon get the impression that wind is powerful. And this is a “rushing mighty wind,” and it was a kind of—evidently, a kind of down draft from above, and it was designed to represent, in this physical way, the spiritual power of the Holy Spirit. And then we read, “There appeared unto them cloven tongues like as a fire, and it sat upon each of them.” Now, the fire was a num—another symbol; this time, of the presence of God. In the Old Testament, from the days when Abraham waited with the pieces of the animals divided for God to manifest himself, and then late in the evening saw the burning furnace pass between the pieces of the sacrifice, on through to the pillar of fire which—which guided Israel through the wilderness, fire was a sign of the presence of God. So

the wind and the fire mark the power of the Holy Spirit, the third person of the Trinity, and the fact that these—this blast of wind accompanied by the fire which divided itself—that’s the sense of the Greek expression—divided itself, and sat upon each of them. Evidently, as they looked—of course, we cannot be sure of this. I certainly was not there, but the fire divided itself, and it was like a tongue that sat upon each of those who were present, who were believers. That was designed to express the fact, that the power of the Holy Spirit was now touching each believer in the Lord Jesus Christ.

And then accompanying these outward physical manifestations we read, “They were all filled with the Holy Ghost.” Filling refers to the control of the Holy Spirit. We needn’t go into detail over this, but you know if you read through the New Testament, you will find that in order to express “filling,” the term that most suits it is “control.” “They were filled with the Holy Spirit. They were controlled with the Holy—by the Holy Spirit.”

So they came under the control of the Holy Spirit, and we read, “They began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.” Spiritual phenomena then were: filled with the Holy Spirit, and speaking in other tongues. The gift meets the needs of this polyglot multitude. After all, there were people here from the nations of the face of the earth, and God, in marvelous grace, gave the gift of tongues, so that those who had never studied the languages, were able to speak them fluently so that people from literally scores of different places, would understand what was happening on the Day of Pentecost. This is one of the many evidences, that when the Bible speaks about “speaking in tongues,” it does not refer to ecstatic speech. It refers to speaking a known language by those who have never studied the language. That is the miracle. It is miraculous, but that is what constitutes the miracle; not that people are able to speak in ecstatic speech. Ecstatic speech is not even a Christian phenomenon. Ecstatic speech was used long before the time of Christ. So when we read in the New Testament of speaking in tongues, we are reading of speaking in known languages, by those who have never studied them, so that they’re able to speak fluently. Those of you that have ever tried to speak another language know that it really takes years to learn to speak the language fluently. This was a magnificent, mighty miracle which God the Spirit performed.

He said he would do it in the Old Testament, and it is confirmed in the New Testament, but he said that he would speak to them by men of other tongues, and he would speak to them in conviction—the nation Israel—and then in verse 22 of 1 Corinthians 14 Paul writes, “Wherefore tongues are for a sign, not to them that believe, but to them that believe not,” just after he has said, “With men of other tongues, and other lips will I speak unto this people, and yet for all that will they not hear me, saith the Lord.” God had warned Israel he would speak to them in this way, but that they would be disobedient, and reject the message. That, of course, is what happened.

Now, when this great event occurred, we read that there was amazement. In verse 7 we read, “And they were all amazed.” In verse 12, “And they were all amazed.” And then we read of perplexity. They were “in doubt” in verse 12, and as you might expect, there were also some there who were critical. “And others mocking; These men are full of new wine.” Peter will deal with that in a moment, but now let’s ask ourselves the question, “What are the cardinal features of the Day of Pentecost?”

What are the things that we are to remember about this great day—this great day in God’s plan of redemption—and what does it mean for me personally?” Well, first of all, the coming of the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost was the inauguration of a new administration of the plan of God. Jesus had said in Matthew 21:43, that he would—“The kingdom of God would be taken away from the nation Israel, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof.” And on the Day of Pentecost we have the inauguration of a new administration of the kingdom of God. We have the Age of the Father, the Age of the Son, the Age of the Spirit. Under the Age of the Spirit, the administration of the kingdom of God is given over now to a body composed of both Jews and Gentiles, who enter into a relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ upon the same basis. No longer is the Israelitish believer to be under the Law. No longer is the Gentile believer to be under the Mosaic Law, but now in relationship with the whole—with the Holy Spirit, they are to serve as the administrators of the kingdom of God. That’s the first thing we can say about it.

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Secondly, in a sense this is the birthday of the Church. Now, sometimes I think we forget that the early Church was largely a group of Jewish believers, and so we tend to say, “This was the birthday of the Church,” as if the Church is a kind of intercalation in the program of God. In fact, one of my old teachers used to use the term, that the church was an “intercalation in the program of God.” I know that’s a big term, and I don’t expect you to understand that one. I expect you to understand “justification,” and “sanctification,” and “reconciliation,” and simple terms like that, but “intercalation,” that’s a little different. An “intercalation” is a period of time which doesn’t have any connection with what precedes or with what follows. It’s the fifteen minutes between the first half, and the second half of a football game, when the band’s marching up and down the field, and the beautiful young ladies dancing, have absolutely nothing to do with what has transpired in the first part of the game or in the last part of the game. That halftime is an “intercalation.”

Now, sometimes the church period is looked at as an intercalation. It is not an intercalation in the program of God. The Mosaic legal period is the intercalation. It began on the day of the giving of the Mosaic Law, and ended at the time of Christ. That period was a true intercalation. The church inherits Abrahamic blessings. The church is related to the Abrahamic promises. That’s very plain, because we are called “seed of Abraham,” and so we must, when we say, “This is the birthday of the church by Spirit baptism,” we must be careful not to suggest, that these people who formed the church were not also the old people of God as well, because they were Israelitish believers. But it is from this time on, that they begin to be called the “church,” the *ekklesia*. Jesus said in Matthew 16:18, “I will build my church”; not “I am building it. “I will build my church.” Paul tells us, “The church is entered by the baptism of the Holy Spirit,” in 1 Corinthians 12. Paul tells us, “The church is his body,” and he also tells us that, “It is by the Holy Spirit that we are baptized into his body.”

In Acts chapter 1 in verse 5, Jesus said to the apostles, “that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which ye have heard of me. For John truly baptized with water, but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence.” So the baptism of the Holy Spirit has not yet occurred, by which the church begin—is—is to be formed.

Then in Acts chapter 2 we read of the coming of the Holy Spirit, and we read that the believers were filled there. It's obvious that this is the reference to which Acts chapter 1, verse 5 refers, but if one had any question about it, he could turn to the eleventh chapter, and the fifteenth through the seventeenth verses, where Peter is telling the individuals in Jerusalem what happened in Cornelius' house, and there in Acts chapter 11 in verse 15 through verse 17 Peter makes a comment that makes it plain, that what happened on the Day of Pentecost, was the baptism of the Holy Spirit. He said, “As I began to speak in Cornelius' house”—this is Acts 11:15—“the Holy Ghost fell on them, as on us at the beginning. 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 Spirit.”

So Acts chapter 2 is the birthday of the people of God, as they exist in this new relationship to the Lord. Paul calls the church, “one new man,” when the old relationship to the Mosaic Law is done away with, and now the members in the one body of Christ have a relationship to him, apart from Mosaic Law.

Now, a third thing. There is, therefore, a new order of life in humanity. The life in humanity that God recognizes now is the life of Christ. Every believer is now indwelt by the Holy Spirit, who forms Christ within us, so that Christ is our life.

We also have for the first time in the history of the plan of redemption, the permanent indwelling of the Holy Spirit. Every single believer now, from the Day of Pentecost on, is permanently indwelt by the Holy Spirit. Sometimes people fail to realize that this is something new. We have many ministries of the Spirit in the Old Testament, but they were individualized, and particularized, but now here is something universal.

Remember John had announced it beforehand in John chapter 7, verse 37 through verse 39, when he described what Jesus said on the great day of the feast, “If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink.” He said, “But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive, for the Holy Spirit was not yet given, because that Jesus was not yet glorified.” So the Holy Spirit could not be given until the glorification of our Lord. As our Lord is glorified and then ascends

to the right hand of the Father, he receives the gift, he pours out the Holy Spirit, and now every believer is permanently indwelt by the Holy Spirit.

You know, that ought to make a difference in our lives, shouldn't it? To think that everyone of us, believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, is indwelt by the third person of the Trinity. How can we say, that we really have a relationship to the Lord that we should have, when there is no sense of communion with God through the Holy Spirit? I daresay that there is much spiritual land to be possessed by all of us in this auditorium. Sometimes we think because we've attended an evangelical church, and we have heard evangelical preaching, and we've heard evangelical preachers often say—they should never say this—“We have the truth,” they tend to believe that, and think that if they have the truth as it is preached in a particular denominational church or a particular independent—whatever it may be—that they have the truth. But the experience of the indwelling ministry of the Holy Spirit is something that continues throughout this age, and I don't know.

As I look at Believers Chapel, I'm inclined to think that we are not fulfilling all that is for us, through the indwelling ministry of the Holy Spirit. I look out upon my life, first of all, and I see that I am not what God would have me to be. I get down by my bedside, and I ask God to make these things real in my life, but I feel I have much spiritual land to possess. I know there are certain stages in the Christian life to which we come, and which are very meaningful and significant for us; when we are converted, when we come to understand some of the great plan and program of God, and then when we come to understand sovereign grace, and then—well, that's not the end. That's really along the way to understanding God. We are to understand and know him; know the Father, know the Son, know the Spirit. These are things that the Holy Spirit sets out for us as magnificent possibilities for us as individuals.

When we read the early chapters of the book of Acts, and it is exciting, because of what God the Spirit was doing through individuals who were controlled by him. There's no reason why we could not have excitement in Believers Chapel in the same way, if individuals take it upon themselves to get off alone with the Lord, and to confess their diffidence, and their lethargy, and indifference to

the faith, and confess their sin. Yes, we need to do that; confess our sin, and then ask God to help us to experience what it is to be indwelt permanently by the Holy Spirit, and enable us to enter into the other ministries, which he is able to give to us. We have much land to possess.

Now, the reference here to the “filling of the Holy Spirit” probably demands a word or two by way of explanation. As you read through the book of Acts, you notice that the filling of the Spirit will occur several other times. The “filling of the Spirit” is a term that refers primarily, to endowment with power. Believers are expected to walk by the Spirit. It’s really a false emphasis to say to people, that we Christians are to be “filled by the Spirit” as a normal experience. If you will look through the Bible from beginning to end, you will probably, I think, come to the conviction that the “filling of the Spirit” is a term that refers to endowment with power for the performance of particular tasks.

“Walking by the Spirit” is a more biblical expression I think, given us by the Apostle Paul. “Filling of the Spirit” or “walking by the Spirit” is not an expression that is designed—are not expressions that are designed to suggest, that there is something unusual about it. If a person was “filled with the Spirit,” he doesn’t have visions, and balls of fire don’t roll up and down his back, and icicles don’t—are not associated with it either. These are simply expressions to describe a person controlled by the Spirit.

Now, it says that, “They were filled by the Spirit, and they spoke with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.” They spoke words that were understood. They spoke words that were “on fire,” in the sense that they were expressive of their relationship with the Lord God.

Now, it says, also, “They spoke with other tongues.” The expression that is used here—the Greek term *dialekton* is a term that is used in verse 8 and verse 11 as well. In every place in the book of Acts where this term is used, it refers to known languages, not unknown languages. I suggest, if you have any doubt about it, look it up in your concordance. So when it states here that, “They began to speak with other tongues,” they were speaking known languages. They were doing what God said he was going to do to the nation Israel. He was going to speak to them with other tongues, and they still were not going to respond to him.

Some have suggested that, perhaps Pentecost is to be opposed to Babylon, and that what we have on the Day of Pentecost, is the reversal of what happened so many centuries ago at Babylon, when God confounded the languages, and men began to speak in other tongues in a different sense. The nations of the earth formed by the confusion of language that took place then, and this is suggestive of the fact, that through the working of the Holy Spirit throughout this age, and the things that follow it, there will be an ultimate unity among the nations, produced by the activity of the Holy Spirit. That’s not specifically stated here. It may be involved in the overall teaching of the Word of God. Maybe this is designed to show us, this is the means for the res—restoration of unity in the human race. One thing we do know; we do know that Luke, no doubt, intends us to understand that this is the power by which the commission given in Acts 1:8 will be carried out. “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 Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.”

Now, you’ve heard me recently say two or three things about this, but it’s one of the things for which—one of the burdens which I have for Believers Chapel. I do feel that our witness in our community can stand considerable improvement, and I feel that one of the ways in which we are failing the Lord as Christians, and then as members of Believers Chapel, is that we are not taking the opportunities that are ours, to give testimony to Christ. And when we think about the Holy Spirit given to the Church; that Jesus Christ’s commission may be carried out, that we might be witnesses unto him, we are missing one of the greatest blessings of life, in not speaking to our friends and neighbors, and those with whom we come into contact about him, and seeking to win them for him. Every Christian ought to do the work of an evangelist, and we may be failing in that respect. I think so.

Now, I don’t mean to suggest—I don’t like preachers who flay congregations. I don’t think that is good. It’s not good to be whipped all the time, and I don’t want to do that. I’m grateful for Believers Chapel. I don’t think there’s any more wonderful place in which to minister on the face of this earth. I haven’t seen it, if there is. But there is—and I am grateful of what—what has been

accomplished, and for the fact that many of you sacrifice, in order that this work may go on, and I wish that all of you could see evidences of the work of the Chapel, which you never get an opportunity to see.

When I went in that—with that group of fifteen preachers, one of the men is pastor of a Chinese church in the city of Toronto; evidently, a fairly nice-sized church. And as I was calling out the roll, just to put names with faces, he happened to be the last one on the list, and I called out his name, and he responded, and he said, “And by the way, Dr. Johnson, I’m here because of the ministry of Believers Chapel.” He had been listening to the tapes. I didn’t even know this man existed, and yet the ministry of the Chapel had touched him, and in response, he’s touching literally hundreds of others. I’m grateful for that. The radio ministry—I receive many and many responses, both by telephone, letters to me personally, and in other ways, that indicate that you are ministering the word of God to others. I’m grateful for that, and I think that’s something for which you shall be rewarded. I only say I think, that if we entered more fully into what we have in Christ through the gift of the Spirit, we’ll be even more effective in the proclamation of the word of God.

Well, this event produced amazement, perplexity, criticism. It’s always so. Today we are more anxious about social life, and buildings, and programs, and what we need to do, is to seek the relationship with the Holy Spirit that amazes, that perplexes, and that even causes mockery. Stephen amazed Paul with his knowledge of the Old Testament, and how it was fulfilled in Christ. Paul was deeply perplexed, and no doubt Stephen was criticized by Paul, but Paul was converted. You know, the Bible speaks of three responses to the Spirit’s word and works. It speaks of the believer’s response, “Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God.” So we, who are believers, who have believed in Christ when he seeks to minister to us and through us, we grieve him when we do not respond. The whole Church, when it quenches the ministry of the gifts of the Spirit, and refuses to let the gifted men speak, they “quench the Spirit.” That’s a word addressed particularly to the local churches. “Quench not the Spirit.” But then the word that is addressed to unbelievers is the word “resist.”

“The Day of Pentecost, or the Promise Given” by S. Lewis Johnson
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When Stephen preached his great sermon, it is said that, “They resisted him, and they resisted the Spirit with which he spake.”

If you are here this morning, and you have never believed in our Lord Jesus Christ, we remind you that the Spirit was given because the Son has completed his atoning work. The blood has been shed for sinners. Forgiveness of sins is available to all. Those who have, by the grace of God, come to feel that they are sinners and under the judgment of God, you may have the glorious freedom of the forgiveness of your sins, of the possession of everlasting life, by lifting your heart to the Lord God and saying simply, “I thank Thee, O God, for the Lord Jesus Christ; the gift of his saving cross for sinners, for I’m a sinner, and I receive this free gift from Thee, and I trust in him and in his merits, for now and forever.”

That brings eternal life if done from the heart. If you’re here, and you’ve never received Christ as your Savior, we invite you to come to him. Don’t leave the auditorium without having made that decision. Come to Christ. Believe in him, and for you who are believers, once you receive him, your Christian life is not over, you know. You have the Holy Spirit indwelling you. He wants to use you as a witness. He wants to use you to build up the body of Christ, and enlarge the body of Christ. May God give you the sense of excitement that comes from being a tool for the glory of Jesus’ name. Shall we stand for the benediction.

[Prayer] Father, we so often fail Thee. We confess that we are surely weak and unprofitable servants. O God, deliver us from lethargy. Deliver us from the same old rut in which we so often live. Give us, Lord, a fresh sense of life in Christ through the Spirit. May we truly come to know the Father, know the Son, and know the Spirit. And, Lord, if there are some here who have never believed in Christ...