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The Sermons of S. Lewis Johnson

Systematic Theology

“The Holy Spirit's Work of Baptizing”

TRANSCRIPT

[Prayer] Father, we are grateful to Thee for the privilege of the study of the Scriptures. We thank Thee for the work of the Holy Spirit, and we pray Lord that as we consider his ministry that we may be able to come to understand it in such a way that our own spiritual lives are affected by our knowledge of him.

We thank Thee for the gift of the Spirit. We thank Thee for the fact that he glorifies Jesus Christ. We thank Thee for his baptizing ministry and tonight, as we consider that, may it not only influence us in our doctrinal thinking, but also influence us in our daily life. So we commit each one of us to Thee for our study tonight.

In Jesus' name. Amen.

[Message] The Holy Spirit's Work of Baptizing. And I'm going to read a few passages of Scripture which set forth in a historical way the teaching of the New Testament on the subject. So, will you turn with me to Matthew, chapter 3 and let's begin by reading verses 11 and 12. Matthew, chapter 3, verses 11 and 12. These are the words of John the Baptist. John said.

“I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance. But he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire: Whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into the garner; but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.”

Now, let’s turn over to Acts, chapter 1 in verse 5. We could read all of the other accounts in the Gospels but we wouldn’t really gain anything other than just reading parallel passages. So, let’s turn to the next stage in the unfolding of the doctrine of the baptism of the Holy Spirit, Acts, chapter 1 in verse 5. Now, our Lord is speaking. And we read.

“For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence.”

Now, let’s turn a page in our Bibles to chapter 2, verse 1 through verse 4. Now, I want you to notice that as we read these four verses in which we have the account of the coming of the spirit on the day of Pentecost that there is no mention of the term baptism. There is, however, of the term “filled.”

“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.”

Now, remember, Jesus had said, “You shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence.” But here we read “They were all filled with the Holy Ghost and began to speak with other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance.” I wonder, did the baptism really occur then? Well, let’s turn over to chapter 11 for our next passage. And we’ll read Peter’s account of what happened in the house of Cornelius. And will you listen as Peter tells what happened. He says in verse 15 of chapter 11.

“And as I began to speak, the Holy Ghost fell on them, as on us at the beginning.”

Now, that is clearly a reference to the day of Pentecost. “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 Ghost.” And so, you can see from this that Peter interprets what happened in Cornelius’ house as the same thing that happened to them in the beginning on Pentecost. And he identifies it with the promise of the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

Now, for the final passage in our Scripture reading, turn to 1 Corinthians, chapter 12 and let’s read verses 12 and 13. 1 Corinthians, chapter 12, verses 12 and 13.

“For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ. For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.”

Notice, particularly, the first clause “For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body.”

Now, The Holy Spirit’s Work of Baptism. And first a few words of introduction. The Most confusing aspects of the doctrine of the Holy Spirit are first, the temporary

character of certain spiritual gifts. I dare say that the thing that troubles the average Christian, who has begun to study his Bible, more than anything else is what about speaking in tongues? What about the gift of healing? These are the things that confuse him. And they are the aspects of the doctrine that are most difficult for the average Christian today because of the claims that are made by many classes of Christians, some not Christians, but many classes of people about the work of the Holy Spirit.

The temporary character of certain spiritual gifts. Now, while I was gone this week to Detroit for meetings in the Detroit Bible College and then on out to Seattle and Tacoma for meetings there over the weekend. I got back this afternoon that’s why I’m a little disorganized. That’s, by the way, why I have a tie with stripes that go this way and a coat with stripes that go this way and I hope you survive. It’s kind of psychedelic looking, I know.

But, anyway, I got home this afternoon and sure enough, I had some mail from some of my old friends. They always send me mail because they want me to accept their doctrines. And so one of them, pieces of literature, I got in the mail was from a personal friend and she is a friend, a good friend and she signed her name. This one the name was signed. Not like the one that I got, did I mention the last letter I got through the mail? I gave a message on the fact that Palestine belonged to the Jews and it’s been taped in Boston and it’s been played around the country on the radio. And I keep getting these notes through the mail either praising me or denouncing me. And I didn’t give permission for these tapes.

But, I got a letter just about ten days or so ago that said “Dr. Johnson, you are a liar and you are as phony as a three dollar bill, and you are going to burn in hell with the other phonies.” [Laughter] And it was unsigned. And then he added some literature that he enclosed in it that was, oh, by the way, he spelled phony “f-o-n-y --” [laughter]. And I think he did spell liar correctly, but there was one other word in those two sentences that was misspelled, too.

But, this time I got some mail, and it was mail on the doctrine of the spiritual gifts. And, it was an attempt to convince me that we should speak in tongues. So, this is one of the confusing aspects of the doctrine of the Holy Spirit. And, I think the other confusing thing about the doctrine of the Holy Spirit is the work of the Holy Spirit in baptizing.

Now, the reasons for this confusion, which so often lead to misunderstanding and division, are first the over-emphasis in many places of water baptism, which has led to a de-emphasis, sometimes a complete omission, of the Spirit’s baptizing work. It’s still true and sad to say it, it’s still true that when you speak to the average Christian who has not been taught in the word, very deeply, and ask him about the Holy Spirit’s ministry of baptism that they do not even know that such a work exists. When the term baptism is mentioned they can only think of water baptism. And so, the over-emphasis of water baptism has led to a de-emphasis, often a complete omission, of the doctrine of baptism of the Holy Spirit.

For example, there are two large denominations, but one particular of these two that even denies that there is such a thing as baptism by the Holy Spirit and, yet, at the same time claims to appeal to the word of God for its doctrine and practice.

Now, I think, another reason for the confusion of this doctrine of the work of the baptism of the Holy Spirit is the association with the doctrine of the baptism of the Holy Spirit with the gift of tongues. It is the doctrine of some people who are professing Christians that the baptism of the Holy Spirit is evidenced by the fact that we speak in tongues; that speaking in tongues is the sign that we have been baptized by the Holy Spirit.

Now, someone put in my hands, a few weeks back, a little pamphlet on baptism of the Holy Spirit. And in this particular pamphlet, which I have here before me, well, it is the doctrine of it that the speaking in tongues is an evidence of the baptism of the Holy Spirit, and if we do not speak in tongues we have not been baptized by the Holy Spirit,

and the reason that we are given the baptism of the Holy Spirit is that we might have power in our Christian lives.

Now, we’re going to see tonight, in the case of the Corinthian church, that Paul says that they had been baptized by the Holy Spirit, every one of them. And if there is one church in the New Testament that was characterized by difficulties and problems and lack of power, it was the church of Corinth. But a lot of people are taught that the way to get power is to be baptized by the Holy Spirit. And, the evidence that you have it is that you speak in tongues. Now, that has caused confusion and, unfortunately, some genuine Christians have been confused by that teaching.

I think another reason for the confusion over the baptizing work of the Holy Spirit is the identification of spirit baptism with the filling of the spirit. In other words, very closely related to what I have just said, it is taught by many that when we are baptized by the Holy Spirit that is the sign that we are filled with the spirit. Or, to put it the other way, if we are filled with the spirit we have been baptized by the spirit, and so, these terms are equated. They are synonymous. What we need, so they teach, is a baptism of the Holy Spirit.

Now, that was quite common by men who were very sound in the faith just a generation or so ago. For example, if you had gone to the Keswick convention in Britain shortly after it was started and had attended it for many years; you would have heard on their platform an identification of the baptism of the Holy Spirit with the “filling” of the spirit. And, many men who were otherwise good teachers of the Bible exhorted the audience to be baptized by the Holy Spirit. But they meant by that the filling of the spirit. They had an imprecise terminology. That is characteristic of the Keswick movement.

But, fortunately, as far as Britain is concerned, some years ago, they issued a statement. And, I must say, it took a great deal of grace to do this. They issued a statement in which they publicly said, “We have been confused in our teaching.” And they said, “We have made a mistake. Our teachers have been speaking about the baptism

of the Holy Spirit and the filling of the spirit, and they have been identifying these terms. And we would like to set the record straight that to be “filled with the spirit” is not the same as to be “baptized” with the spirit.” And some of the men who were involved in that were F. B. Meyer and others like him who were, in other respects, good teachers of the word of God. Now, all of this has created a great deal of confusion. And, consequently, in Christian circles, the doctrine of the baptism of the Holy Spirit is often not very clear.

Now, we are dealing, in our study of the Holy Spirit, with the Spirit’s work in the believer. Now, and remember, we took three studies in his work of regenerating. Now, the second work is his work of baptizing. Now, remember, if I may just for a moment, draw a little diagram. The Spirit works in the world and he works in believers. Now, when he works in the world, we could draw a circle, something like this, and divide it up into, say, three parts. And, we could call this the Spirit’s work in the world. Among the things that the Spirit does in the world is, he provides us with natural blessings, Acts, chapter 14, verse 17. He supplies us with rain, clothing, food, sunshine.

Now, this is the work of the Spirit in the world. It is a work that pertains, not just to believers, but unbelievers. He also is bestowing blessings that have to do with, well, let’s see, we spoke of them as the work of the Holy Spirit that tends to redemption. For example, 1 Corinthians, chapter 7, verse 14. We spoke about the children of believing parents and how they were sanctified. That’s the work of the Holy Spirit in moving upon men, attempting to influence them towards redemption. It does not lead to salvation but it tends to influence them toward it. It is his work of common grace. And then, there is the work of the Holy Spirit in influencing the world morally. His moral influence. That’s influence. For example, he restrains sin. Genesis, chapter 6, verse 3. Acts, chapter 7, verse 51. This is common grace. It is his work toward the world.

Now, I’m not going to draw another diagram. It would take me too long to do this and to do it well, but we could draw a diagram, divide it into seven parts, one, two, three,

four, five, six, seven. If you want to do it, you can do a better job than I. And there are seven ministries that the Holy Spirit has toward believers. So, this is his ministry to believers. He regenerates. He baptizes. He indwells. He teaches. He gifts, that is, he gives spiritual gifts. Teaches, gifts, he sanctifies, that is, he is responsible for spiritual growth. And then, he fills. Now, we’re going to talk about filling and I’m going to surprise you because the doctrine of the filling of the Spirit is not what most people think it is, in my opinion. Have you ever wondered why I haven’t spoken on the doctrine of the filling of the Spirit? Well, you’ll see, ultimately.

Now, so, what we are doing now is we’re looking at the ministry of the Spirit to believers. Last time, we finished a three-part study on that. We’re not going to take that long on baptism. Tonight, we want to do the complete doctrine of the baptizing work of the Holy Spirit. This is one aspect then, of the Spirit’s work on believers.

Now, let’s take a look at our outline. Roman I - The prophetic passages. Now, you will notice from what I have put on the board that the prophetic passages are passages in which the Holy Spirit’s ministry is referred to as something that is going to come to pass in the future. Now, I read some of them in the Scripture reading. We read Matthew, chapter 3, verse 1. We read Acts, chapter 1, verse 5. And, these are the things that we will learn from those passages that I read.

First of all, the author of the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Now, the author of it is, now, what are you going to think we’ll put here? The author of the baptism of the Holy Spirit is Jesus Christ. “It is He who baptizes with the Spirit.” For remember, John said, “I indeed baptize you with water. He shall baptize you with the Holy Spirit.” The author of the baptism of the Spirit is the Lord, Jesus Christ. The agent of the baptism is the Spirit. He shall baptize you with the Holy Spirit.

Now, from the standpoint of the prophetic passages, the date of the baptism is future. Now, what I am trying to show by this is that the work of the baptizing of the Holy Spirit did not take place until after our Lord had ascended into Heaven and took his

seat at the right hand of the Father on High. In other words, the baptism of the Holy Spirit is a new ministry of the Spirit that is suitable for this age only.

Now, let’s move on. The historical passages. And, first, I want to say a few words about Acts, chapter 1, verse 5 and we need to turn there. So, turn in your Bibles to Acts, chapter 1 in verse 5. These passages are important for the doctrine of the church and the inception of the church as well as the doctrine of the Holy Spirit. Now, remember, in Acts, chapter 1, we are looking at a passage in which Luke describes the post-resurrection ministry of the Lord, Jesus. And let’s read these 5 verses. Luke says.

“The former treatise 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 Spirit had given commandments unto the apostles whom he had chosen: To whom also he shewed himself alive after his passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God: 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.”

Now, notice that little expression that little temporal expression, “not many days hence,” can only refer to the Day of Pentecost. There is no other event that is described in the context of the Book of Acts or that is an event of any significance in the history of the church in its formation that could possibly be the event to which our Lord refers, except the Day of Pentecost. So, if we did not even have Acts, chapter 11, we would know that the baptism of the Holy Spirit took place on the Day of Pentecost. So, the significance of this text is that it identifies the time of the baptism of the Holy Spirit as the Day of Pentecost.

Now, let’s turn over, again, to that Acts 11 passage. We’re going to see that here this is confirmed. For Peter, remember, is explaining what happened in Jerusalem. And, remember, when he spoke in Cornelius’ house, the Holy Ghost fell on them that heard the word and they, of the circumcision which believed were astonished because here the Holy Spirit is falling upon Gentiles and Gentiles are obviously being saved and Jews are astonished with that because they are saved apart from Jewish influence, apparently. Now, then, Peter explains what happens. And he says, verse 15 of chapter 11.

“And as I began to speak, the Holy Ghost fell on them, as on us at the beginning. [That is, as on “us” at the Day of Pentecost.] Then remembered I the word of the Lord, [That is, the promise of Acts 1:5] How that he said, John indeed baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost.”

Now, you can see from this that Peter has identified the date of the baptizing ministry of the Holy Spirit and its inception as the Day of Pentecost. It was then for the first time that the Holy Spirit baptized believers in Jesus Christ. Now, the reason this is so important is because it is related to the date of the birth of the Church of Jesus Christ. For, what is the church? Well, let’s turn over to Ephesians, chapter 1 and see what Paul says is the church. Ephesians 1 in verse 22 and 23. Paul says, Ephesians 1, verse 22 and 23.

“And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, which is his body”

Now, the church is the body of Christ. The church is the spiritual body of Christ. Jesus Christ is the head of this spiritual body this pneumatic body. Believers who are members of the church are then his body. Well, now how do we get into the body? Well, Paul tells us in 1 Corinthians, chapter 12, in that passage we read, verse 13.

“For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free.”

So, if the church is the body of Christ, and we enter the body of Christ by the baptism of the Holy Spirit, and if the Holy Spirit did not occur until the Day of Pentecost, when did the church begin? When did the church begin? Pentecost. Does that mean then that there is a church in the Old Testament? No. There is no group of people in the Old Testament who belong to the body of Christ, because you enter it by the baptism of the Spirit, which event did not occur in Old Testament times. So the church began on the Day of Pentecost. That was the birthday of the church. And the attending physician was our Lord, Jesus Christ. So then is when the church began.

Now, that is why the baptism of the Holy Spirit is so significant, because it is by that operation that the body of Christ is formed. And, it was then that it began to be formed. Now, that means that the church did not begin with Adam. That means the church did not begin with Abraham. That means the church did not begin with Moses. The church did not include within it the Old Testament saints. It means that the church began on the Day of Pentecost. There, for the first time, the baptizing ministry took place and there, for the first time, there is a church. Now, this is confirmed by the fact that Jesus said, in Matthew, chapter 16 and verse 18 “Thou art Petros, and upon this petra though art the Christ, the Son of the Living God, I will build my church.” Not I am building it. Not I have been building it. But I “will” build it.

In other words, Matthew, chapter 16 in verse 18 points to the future. The church is future. “I will build my church.” Now, of course, all of this adds up then to the simple fact that the church is something that is a particular work of the Holy Spirit in the present age in which we are living. So, the significance of Acts 11:15-17 is very, very important. That means that the primary purpose of the coming of the Holy Spirit on the Day of

Pentecost was not that the disciples should gather together, pray for the Spirit to come, have the Spirit come upon them, and they should speak in tongues in order to have great power in their ministry. The primary purpose was the formation of the church as the body of Christ.

Now, that means, too, that the coming of the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost was not a coming conditioned by the fact that believers gathered on that particular time and were of one accord and of one mind. Now, some of you have heard me say this several times and I’ll have to beg your pardon if I mention it again but some have not.

It is commonly believed that the reason the Holy Spirit came on the Day of Pentecost is because believers were of one accord and of one mind. And they gathered together to wait for the Spirit and because they were of one heart and one mind the Holy Spirit came. And, as a result of this, people believing that the Holy Spirit comes because believers get together and are of one spirit and one mind there are believers all over the world get together and have tarrying meetings. They get together and pray that the Holy Spirit will fall upon them and baptize them as happened on the Day of Pentecost. Now, let me assure you that that will never happen again. Pentecost will no more happen again than Calvary will happen again.

Now, there may be some results that flow from the coming of the Holy Spirit and we look forward to an outpouring of the Spirit in the future, but there will not be another coming of the Spirit in the sense of Pentecost. That occurred in accordance with prophecy. And, if the apostles had been off shooting pool on the Day of Pentecost, the Holy Spirit would have come because his coming was conditioned by the promise of the Father and in accordance with the Holy Spirit, not because they were of one accord and of one mind.

Just as Calvary would have happened regardless of how Peter or John might have been spiritually in a sense of expectancy for Calvary. These great redemptive events of the program of God occur in harmony with the will of God according to his prophetic

program. So the Day of Pentecost is extremely important for the church. It was there that the church began.

Now, we’re going to have to hurry on because I want to try to deal with a few other points. Now, the significance of Acts, chapter 19, verses 1 through 6. Let’s turn over there for a moment. Acts, chapter 19, verses 1 through 6, is a unique thing because this is the only time in the New Testament in which people were baptized twice. And the striking thing about it, of course, that they were John’s disciples and then they were baptized by Paul. Now, we read in verse 1.

“And it came to pass, that, while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul having passed through the upper coasts came to Ephesus: and finding certain disciples, He said unto them, did you receive the Holy Ghost when you believed? They said unto him, we have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost. [Now, they had heard of the Holy Ghost because, of course, John preached that. That was one of his great messages but they had not heard that he had come. That’s what they mean.] And he said unto them, Unto what then were ye baptized? And they said, Unto John's baptism. A baptism of waiting for the Messiah. [Now, this, by the way, proves that the Old Testament saints looked forward to the coming of the redeemer. Paul said that. John’s disciples, John the Baptist’s disciples were Old Testament saints. They were not members of the Church of Jesus Christ. And, pardon me, my Baptist friends in the audience. Bring some more of your friends too. We love you, every one of you. But, the Baptist Church did not begin with John the Baptist. Why, John the Baptist’s disciples weren’t even in the church. But, anyway.] Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus. When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. [Now, he’s talking about water baptism, of course.] And when Paul had laid his hands

upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied.”

Now, the reason that this event took place, I believe, is because it is intended to show us that the church includes not only Jews as on the Day of Pentecost, not only Gentiles, as in Cornelius’ house, when the Holy Spirit fell upon them and they spoke in tongues. But also, John’s disciples too, are now incorporated into the body of Christ. And, the speaking in tongues, of course, is a witness to the unbelievers that God is with this movement with which Paul is identified. Now, that’s a peculiar little incident. It’s been the subject of a great deal of discussion and we don’t have time to enter into great detail and discussion of it.

Now, third - The doctrinal passages. And, we want to try now to construct in the remaining minutes the doctrine of the baptism of the Holy Spirit; just the salient features. And, first of all, I want to try to define the doctrine of the Holy Spirit, the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

Now, let’s get this straight, and if you’re taking notes, I’ll try to say it two three times so you’ll be sure to understand precisely what I’m saying. Now, you don’t have to believe everything that I say, of course. Test it by the word of God. And then, after you’ve tested it by the word of God, come to me and say, “You were right, after all, Dr. Johnson.” [Laughter]

Now, seriously, we want to be Borrians and we want to study the Scriptures and if you come and say, “Well, I see it a little differently,” well, I hope I have the grace to listen to you. I’ve been taught most of what I know by my friends.

So the definition of the doctrine of the baptism of the Holy Spirit. What is the baptizing work of the Holy Spirit? Well, the work of the Holy Spirit in baptism is the work of Jesus Christ, really. The doctrine of the baptism of the Holy Spirit is the work of Jesus Christ in putting us into the church through the agency of the Holy Spirit. So, the

baptism of the Holy Spirit is the work of Jesus Christ by which he puts us in the body of Christ through the agency of the Holy Spirit. We, really, ought to call it the doctrine of the spiritual baptism of Jesus Christ, but since it’s so commonly called the doctrine of the baptism of the Holy Spirit, and since it can be called that, we’ll continue to call it that. But it’s the work of Christ by which through the Spirit he puts us into the body of Christ.

Now, what is the body of Christ? Well, the body of Christ is the church. So the work of the baptizing ministry of the Spirit is simply the work of Christ by which when we believe in him, he places us into the church.

Now, the church, of course, is the body of believers. So when a man believes in Jesus Christ, he is baptized by Jesus Christ, who through the Spirit, puts him into the body of Christ and he joins other believers in one body, the church. And, we’re all together. And, Baptists who believe are there. And Presbyterians who believe are there. And Independents who believe are there. And, even Roman Catholics, if they should believe, they are there. All true believers, regardless of what their earthly affiliations may be, are one in the body of Christ. When they believe on the Lord, Jesus Christ, Jesus Christ by means of the Spirit joins us all together in a unity, the church, the body of Christ.

Now, that’s what the baptizing work of the Holy Spirit is. It is an incorporation then of all believers into one body. I have a friend, who likes to preach on this subject, and he likes to contrast the “new birth” with the baptizing ministry of the Holy Spirit by saying, “It is the birth that brings us into the family of God. It is the baptism that brings us into the body of Christ.” So the birth, the new birth, brings us into the family of God. The baptizing work of Jesus Christ brings us into the body of Christ. So, it’s that particular ministry of the Lord by which he unites us to the church. That’s the baptism of the Holy Spirit. It is an incorporation of every believer into Jesus Christ.

Now, what is water baptism then? Well, water baptism is the visible symbol of spirit baptism. That’s what it’s designed to be. So when, for example, in our church, we have baptistery here, when we remove the pulpit and we go down into the water and we

baptize believers into water, we are signifying by that their baptism into the body of Christ. And so when they are placed into the water and out of the water they are symbolically seen as dead, buried, and resurrected with our Lord, Jesus Christ. Identified with him and, thus, identified with all who are identified with him. So that water baptism is the visible symbol of the baptism of the Holy Spirit by which we are united to Jesus Christ in the body of Christ. That’s why we have water baptism. So you see, water baptism is really not just a testimony of my salvation, but it’s a testimony of my salvation and my identification with Jesus Christ and with all who are identified with him. That’s why the work of baptism is such a significant thing and that’s why the fact of water baptism is so significant.

Now, then, the details of this doctrine. And, I’m just going to look at some of the salient features of what the Bible says, then, about the doctrine and try to point them out. Number 1, the baptism of the Holy Spirit is for “this age.” Now, we learned that from Acts, chapter 1, verse 5. It’s not for the Old Testament age. It’s for this age. Remember, we said a long time ago that there are three ages, three great ages. There is the age of the Old Testament, which is largely the age of the Father. Now, I’m not drawing that very well, because I’m doing this on the spur of the moment. Now, this is the birth of Jesus Christ. We could call this the age of the Son in the sense that he was here in his ministry and, of course, that is tremendously significant.

But on the Day of Pentecost, the Holy Spirit came to the earth so that we call the present age, the Age of the Spirit. Now, when Jesus Christ comes again to the earth to establish his kingdom and we have the kingdom, it is the Kingdom of the Son. So in one sense, the Old Testament age is the age of the Father. We’re in the Age of the Spirit, now. We look forward to the Age of the Son and his Kingdom. Or, if we like, we could look at this as the Age of the Father, the Age of the Son, this is the Age of the Spirit. Under any circumstances, this is the Age of the Spirit. This is the Age in which the work of the Holy Spirit is prominent. Baptism is for this age.

Second, the baptism occurs at regeneration. The baptizing work of the Holy Spirit takes place, with reference to us, when we are born again. Now, that is evident from our passage in Acts, chapter 11 in verse 17 when in Cornelius’ house, the Holy Spirit fell upon them who were not believers. They were, by the Holy Spirit, united with the body of Christ at the time of their new birth. So, that means that if you believe in the Lord, Jesus Christ, the moment that you believe in him, you are baptized by the Holy Spirit into the body of Christ. It’s not then something which you look forward to as a second experience after you’ve been saved. Third, oh, I should illustrate that of course, you know. Well, let’s go on. We’ve got to get through this tonight.

The baptism is universal among Christians. Now, this is important because, you see, I said at the beginning that some of the confusion that exists over the doctrine of the Holy Spirit is caused by the fact that this is often identified as a second work of grace by which we receive power for Christian living. So, will you turn over to 1 Corinthians, chapter 12, and let’s look at verses 12 and 13 again. The baptism is universal among Christians. Paul writes.

“For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ. For [Now notice] for by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.”

So, by Jesus Christ, through the agency of the Holy Spirit, we have all been baptized into one body. Now, let’s think for a moment about the Corinthians. What kind of a church was the Corinthian church? Well, the Corinthian church was a very unspiritual church. The Corinthian church was a church that was full of problems. If Believers Chapel had all the problems that the Corinthian church had, the Elders would want to tear their hair out, I’m sure. They had every kind of problem imaginable, it

seems. Immorality, doctrinal error over the resurrection, believers going to war with one another, marital problems, the problem of carnality. One man saying I am of Johnson, another saying, I am of McCrae, and another saying, I am of Waltke. And, well, just almost every kind of problem that you have was in the Corinthian church.

Now, Paul says of them, look, this is the Corinthian church “For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body.” And, lest you think that Paul is saying: “Ideally, are we all baptized into one body,” he puts it in the past tense. It really should be rendered, “For by one Spirit have we all been baptized into one body.”

In other words, the Corinthians, every one of those carnal Christians in Corinth, had been baptized by the Holy Spirit into the body of Christ. So, it’s obvious that the baptism of the Holy Spirit is not a work of the Lord Jesus that is associated with power in the Christian life directly. In other words, it’s possible to be baptized by the Holy Spirit, but to be a carnal Christian. So, it should be evident to us, then, that the baptizing work of the Holy Spirit is something that is not associated with power. It is on the other hand a universal work among Christians. If you are a Christian; you have been baptized by the Holy Spirit. It’s not a second blessing, which you are to seek afterwards. It’s not a third blessing or a fourth blessing. It is just part of your birthright as a Christian.

Now, suppose I had come home after my, I started to say vacation [I don’t know if Mary would like that or not.] But suppose I’d come home after my week of traveling and I should say, “Mary, I’ve been thinking over things while I’ve been gone. And, you know, we’ve been living together for thirty-one or two years and I think I would like to get married. And I’d like for you to be my wife.” I’d like to see the look on her face if I said that. That would be stupid and silly, wouldn’t it? Because, it has already taken place. It took place so long ago, I’ve almost forgotten about it. [Laughter] And, I’m living out of the relationship of union that exists between us now. We are of one body; we are of one soul in the Lord, one flesh in the Lord. So I don’t have to ask my wife to marry me again. I am already married to her. I do not have to ask the Holy Spirit to baptize me into the

body of Christ. I have been baptized into the body of Christ. How silly it is then to say to people then in the light of the teaching of the Bible, “What you need is the work, the second blessing of baptism by the Holy Spirit.”

Many years ago, I was preaching out in West Dallas in Eagle Ford, and I was just wandering around in the afternoon visiting people in the community out there, trying to interest some in hearing the Evangelistic message at night, which I usually gave in the schoolhouse out there. And, I came to one man and he was a very nice young man, and we got into a discussion of spiritual things. And, after we’d talked for a little while, he asked me if I’d had the “baptism”. And I knew what he was talking about. I just replied, yes, I’ve had the baptism. Have you had the baptism? And then, he went on to tell me how he learned to speak in tongues. And, I’ll say something about it later on when we talk on tongues.

But, I let him talk on and on and on. And when he asked me about my experience, I said, well, it occurred when I believed in Jesus Christ. And his mouth kind of fell open. He said, “What do you mean?” I said, “Well, here it is in the Bible. It says, ‘for by one spirit are we all baptized into one body.’” And I said, “Even the carnal Christians had been baptized by the Holy Spirit and it means simply that I’m in the Church of Jesus Christ.” And I never have seen a more confused fellow leave our discussion. He just had never heard anything like that in his life. It was just so utterly foreign to him and what he had been brought up in that he couldn’t take it in. But that’s what the Bible teaches. If we have believed in Christ, we have been baptized by the Spirit into the body of Christ.

Fourth, the baptism is non-experiential. Now, by that, I mean it is not based upon or derived from a sentient experience. In other words, nobody can say, I just experienced the baptism of the Holy Spirit. It’s one of those things that occur instantaneously and it is received by faith. No one ever feels the baptism of the Spirit. We may feel some joy and

happiness when we learn that we are in the body of Christ in the true church. But, you see, the baptizing work itself is not felt. It is non-experiential.

Fifth and this is the counterpart of it. The baptizing work of the Holy Spirit is a positional work. We are not to seek it. It’s true the moment we believe in Jesus Christ and we are placed in the church, that’s our position, and it’s a position, by the way, that we never lose. Once we are in the church of Jesus Christ, we never lose it. By the way, that is why it is unscriptural to excommunicate someone from the church. Does that startle you?

Do you know, if your church practices excommunication, it in effect is saying that you can be in the body of Christ and then you can be lost again? You see, in the New Testament, discipline was never excommunication in the sense of removal from the church. It was discipline with reference to partaking of the Lord’s Table. They were regarded as “in the church” but they were not allowed to partake of the Lord’s Table, for you see, the Lord’s Table is a visible expression of fellowship with the Lord. And, when a man is out of fellowship with the Lord, if he’s a genuine Christian he doesn’t lose his salvation. He loses his fellowship with the Lord. And so he is asked to abstain from the partaking of the elements until that relationship is restored. But, he’s not removed from the church. He’s still a member of Jesus Christ, for all discipline is designed to restore a person to the relationship of fellowship. And so excommunication is an unbiblical doctrine.

Now, I know you may turn to 1 Corinthians, chapter 5, and read where it says “put them away.” But, that’s the sense in which you are to put them away. That is, you’re not to sit down at the Lord’s Table and eat with them. They are to come under discipline and they are not to be allowed to exercise their right to partake of the Lord’s Table because they are out of fellowship with the Lord. But, they’re in the church, and they should be the object of the love and affection and counsel of other Christians.

Sixth, the baptism is not directly related to spirituality in life. It is indirectly related, of course, because we are united in Christ. But it is not directly related to spirituality in life. And, we’ve seen that. If you just remember, the Corinthians were carnal, unspiritual, but they had been baptized by the Holy Spirit. You will see that that statement is correct. A person can be baptized by the Holy Spirit and not necessarily spiritual in his life.

And seventh, the baptism of the Holy Spirit may or may not be followed by the gift of tongues. It is not a necessary sign of the baptizing work of the Holy Spirit that a man speak in tongues. And, I want you to get this, so will you turn with me to 1 Corinthians, chapter 12, verse 28, 1 Corinthians, chapter 12, verse 28. Now, there are people who say that every Christian should speak in tongues. You ever run across anyone like that? Shake your head? Have you? See, quite a few of you have. Every Christian should speak in tongues. Now, that is unscriptural. I want to show you why. Now, the reason I’m trying to show you why is I want you to see that speaking in tongues, later we will deal with this for an hour, but speaking in tongues is not a sign of the baptism of the Holy Spirit. It’s not a sign of spirituality. 1 Corinthians 12, verse 28:

“And God hath set some in the church, [he’s talking about spiritual gifts --] first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues. Now are all apostles?”

Now, how would you answer that? Tell me? No. Now, by the way, you know, someone might say, I want to answer yes. And, we wouldn’t in English have any way of proving that the author expected the negative answer. But, in Greek, we do have. You see in Greek, if a man wanted you to answer him negatively, he would use the Greek particle, “may.” If he wanted you to answer him positively, he would use the Greek

particle “oo” with his question. And so, if he expected a negative answer, he would use “may.”

Now, Paul uses “may” here. You can look in the Greek text and see it. And, this is the way we should, then, translate these verses. All are not apostles, are they? No. All are not prophets, are they? No. All are not teachers, are they? No. All are not workers of miracles, are they? No. All do not have the gifts of healing, do they? No. All do not speak with tongues, do they?

Now, you see, if tongues, then, were a sign of spiritual life every Christian should speak in tongues. But Paul says, not all are to speak in tongues. Why? Because tongues was a special gift that was designed to authenticate the message. It did not have any direct relationship to spiritual life. Now, we’ll talk more about that later on. So the baptism may or may not be followed by the gift of tongues for the simple reason that the baptism is universal is universal but tongues is only partial.

Now, our time is up. I’d ask you a question tonight, “Now, what is the baptizing ministry of the Holy Spirit?” What should you say? Well, you should say, the baptizing ministry of the Holy Spirit is the operation of Jesus Christ, by which, through the Holy Spirit, he unites every believer in him to the body of Christ, the church. That’s the baptizing ministry of the Holy Spirit. The way we come into the church, then is through faith on our part but the baptizing ministry of the Holy Spirit that unites us to Jesus Christ and to all who have believed in him in the one body.

So my Christian friends, how many of you are believers? Well, most of you will raise your hand. Have you been baptized by the Holy Spirit? Have you? Yes! Right. If you are believers, you have been. So if I should stand up and say, “What you need is to seek the baptism of the Holy Spirit?” What should you say? “Learn your theology, Johnson.” [Laughter] Never, by the way, are we ever told in the New Testament to seek the baptism of the Holy Spirit. And, that confirms all that we’ve been talking about. It’s something that you don’t seek. It happens when you believe.

Let’s bow in prayer.

[Prayer] Father, we thank Thee for Thy word. We thank Thee for the clarity of it, most of all we thank Thee that we have been united by the Holy Spirit at the behest of Jesus Christ, to him and to all who have believed in him, in one body. And, help us Lord, to have love and affection to all who are in the body, even those who may be misled on some points of Scripture, for surely, Lord, not any of us knows all [Tape ends]