

THE SUPERNATURAL BIRTH OF THE CHURCH Transcript

By Dr. Ron Jones

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Vance Havner once that, “We are not going to move the world around us by criticism of it, by conformity to it, but by the combination of lives ignited by the Spirit of God.” That is spot on, and it’s worthy of our thought and consideration this morning. We’ll never, as followers of Jesus Christ, impact or influence the world around us apart from the combination of our lives in this thing called the church and the body of Christ put on fire by the Spirit of God. We’re in a study of the book of Acts, the Acts of the Apostles, and a study of what happened. We’ve been asking the question, what happened after the resurrection of Jesus Christ? Well, the book of Acts tells that story. And we’ve come to Acts 2.

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Acts 2 is probably one of the most iconic, epic chapters in all the Bible; first of all, because the story here is very dramatic. It’s just one of those stories and one of those passages of scripture that make us go, “Wow! What really happened here? Not only what happened, but, what does it mean?” But it’s also epic because it introduces maybe a little bit of controversy and debate within the body of Christ in terms of what happened and why it happened and what it means for us today. But I’ve titled this message “The Supernatural Birth of the Church” because Acts 2 describes that- the birth of the church, the *ecclesia* of God.

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You’ve been to a birth celebration before, haven’t you? Maybe your own birthday. Maybe you’re too old to celebrate birthdays anymore. I don’t know. But maybe you’ve been to a birthday celebration recently. And besides the cake and the singing of “Happy Birthday” and the guest of honor and all that, what do we think about when we think about birthdays? Gifts. All right. You bring a gift. And on the birthday of the church God brought...He gave a gift to us. And it as the gift of the Holy Spirit. As the church was formed, the Holy Spirit came in a different way than what He came in the Old Testament. Remember, the book of Acts is a transitional time. And we’ve got to understand that we’re in transition in the program of God. The Holy Spirit goes all the way back, you know, before the moment of creation. And in the moment of creation we can find the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. But in the Old Testament, the Holy Spirit came and He went. He came and He went. He didn’t dwell in believers permanently. He came upon certain individuals for certain tasks at certain times. And this why David, quite frankly, in Psalm 51 prayed, “Take not thy holy spirit from me.” That’s a good Old Testament prayer, but it’s inappropriate for us as New Testament believers to pray that way, partly because of what happened in Acts 2 when the Holy Spirit came.

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Now, there’s a lot of confusion about the ministry of the Holy Spirit. But let’s have no confusion about what happened on that day. Let me read the first four verses of Acts 2. It says, “When the day of Pentecost arrived, they were all together in one place. And suddenly there came from heaven a sound like a mighty rushing wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. And divided tongues as of fire appeared to them and rested on each one of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit

gave them utterance.” Now, the words that I just read and the balance of chapter 2 in part is in fulfillment of some prophecy, some predictions that this would take place. And today I just want to only go as far back as a prophecy from a guy named John, John the baptizer, who said in Matthew 3:11, “I baptize you with water,” John said, “but he who is coming after me is mightier than whose sandals I am not worthy to carry.” Of course He is talking about the Lord Jesus Christ. And then he, John, goes on to say, “Jesus will baptize you with the holy spirit and fire.” And that’s what happens in Acts 2. There is a sound like the mighty rushing of wind. It doesn’t mean the place became windy and tornadic. It says it sounded like that. Some of you who live in Tornado Alley or have lived there before, you know you know that a tornado is loud as much as it is windy. And there was a loud sound that got everybody’s attention in Jerusalem.

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Keep in mind that this was the feast of Pentecost. Pentecost means 50 or 50th. It’s 50 days after the feast of first fruits, which was the day that Jesus rose from the dead. And then prior to that a few days is Passover, and then also during that time was the feast of unleavened bread. But 50 days after first fruits came the Pentecost celebration. And on the day of Pentecost there was this loud sound in Jerusalem. It was a time when there were tens, if not hundreds of thousands of people in Jerusalem. The population had swelled because people from all around the region, different dialects and different regions and different people groups were coming to Jerusalem to celebrate. They hear this loud sound. It rivets all of their attention, and they see the disciples and those early believers, now speaking in tongues. In languages they didn’t know previous to that and in languages that all these different people groups could not understand. We’ll come back to that in a moment.

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But what’s described here is actually three ministries of the Holy Spirit. And we could talk long about the ministry of the Holy Spirit, longer than we have time for today. Like when I was in seminary, we would take an entire semester to go through some of us. It was called pneumatology. *Pneuma* is the Greek word for spirit. Pneumatology is the study of or the theology of the Holy Spirit. So here is a little pneumatology 101, a brief theology of the Holy Spirit. Three ministries that come together here. One is the indwelling ministry of the Holy Spirit. It comes to indwell believers, to live inside them. The other is the baptism of the Spirit, and the third is the filling of the Spirit. The question that often comes up in Acts 2 and the debate and sometimes the controversy is what is the baptism of the Holy Spirit?

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Let me give you a little definition here. The baptism of the Holy Spirit is the supernatural work of God that places the believer into the body of Christ. What happened on the day of Pentecost was the Holy Spirit came as He was prophesied, as He was promised, unlike He had ever come before. He came to permanently indwell all believers. Simultaneous to that, He also baptized all believers in Jesus Christ, and baptized them into the body of Christ. You’re not only indwelt by the Holy Spirit, but now you’re a member of this new spiritual entity known as the *ecclesia*, the called out ones or the church of Jesus Christ.

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The confusion in my mind often comes over what is the baptism of the Spirit versus the filling of the Holy Spirit. And I alluded to this a couple a couple weeks ago, but this week I've given you a chart in your notes there. And I just want to summarize real quickly the very important difference between the two. Number one, the baptism of the Spirit happens once. It happens at the moment of salvation. We're never commanded, you know, "Be baptized in the Holy Spirit." It just happens. And like baptism that we'll talk about in a moment, it identifies us with the body of Christ and places the believer in the body of Christ.

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The filling of the Holy Spirit, though, is commanded. Ephesians 5:8, "Don't be drunk with wine which leads to debauchery, but be filled with the spirit." "Be filled" is in the imperative form in and Greek language. It's a command. A baptism is automatic to believers at the moment of salvation. Filling of the Holy Spirit is not automatic, but it is commanded for believers. The question is this. Do you have the Holy Spirit as a believer in Jesus Christ? Yeah, you got Him. You got him at the moment of salvation. In fact, He was the down payment on your salvation. Read Ephesians 1:13-14. He's called the earnest, like an earnest money deposit in a real estate transaction. It's God's way of saying, "I've deposited this into your life. There's more to come." When? Well, when we see Him face to face. He's the down payment. He's also evidence that we are children of God. As the Holy Spirit speaks to our spirit and gives witness to our spirit that we belong to Christ, Romans 8 even tells us, if you do not have the Holy Spirit, you don't belong to Him. So you try to align that with all these people who are saying that the baptism of the Holy Spirit is something...well, it's a second blessing. No, it's not a second blessing. It's a first blessing. It's the first thing that comes to you as a gift from God, the gift of eternal life and the indwelling, baptizing ministry of the Holy Spirit at the moment of salvation. Do you have the Holy Spirit? You've got Him. You've got all that's available to you. That's the baptism.

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The filling of the Holy Spirit is a whole different discussion. The question is, does the Holy Spirit have you? Paul compares it to being drunk with alcohol. He says, "Don't be drunk with win that leads to debauchery." What happens when you drink too much wine? Well, that substance controls the way you think, the way you speak, the way you walk. It controls everything about you in a negative kind of way. He says instead be drunk with the Holy Spirit. Be filled or controlled by the Holy Spirit. The baptism asks and answers the question, do you have Him? The filling answers the question, does He have you? Okay. It's a whole different discussion. And I've said for years the most frustrated person in the church today is the person who is a believer in the Jesus Christ but has never learned the secret of the Spirit-filled life, how to be filled with Him, how to walk with Him, how to live by the Spirit. And you're living by the flesh. We'll talk more about that in a moment.

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But those are the two areas of confusion. You come back to Acts 2. Now we read on in verse 5. And it says, "Now there were dwelling in Jerusalem Jews, devout men from every nation under heaven." Every nation under heaven. Didn't Jesus say to His disciples, "You shall be my witnesses to the ends of the earth,?" Well, on the birthday of the church the ends of the earth came to Jerusalem. They were all there. Different nations, different dialects, different

tribes, different tongues. “And at this sound, the multitude came together, and they were bewildered, because each one was hearing them speak in his own language. And they were amazed and astonished, saying, ‘Are not all these who are speaking Galileans?’” That was kind of a tongue-in-cheek way of saying, “Who are these hillbillies, these Galileans, these uneducated, you know, Galileans who are now speaking in languages that they’ve never been to school on?” “And how is it that we hear, each of us in his own native language? Parthians and Medes and Elamites and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya belonging to Cyrene, and visitors from Rome.” Hey, I worked on that all week long pronouncing each one of those. Didn’t I do a good job? Didn’t miss a single one of them. Boy, third service, and I’m just going great here. Where am I here? Verse 11, “Both Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabians—we hear them telling in our own tongues the mighty works of God.’ And all were amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, ‘What does this mean?’ But others mocking said, ‘They are filled with new wine.’” “They’re just drunk.”

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You get the picture? It’s an epic scene. It’s epic because it’s one of the most exciting stories to read about, and it’s epic because it creates a lot of debate and conversation. But there in verse 12 they ask this question- “What does this mean?” That’s a great question 2000 years ago, and it’s a great question now. And I’m so glad you asked it, because I’m going to try to answer that over the rest of our time together. What does this mean? What does Pentecost mean to us?

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Well, there are at least four things it means both then and now to believers just like you and me. Number one, it means as a believer in Jesus Christ you have a new identity. Identity. Remember, the baptism of the Holy Spirit places us into the body of Christ and identifies us with the body of Christ.

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Now, let’s go to Romans 6. We’re going to go deeper into the New Testament where the eyewitness of the resurrection of Jesus Christ like the apostle Paul and others begin to unpack some meaning that flows out of the book of Acts. Romans 6 is one of those places. Before I read a few verses here, keep in mind there are two baptisms in the Bible. There is water baptism, and there is Spirit baptism. Okay? And both have to do with identifying us with something.

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In water baptism, it is a symbolic presentation of a new spiritual reality that is in us. Baptism doesn’t save us. It doesn’t accomplish our salvation. It’s a step of obedience. It’s a way for somebody to say, “I belong to Jesus Christ. I have decided to follow Him.” And we identify with the death, the burial, the resurrection of Jesus Christ. I always like to say that everybody needs to preach at least one sermon. And when you go public with your faith, you get to do that without words. Death, you go under, the burial, you rise again to new life, the resurrection. Okay? It identifies us with the death, the burial and the resurrection of Jesus Christ symbolically.

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Spirit baptism identifies us or places us in the body of Christ. And I think Paul has both baptisms in mind in Romans 6 when he tells us he wants us to know something. All right? In his flow of the book of Romans he's gotten past our sin and the answer to that and salvation in Jesus Christ. Now he's come to a place in his argument in Romans, his magnum opus of theology where he is speaking to believers. And the first thing he says is, "Do you not know..." Don't you know this? If you don't, mark this down. This is something important you've got to know. "Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death?" In other words, your baptism, Spirit and water, identified you with the death of Christ. "And we were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life." Again, water baptism, the physical, symbolic expression of a new spiritual reality. Baptism is about our identification in Christ.

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Now, further in the New Testament in Paul's writings, he says human beings are identified by one of two persons. You're either in Adam or you're in Christ. There is no other option. You're either in Adam, our spiritual and physical forefather going all the way back to the Garden of Eden. You're either in Adam, identified with sin, death, separation from God and rebellion. That's your identify in Adam. Or, because you've placed your faith and trust in Jesus Christ, you're no longer in Adam. You're in, now, the second Adam, Paul says, who is Christ Jesus. Not identified with your sins, because your sins are forgiven. Not separated from God anymore. You're reconciled to Him. No longer in darkness, now in light. No longer in spiritual death, but spiritual life. You're either identified with one or the other. And baptism, both water and Spirit baptism, has all of that in mind. Where is your identity today?

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You know, there is a lot of talk today about identity thieves. And maybe you've done something like I have to kind of protect your information and your Social Security number, all that kind of stuff from identify thieves. And that's all a good thing to do. If you do all of that, you still need to understand, your identity was stolen. It was hijacked by the devil. He hijacked Adam's identity. And we, as his spiritual and physical descendants are identified with Adam until we come to faith in Jesus Christ. And Jesus, through His death, His burial, His resurrection, and then later He ascends and sends the Holy Spirit...our identity has been fixed, as it were. And our identity is now in Christ. And that has a whole lot to do with this thing called the baptism of the Holy Spirit that not only identifies us with the death, the burial and the resurrection of Christ, but also with His church, the body of Christ. This is why Paul would say—and these are identifying words—"I am crucified with Christ, but it's no longer I who live but Christ who lives within me. And the life that I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God." Paul says, "I'm no longer identified with the old Paul and with the old Adam. I have a new identification in Christ." And the question is, are you living out that identify in Christ? That's a big question to ask.

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But we're asking the question, what does this mean? What does Pentecost mean? Well, it means you've been given a new identity. Secondly, you're part of a new unity. A new unity.

Now let's go to 1 Corinthians 12:12-13. (0:19:00.1) Paul says, "For just as the body,"—and he's referring to a physical body here—"is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ." He points to our physical bodies where the neck bone is connected to hip bone and this bone is connected to that bone and all...I messed that all up. For doctors out there, I know. But still, you get the idea. We have many different parts in our body, but it's one body. Right? One unified body. He says, "So it is with Christ." We are how are in Christ are part of a body. Now, he goes onto say in verse 13, "For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body." Okay? Notice the unifying language here. One body, one Spirit, one baptism. And circle the word "all." We were all... He's writing to (0:20:34.3) believers in Jesus Christ at the church of Corinth. What a messed up church it was. A carnal, fleshy church. And you're telling me that even those in Corinth were all baptized by one spirit into one body? Yeah, because the baptism of the Spirit is not for super spiritual people. Okay? It's for all believers. And the baptism of the Spirit has a unifying effect that nothing else does. Okay? Make note of that in the language there. Even in Ephesians 4:30 we're told to work hard to do what? Preserve the unity of Spirit in bond of peace. The unity that the Spirit brings. Okay?

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Now, think about this. In Acts 2 you have all the nations of the earth there and 15 or 16 different dialects and tribes and languages and all of that. The representation of this diversity of ethnicities and diversity of languages. And what brings them together is this miracle about languages. Okay? In one sense, what was happening in Acts 2 was the reversal of the judgment that came at the tower of Babel. Now I'm going back to Genesis 11. Remember after the fall and you read the story of the fall of creation and the fall of man. And you're coming out of Genesis 3. And the evil on the earth just gets more and more profound. So much so that Nimrod comes together and tries to build this tower to the glory of human achievement and to create a one world government with one language and one religion. It was the first time that man, evil in his nature, tried to form this one world entity. And God looked down and said, "No, that's just a bad thing." And to put some brakes on the spread of evil and the compounding of evil through the unifying effect of evil, He scattered them and then created a diversity of languages and nations and people groups. And it's one way that, in God's overall plan, He retards evil. Okay? Until Jesus came. And through His death, His burial, His resurrection, He dealt with sin. And through the coming of the Holy Spirit, could bring us together again in a unifying way and, how interesting, through the gathering of people through a miracle that had to do with languages. You see all of that?

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So what I'm saying is that part of this means is that we are part of a new unity. Are we living out that unity in the body of Christ as best as we could? No, we're not. Because not everybody who is baptized in the Holy Spirit is walking by the Spirit, quite frankly, and living by the Spirit and being filled with the Holy Spirit. We live today in kind of a divided America. I call it a hyphenated America. You know, African American, Asian Americans, Hispanic Americans, Anglo Americans and whatever else you want to hyphenate yourself and create this divided nation of ours. But, friends, that may be America, but that's not the church. We are not black Christians, white Christians, yellow Christians, brown Christians, or whatever you want to call yourself. We are Christians. And what unites us is the Spirit of God. Now, do we have to

work hard at that? Yeah. Paul says, “Work hard at persevering the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.” But the best answer today to racism and all that divides us is the Spirit of the living God falling fresh on His people and living out a unity that the world just marvels at and doesn’t understand. You’re part of that as a believer in Jesus Christ. My question is, are you part of the solution or part of the problem? It all has to do with whether you’re filled with the Holy Spirit. You’ve got the Holy Spirit, but does the Holy Spirit have you? Even controlling your view of other people with other nations, other races, other tribes, other tongues, and seeing them in the beautiful unity of the body of Christ and the Spirit of Christ who lives inside all of us as believers in Christ.

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Wow, what does this mean? It means a lot, doesn’t it? It means we have a new identity, a new unity that we’re a part of. Thirdly, we possess a greater capacity. Now I want to go back to Acts 1:8 where the Bible tells us that Jesus said to His disciples, “You shall receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you.” The word is *dunamis*. And it’s kind of where we get our word dynamite. When the Holy Spirit comes...and how did He come again? He indwells believers, resident in you. He baptizes you simultaneously placing you in the body of Christ. You’re part of all this now. And if you let Him, He’ll fill you. He’ll empower you. He will not enable you to live the victorious Christian life. The baptism of the Holy Spirit happens automatically. The filling of the Holy Spirit does not, friends. It depends on our yielded-ness. But the power is there.

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Suppose you got up in the morning and it was time to, you know, fight traffic and go off to work. And, you know, you got in your garage and you started pushing your car out of the garage. You know, you get it out of the garage. You get it turned. And you’re down the driveway and you’re partway out the street in front of your house, and your neighbor walks out and says, “What in the world are you doing?” “Well, I’m going to work.” And you just keep pushing. Now you’re sweating, you know. You’re tired. And your neighbor says, “Listen, I think there’s an easier way to that. You see this key or see a little button you push in your car? Just push that and...” Vroom, vroom, the HEMI engine, you know, that power under the engine revs up. Just sit here. Just take your foot. Just press on this accelerator. Boom, there you go. That’s the way it is with the Holy Spirit. The power is there.

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But the most frustrated person in the world today is not the unbeliever in Jesus Christ who might be mildly aware that he’s apart from Christ. The most frustrated person is the believer in Jesus Christ who now has both the flesh and the Spirit in him. Galatians 5 says the Spirit wars against the flesh and the flesh wars against the Spirit. Anybody who can identify with that war going on in them, say amen, oh my, or me, oh my! It’s a battle like you’ve never experienced before. And until you learn how to access and activate the power within who is the Holy Spirit, you will live a frustrated, discouraged, despondent Christian life. You might even get to the place where you say, “I’m done with this. It doesn’t work.” Why? Because you’re trying to push the car. It was never designed to be lived that way. Jesus even told His disciples, “Hang out in Jerusalem until the promised Holy Spirit comes. If you try to do this church thing

in your own strength and in your own flesh,” the implication was, “you’ll fail. You need the enabling resources and power of the Holy Spirit.”

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I always think about this when I’m at an airport. And, you know, sometimes you fly into a big airport. And you come in on gate 2, and your connecting flight is in gate 72. You ever been there? And you’re, like, “Oh my.” And you grab your bag or your satchel and...you know, I’m still in pretty decent shape. I can walk the mile and a half to get there. But what I’ve noticed is they’ve put these moving sidewalks in the airport. They’re wonderful. And, you know, you’re walking along, exerting your energy, you know, doing that thing against gravity and all that. And you step on that moving sidewalk, and you’re, like, “Whoa.” You know, you’re just kind of gliding along. And you’re waving to your friends over there who are dragging their bag, and they’re sweating and they’re exerting strength. And every time I do that I’m reminded of the Spirit-filled life. That’s the way it’s supposed to be when you’re filled with the Holy Spirit and you’re walking in the Spirit, you’re living by the Spirit, you’re filled with the Spirit or, as Jesus said in John 15, “Abide in me, and let my words abide in you, because apart from me, you can do nothing.” When you learn that secret, the Christian life is easy. When you try to live it in the flesh, you’re gonna be tired, worn out, struggling, three steps forward, five steps backwards, and about ready to give up. The filling of the Spirit and the power that comes with that is a day by day, moment by moment decision whereby I say yes to the Holy Spirit and no to the world, the flesh, and the devil. It doesn’t happen once like the baptism of the Spirit. It happens many times. And it’s possible that right now you’re not filled with the Spirit because you’re filled with your selfish self and your own agenda rather than confessing and repenting of that sin and being filled with the Spirit.

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So what we have in Acts 2 on the day of Pentecost...three things happening. The indwelling of the Holy Spirit comes to be resident in them. He also simultaneously baptizes them in the Spirit, places them in the body of Christ, creating this new entity called the *ecclesia*. But if you read carefully there in Acts 2, it says they were all filled with the Holy Spirit. Why? Because they were spending days in prayer, pouring themselves out before God, emptying themselves of self and their selfish agendas and their selfish ways and waiting for the coming of the Holy Spirit. And when He came, they were an empty vessel to be filled with the Holy Spirit. And, boom, the church exploded.

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I think it was D.L. Moody or somebody like that who says, “We have yet to see what God can do through a person, an individual, maybe a collective group of people who are fully sold out and given over to the Holy Spirit.” I think we have a glimpse of it in Acts 2. But, oh, that that would happen today in our lives. You’ve got the Holy Spirit. We have the Holy Spirit. We have all the equipment we need. We’ve got a vehicle with a high-powered HEMI engine underneath it. But a lot of times we’re still trying to push and exert in the flesh to live the Christian life and to do the work of the church.

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Let me move on. Number four, you've also, and finally, been given a new or enhanced ability. The Holy Spirit not only comes to indwell and baptize and fill, but He also distributes gifts, spiritual gifts. And we could talk for weeks about spiritual gifts. Let me just give you a little highlight here. I put them in your notes. There are three central passages of scripture that deal with spiritual gifts. That's Romans 12, 1 Corinthians 12 and 1 Peter 4. There is a list of spiritual gifts in each of those sections of scripture. And you can compile those gifts and, as some have done, categorize them. Some are what we call serving gifts. Some are what we call special, and others are sign gifts. So the serving gifts may be the gift of service, the gift of mercy, the gift of giving, even the gift of leadership, servant leadership, and some others like that. The special gifts are apostle, prophet, you know, pastor, teacher, evangelist. You know, Paul mentions those in Ephesians. And then the sign gifts. The sign gifts have to do with miracles and healing and, yes, speaking in tongues. Brings us full circle to Acts 2. What does this mean, these languages? And what does it mean for us today?

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Now, this is where it can get a little controversial, get a little heated. There is debate in the body of Christ. Let me just say there are good, godly people who we'll see in heaven who have a different view of this. But I alluded to my view and our view just last week or the week before when I talked about the apostolic era and an apostle being defined as someone who was there from beginning of Jesus's ministry and who visually saw the risen Christ. That was the definition. That was the criteria. And during the apostolic era they spoke with apostolic authority that was confirmed with signs, wonders and miracles. We are not in the apostolic era because the apostolic era ended with the death of the apostles. I'm not Apostle Ron. I don't speak with apostolic authority. I speak with biblical authority. We have what the apostles didn't have that was in process at the time, and that is the complete canon of scripture. And God would far more rather you and I believe him because we take Him at His Word than we saw some sign or wonder or miracle. Okay? And we understand that Acts is transitional in that way.

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So what about these sign gifts? Again, there is debate. There is honest disagreement on this. It's not to say that God can't do, or the question is, does He? Are we in that time where this is necessary to confirm with signs and wonders and miracles and so forth as a common expression in the body of Christ? All of that to say, wherever you are on that, just be humble about it, whatever your position is. But do understand this, and I will say this about speaking in tongues. Speaking in tongues in the Bible is always the supernatural ability to communicate a known language not otherwise learned. A known language that is spoken somewhere in the world. Okay? Read the book of Acts 2. And that's what it was. It would be like somebody showing up on my front doorstep from, let's say, Paris, France. And he's never taken an English class. I've never taken a French class. He is speaking to me in French. Suddenly I have the supernatural ability to speak fluently in French and speak to him about the wonderful works of God. That's what was happening in Acts 2. Okay?

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So when people today say, "Oh, this is for today," let's put it under the microscope a little bit. What is it? Is it the known language miracle that we find in Acts 2? Or is it some incomprehensible gibberish that nobody understands? That incomprehensible gibberish, friends,

is not biblical. It's not even Pentecostal. It's not the day of Pentecost. You say, "Well, what is it?" Well, you've got to ask yourself. Is it of the flesh, or is it of the Spirit? That kind of gibberish...and I don't have time to go into it all...has it its roots in the pagan religions. And I'd be very, very careful of that. Whether you believe the sign gifts are for today, that's a good debate to have. But if we're gonna have that debate, let's be biblical about it. Speaking in tongues is the supernatural work of God about a known language. Most of what's happening in that world today in the body of Christ is not Pentecostal in the Acts 2 sense. So we have to be very, very careful of that.

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That said, I will also say about that there is no such thing in the Bible about a heavenly language. I don't know where that rumor got started. I guess it got started in 1 Corinthians 13, which is the love chapter. How we got from love to heavenly language, I'm not quite sure, other than that Paul, using exaggerated language to try to make the point that love is the greatest, says, "Suppose that I speak with the tongues of men and of angels." And people have taken that and said, "Oh, there's an angelic language out there." And they go, "bbbbbb," some incomprehensible gibberish. Folks, that's just really bad Bible interpretation. That's not what Paul's doing. He's using hyperbole and exaggerated language to make the point that love is the greatest. So there is no heavenly language. What is known in the scripture as speaking in tongues is a known language spoken somewhere in the world, but, miraculously, somebody who hasn't had the training in that language is able to speak to somebody about the wonderful works of God in that moment.

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But here is the bigger question in all of this. Do you have the Holy Spirit? And if you don't, the Bible says you don't belong to God. You're not part of His family. That's Romans 8. And what are you waiting for? God wants to give you not only the gift of the Holy Spirit, but He wants to give you the free gift of eternal life. It's already bought and paid for. And you just come to the cross as a sinner who needs a savior. You say, "I'm still identified with Adam, and I'm living a life of sin and selfishness and darkness and destruction. I was made for something better." Yeah, you were. And that's what the cross is all about.

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And then if you have the Holy Spirit, does He have you? Can you sing, "You can have it all, Lord, every part of my world"? And those words roll off our lips, but do we really mean it? Or is there some area of our life that's not rightly related to Him? You know, the New Testament talks about grieving, quenching and resisting the Spirit. And it's possible as a Christian to live all your life in one of those states because you're holding onto some of that sin or some attitude or unforgiveness or whatever it is. And you've grieved the Spirit and shut down the flow of His power for your life. And that is just a huge discussion to have. But I drop that in and say, listen, let's learn from Pentecost our new identity, this unity we're a part of, this increase in capacity. And let's live that out in a wonderful way and grab hold of the new ability He has given us as spiritual gifts and bless the body of Christ with that.

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I'll leave you with this prayer in Ephesians 3. Paul says, "Now unto him who is able to do exceedingly and abundantly beyond all that we ask or imagine..." Who wants that? I certainly do. Have I got dreams and visions about what my life and ministry could be a part of? Oh my. But I want to tap into Him who is able to do exceedingly and abundantly beyond all that we ask or imagine. And then he goes on to say, "...according to the power that works within us." We'll never get there, friends, apart from the Holy Spirit. We have Him. We have the equipment. The question is, does He have us? Are we completely yielded to Him? You can have it all, Lord, every part of my world. And when we get there, oh my, strap on your seatbelts because the church then becomes a rocket to the moon. Let's pray together.

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God, thank You so much for the gift of Your Holy Spirit and the gift of eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. You're such a generous God. And, Father, if there is anybody here today who has never receive by faith that gift of eternal life and the forgiveness of their sins and a home in heaven...Lord, You've been stirring hearts this morning, but stir them to the place where they have faith to believe and they say yes to Jesus today as a sinner who needs a savior, coming to the cross of Christ desperate before You. And, Father, make us as believers who are part of this unified body known as the body of Christ, make us desperate for You again, for the fullness of the Holy Spirit that You've placed to be resident in us. If You could, You'd make Him president of us. But You've given us free will. And that's a choice we have to make. So search me, Oh God, and know my heart. Try me and know my wicked thought, and see if there is any wicked way in me. And lead me, lead us in the way everlasting, Father. And I pray this in Jesus's name and for His sake, amen.

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