

# Pentecost: The Power of the Spirit

by Stephen Hamilton

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*The Holy Spirit was given in power to fulfill God's Word and to indwell every believer permanently as the Vicar of Christ, and He permanently indwells believers, giving them the gift of speaking in tongues.*

**Duration:** 53:45

**Scripture:** Leviticus 23:16-17, Acts 2:15-17, Ephesians 2:11-13

**Topics:** "Pentecost"

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## Description

In this sermon, the preacher shares a powerful story of a sermon he witnessed where the preacher spoke on Ezekiel chapter 36, emphasizing the pouring out of God's spirit upon men. As the preacher spoke, a few drops of rain fell, causing the congregation to reach for their shawls and raincoats. The preacher used this moment to challenge the congregation, asking them how they would react when the wrath of God is poured out upon them in the day of judgment. This led to a powerful preaching of the gospel, resulting in 500 people being converted. The sermon also references Acts chapter 2, where the apostles were mistaken for being drunk when they preached in foreign languages. Peter clarifies that they are not drunk, but rather fulfilling the prophecy of Joel. The sermon also mentions the growth of the church, comparing it to leaven in three measures of meal, symbolizing the spread of the kingdom of God. The sermon concludes by mentioning the offerings mentioned in Leviticus 23, which represent the work of Christ on the cross.

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## Transcript

I want to draw your attention tonight once more to the 23rd chapter of the book of Leviticus. In this chapter we have a record given of various feasts of the Lord. Each of them do speak to us of the person and work of the Lord Jesus.

Last time we considered the third feast of the Lord, the feast of firstfruits. But that feast was followed by another holy convocation called the feast of Pentecost. Perhaps you have heard of it.

Pentecost is of course mentioned in the New Testament. It was a feast, the fourth feast, which occurred exactly 50 days after the feast of firstfruits. We learn that from verses 15 and 16 where they were to count from the morrow after the sabbath, from the day that they brought the sheaf of the wave offering, seven sabbaths, even unto the morrow after the seventh sabbath.

He said, shall ye number 50 days and ye shall offer a new meat offering unto the Lord. It took place therefore this feast on the first day of the week. That's the Lord's day.

The day upon which we worship God particularly and especially. Now we've seen that the firstfruits speaks to us, among other things, of the resurrection of Christ. Because, just to refresh your memory, back in verses 10 and 11, the Lord commanded them to bring a sheaf of the firstfruits of their harvest unto the priest.

God says in verse 11, and he shall wave the sheaf before the Lord to be accepted for you. On the morrow after the sabbath, the priest shall wave it. And of course that morrow after the sabbath was the Lord's day, the first day of the week.

And that's the day when Jesus rose from the dead. And the Bible calls Christ, in the book of 1 Corinthians, in the chapter 15, the firstfruits of them that slept. So the feast of firstfruits definitely speaks to us about the resurrection of the Lord Jesus.

Now if that's true, then it is also true to say that the feast of Pentecost, following on from that, commemorates the pouring out of the Holy Spirit on the church. I think it's interesting as we look at this portion, especially in verses 16 and 17, Leviticus 23, 16 and 17, that the New Testament church is pictured here. He says, even unto the morrow after the seventh sabbath shall ye number fifty days, and ye shall offer a new meat offering unto the Lord.

Ye shall bring out of your habitations two wave loaves of two-tenth deals. They shall be of fine flour, they shall be baked with leaven. They are the firstfruits unto the Lord.

It speaks there of a new meat offering. That one offering consisted of two loaves baked with leaven. I know we're spiritualizing this, but I think as you look at the Scripture, it would not be wrong to say that those two loaves making one offering reminds us of the Jews and the Gentiles being made one body in Christ in the church.

Two loaves, but one offering. And we read in Ephesians chapter 2, a portion that for me, definitely militates against the nonsense of hyper-dispensationalism, which tells us that the church didn't begin until Pentecost, or even in some cases the ministry of John the Baptist, or in some cases the ministry of Christ. Look at Ephesians chapter 2, and reading from verse 11, it says, Wherefore remember that ye being in time past, Gentiles in the flesh, who are called uncircumcision by that which is called the circumcision in the flesh, made by hands, that at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world.

But now, in Christ Jesus, ye who sometimes were far off, are made nigh by the blood of Christ. Now listen to verse 14 and onwards. For he is our peace, who hath made both one, two loaves, one offering, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us, between who? Between Jews and Gentiles, having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances, for to make in himself of twain or two, one new man, so making peace, and that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby.

There is this one church that's made up of Jew and Gentile. But I want you to notice as well that that offering in Leviticus 23 is baked with leaven. Now we've mentioned the leaven before, as we saw in the feast of unleavened bread.

Leaven or yeast can be a picture of sin. But as I read the Bible, I find that it can also represent something good. Because the church shall be as leaven.

According to the parables spoken by our Lord in Matthew 13 and verse 33. Another parable, speak ye unto them. Matthew 13, 33.

The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal till the whole was leavened. And I believe in this instance it's talking about the spread of the church and the growth of the kingdom of God. Not in an evil sense, but in a good sense.

And surely that is the picture that God gives us of the New Testament church. It continues to grow, it continues to spread until Christ comes. And of course on the New Testament day of Pentecost, the church quite literally grew instantaneously as a result of the outpouring of the Spirit.

Because about 3,000 souls were saved. And in the aftermath of that, many more thousands were brought into the church. Now there are various offerings mentioned in Leviticus 23 that we're not going to look at in detail.

But each one of them pictures the work of Christ on the cross. What I want to focus on tonight is the coming of the Holy Spirit. In Acts chapter 2, we notice that that coming of the Spirit was on the day of Pentecost.

But when the day of Pentecost was fully come, this is this feast mentioned in Leviticus 23. Let me say that that which happened in Acts chapter 2 would never have happened unless Christ had been sacrificed at Calvary. That had to happen first.

And that leads us back to Leviticus 23 and the order there. But let me just mention it very briefly, what the Bible says about this in John chapter 7. So you don't just take my word for it, but you have the Scripture for it. That Pentecost would never have come unless Christ had first been sacrificed upon the cross.

If He had not been offered, there would never have been the coming in fullness of power of the Holy Ghost. Look at John 7, reading from verse 37. In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink.

He that believeth on me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. Of course, that wasn't literally to be the case. This is a spiritual statement.

Verse 39, the words in brackets, parenthesis. But this spake he of the Spirit. Which they that believe on him should receive.

For the Holy Ghost was not yet given, because that Jesus was not yet glorified. Now what does that mean? The Holy Ghost was not yet given. What I want to concentrate on before we deal with that, is that the giving of the Holy Ghost to the church that Christ spoke of here, is that which took place on the very day of this feast mentioned in Leviticus 23.

So we're really looking at the subject of what this feast points us to. And this feast points us to the giving of the Holy Spirit. Now the Holy Spirit was given in power for certain reasons.

I want to mention those reasons to you. First of all, the Holy Spirit was given in power to fulfill God's Word. This is very important.

God will fulfill His Word. His promises are true. His threatenings will come to pass.

And His warnings will be fulfilled. As well as the blessings that He promises. They will also come to pass.

Look at John 14. With me please. And verses 16 and 17.

And we find here that the Lord Jesus foretold the day of Pentecost when He was speaking to His disciples. John 14, 16. And I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you forever.

Even the Spirit of Truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth Him not, neither knoweth Him, but ye know Him. For He dwelleth with you, and shall be in you. I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter.

Now what's the Lord saying here? Well He's saying that the Holy Ghost is going to come in power. Now even before these words of Jesus, the prophet Joel, if you care to go back there in your Bible to Joel chapter 2, had prophesied and had spoken of this event. The book of Joel, I'm sure you know is between Hosea and Amos.

In case you didn't know, I've just told you. Joel chapter 2, reading from verse 28. And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out My Spirit upon all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions, and also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days, will I pour out My Spirit, and so on.

Now when you come to Acts chapter 2, you see some interesting words spoken by the Apostle Peter, in relation to this prophecy. Acts chapter 2, verse 15. For these are not drunken as ye suppose, seeing it is but the third hour of the day.

What did they think? Well, when the Apostles were standing up and preaching the Gospel in foreign languages, even in the very dialects of the people, they'd never been able to do that before, they couldn't understand it, these hearers. They said, well, they must be drunk. But Peter says, no, they're not drunk, as ye suppose.

Verse 16 of Acts 2. But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel. And then he gives this prophecy, that we just read from the prophet. And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of My Spirit upon all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams, and so on and so forth, right up until the coming of Christ.

The people want to apply the last days, to the very last days just before Jesus comes. But I want you to know, that the term, the last days, covers the period of time, from the time of Christ being on this earth, right until the end of time. And it's easy to prove that, as you look at various scriptures, Hebrews 1, half in these last days, spoken unto us by His Son.

The apostles lived in the last days. And in those last days, the Spirit came in mighty power, and there were many different features of His coming. There were things that accompanied His coming.

That was a day, when the Word of God was not complete, and therefore, there were many things that were given to the apostles to do, that were, as Paul puts it in 2 Corinthians 12, 12, the signs of an apostle.

And when that ministry was complete, when that ministry had fulfilled its course, then those things passed away, in accordance with the promise of Scripture. Whether they be tongues they shall cease, whether they be prophecies they shall fail, and so on and so forth.

But the point that I'm making here, is that the Spirit came to fulfill God's Word. Because He is, as my pastor is so fond of saying in his prayer before preaching, the promised Holy Ghost. The blessed power of Pentecost.

That's who He is. Now, let me make this clear. It is not true to say that the Holy Ghost was not in the world before the New Testament day of Pentecost.

That would be foolish. For we know that the Holy Spirit was in the world. In fact, it's interesting, is it not, to find that in Genesis chapter 1 verse 2, there's the first mention of the Spirit of God.

I'm always amused by people who say, to make it fit in with their view of prophecy, you know, if believers are taken out of the world, then the Holy Spirit goes out of the world, and vice versa, if the Holy Spirit goes out of the world, believers have to go out of the world. Who said so? Because I read here in Genesis 1 verse 2, that the Spirit of God was moving upon the face of the waters before there was ever a man on the earth. The Holy Spirit is omnipresent.

The Holy Spirit is not located merely in the hearts and lives of believers. The Holy Spirit is omnipresent. He's everywhere present.

So the idea that some kind of a rapture will take the Holy Spirit out of the earth and all the believers with Him, is totally unscriptural. It's built on extremely faulty exegesis in the first place. But I don't want to deal with that tonight.

I'm making the point that the Holy Ghost was in the world before the day of Pentecost. Throughout the Old Testament, He's continually seen at work. We've been looking at the book of Judges in our Sunday morning services.

And we've read of Gideon, how that the Spirit of the Lord clothed him, came upon him mightily. We've read of Samson, how that the Spirit of the Lord came upon him mightily. And throughout the Old Testament, that is the case.

But not only that, the Spirit of God had not only come upon men, but contrary again to what some will tell you, He actually indwelt various individuals for particular tasks. For instance, look at Ezekiel chapter 2. And that will be one proof text that you could look at. There are many more.

Ezekiel chapter 2, the first two verses. And He said unto me, Son of man, stand upon thy feet, and I will speak unto thee. And the Spirit entered into me when He spake unto me, and set me upon my feet, that I heard Him that spake unto me.

The Spirit entered into me. So here's a man who was indwelt by the Spirit. At least for a particular task, for a particular period.

It may well be that the Spirit of God did not dwell in every believer in a permanent sense in the Old Testament. But it's certainly true that after Christ died, rose again, and ascended to heaven, the Spirit was going to indwelt permanently every believer. And He was going to indwelt them permanently as the Vicar

of Christ.

Now there are those who tell us that Papa, the Pope in Rome, is the Vicar of Christ. But He's not. He's not in any sense.

He's not in any sense the representative of Christ on the earth. Although He claims to be. That's one of His titles that He takes to Himself.

The Vicar of Christ. Every Pope in succession through history has called Himself the Vicar of Christ. As well as many other names beside.

But He's not the Vicar of Christ. The Vicar of Christ, the vicarious representative of the Lord Jesus is the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit.

And therefore the Pope is guilty of blasphemy against the Holy Spirit. For he claims the position and the title of the Holy Spirit. As well as, by the way, claiming the title of the Father.

For people refer to Him, even our President to His shame, as the Holy Father. He's not the Holy Father. There's only one Holy Father and that's the Lord in heaven.

There's only one time in the Bible where He's named that as well. And that's in John 17. But I digress.

The Holy Ghost, Christ taught us would be available to fill every Christian with power for service. And so now in this day and age, the age of the Spirit as we rightly call it, the Holy Ghost permanently indwells believers. How do we know that? Because Jesus told us.

Again, referring to John 14. Another comforter who may abide with you forever. He says at the end of verse 17 of John 14, For He dwelleth with you and shall be in you.

If you're a Christian tonight, the Spirit of God has not only placed you in the body of Christ, but He has taken up permanent residence in your heart. Of course, on the other hand, if you're not saved, God's Spirit does not dwell in your heart. I hear some in the charismatic movement rejoicing because priests and nuns and other people are able to speak in tongues, therefore they're filled with the Holy Spirit.

They're not filled with the Holy Spirit at all. Because John 14.17 says that the Spirit of truth is one whom the world cannot receive. An ungodly man can't speak in the power of the Holy Ghost.

He's not indwelt by the Spirit. But if you're a believer, you're indwelt by the Spirit. He lives in Christians.

And in John 7, by the way, it tells us that the Holy Ghost was the person which they that believe on Christ should receive. And on the day of Pentecost, if you look at it in Acts chapter 2, the Spirit of God came in fulfillment of the promise of God to those that believe. Look at those verses near the end of that chapter.

Acts 2 verses 38 and 39. Then Peter said unto them, Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins. And ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.

For the promise, what promise? The promise of the Holy Ghost is unto you and to your children and to all that are far off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call. So there's this promised Holy Ghost given as the indwelling portion of every true believer. When you come to Christ, the Spirit of God enters your heart to live there forever.

The Holy Spirit was given to fulfill God's Word. Even to fulfill the type of the Feast of Pentecost. But secondly, the Holy Spirit came on the day of Pentecost to fill God's people.

We're going to look more closely at Acts chapter 2. This is one of the most misunderstood portions in all the Bible. There are people who even will take their denominational name from the day of Pentecost. But actually, if you look at what it says about what happened on Pentecost, then that's a misnomer.

I'll explain. You'll see in Acts chapter 2 from verse 1, and when the day of Pentecost was fully come, that's the day of the Feast that's mentioned in Leviticus 23. They, that's the believers, 120 of them, were all with one accord in one place.

Isn't that a beautiful statement? They were all with one accord in one place. There were no factions, there was no division, there was no fighting, no backbiting, no murmuring, no complaining. Didn't last, mind you, when you come to Acts chapter 6. There were problems already and it was about a very petty thing.

But nevertheless, we should take account and take note of this. 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 running about and hanging from the rafters.

No, no, no. Where they were sitting. This was a dignified occasion.

But people say, we don't like churches like yours because it's too dignified. We don't like the fact that, you know, churches like yours, whenever they get a church building they put pews in it. We'd rather have a place where we can have a bit of a jamboree and we can all move about and dance about in the Spirit and feel free.

And we don't want to have hymnals because that only restricts the Spirit. You want to flash it up on a screen behind so you can have a hands-free service. That's what it's all about, friends.

But I want you to see this. When the Holy Ghost came at Pentecost it filled all the house where they were sitting. They were sitting.

This was a dignified occasion. They were doing things decently and in order. 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. All of them. Not just some.

All of them. And began to speak with other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance. Now what is this talking about? Well, it's obvious what it's talking about because when you read on it says, 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 watch it because that every man heard them speak in his own language. Ah, that's interesting, isn't it? This wasn't gibberish. This wasn't turkeys at Christmas.

This was a situation where men who had never been able to speak in those languages before could suddenly speak in those languages. Communicating truth. And people who were there from every nation under heaven the Bible says were able to hear them speak each of them in his own language.

By the way, the word that's used here is dialectos. It's the word from which we get dialect. So this is a really tremendous miracle that's taking place here because not only is Peter and James and John and so on speaking in a language that they'd never learned before but they were speaking it with the accent of the people.

With their accent. In their very dialect. So that if they were preaching in my home city of Belfast they would be preaching the word of God like that you know and saying eight instead of eight and grace instead of grace.

That's right. I'm being serious. In their own dialect.

I tell you folks that was a miracle. That doesn't happen in charismatic circles. It doesn't happen.

Never has happened. I remember a minister in our church back in Ulster challenged one of these neo-Pentecostal fellas. He said I want you to come with me down to the docks in Belfast where there are ships that come in from Poland and Russia and all these Eastern European countries.

That was Dr. John Douglas by the way who preached here last year. He said I want you to come with me and I want you to come down and exercise the biblical gift of tongues in preaching the gospel to these men. Well of course he didn't take up the challenge.

Because you see that is the gift of tongues. That is the gift. And it's given right here in Acts chapter 2. The Holy Ghost was given to fill God's people.

Now is it possible to be saved without being indwelt? No it's not. Is it possible to be saved but not to be filled with the Spirit? Yes it is. Yes it is.

Because the indwelling and the infilling are not exactly the same thing. Yes one leads to the other. But why would Paul write to the Ephesians in Ephesians 5 verse 18 Be not drunk with wine wherein is excess but be filled with the Spirit if they are already filled with the Spirit.

This is a command. And by the way it's in the present continuous tense in the Greek language which literally means keep on constantly continually being filled with the Spirit. It's not a one time thing.

Now notice they already had the Spirit within. How do I know that? Because I've read the book of Ephesians. I've read chapter 1 and verse 13 notice what it says there of Christ in whom ye also trusted after that ye heard the word of truth the gospel of your salvation in whom also after that ye believed ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise.

So they had already received the Holy Spirit. They were indwelt by the Spirit. But now Paul is saying keep on being filled with the Spirit.

We believe as a church in the infilling of indwelt believers by the Spirit for power to live and witness for Christ. That's taken directly from our articles of faith. We believe in that.

One thing that's very important here and I've already mentioned it and I want to emphasize it being filled with the Holy Ghost is not a one time experience. There are some who preach it as what they call a second work of grace subsequent to salvation and it makes you from that point on to live on a higher plane from other Christians and it's false. I want to tell you that.

It's a false doctrine. And I think it's based on not only a misunderstanding but probably also upon pride. The Bible says and the tense we've given it already in Ephesians 5.18 keep on constantly being filled with the Spirit.

Now that's borne out by the book of Acts. If you had time you could look with me at Acts not only Acts 2 verse 4 but Acts 4 verse 8 Acts 4 verse 31 and you see these repeated fillings of the Spirit. Now you might well ask how is it that you receive the infilling of the Spirit? For me one of the keys to this is one of the verses that's mentioned there in Acts chapter 4 one of the references there and it is Acts 4 verse 31 and when they had prayed.

It's simple isn't it? When they had prayed. If I want to be filled with the Holy Ghost to live and witness for Christ what do I do? Sit around and wait for tingly feelings in the end of my hands or something else like that? No, no, no. Look chapter 11 verse 13 the words of our Saviour.

Look 11 verse 13 If ye then being evil know how to give good gifts unto your children how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him? And He's talking to believers. It's right and it's proper. It's scriptural.

It's correct for us to pray Lord fill me with the Holy Ghost. But what are the evidences of being filled with the Spirit? Some people will say well the evidence of being filled with the Spirit is that you have the gift of tongues but that is not so. And we'll see that in a moment.

But Ephesians 5 I think gives the key to this because the verses that follow verse 18 talk about how believers are to live. Be filled with the Spirit. Doing what? Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God.

If you're filled with the Holy Ghost in other words you'll be full of the joy of the Lord singing and making melody not necessarily with your voice but in your heart unto the Lord. The joy of the Lord. You'll be joyful in the Lord if you're filled with the Spirit for the second fruit of the Spirit is what? Joy.

The fruit of the Spirit is love. Joy. Something else.

If you're filled with the Spirit you'll be full of the Spirit of thankfulness giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ there'll be a submissiveness in the heart of one who's filled with the Spirit. So many things here that have to do with being filled with the Holy Ghost wives being submitted to their husbands husbands loving their wives how's it going to happen if they're filled with the Spirit? If we have Spirit filled homes then things will be better in our homes they won't be perfect they'll be better if we're filled with the Spirit. May we seek not only daily and hourly but as my pastor said to me on one occasion moment by moment to be filled with the Spirit.

Now the third reason why the Holy Ghost was poured out at Pentecost was this to forward God's church. I think we need to again look at Acts chapter 2 and you see there that in verse 4 when they were all filled with the Holy Ghost they began to speak with other languages that's what the thought is there as the Spirit gave them utterance. There's an awful lot to use a good UK word an awful lot of rubbish taught today on the subject of tongues and their purpose.

Now it's far too large a subject to discuss in detail tonight but we need to be very clear on several points because I think there's a lot of damage done to the cause of Christ through what some men preach and their false and unscriptural view of this subject. For instance and I remember one time in my place of work being told by one of these fellas that I was not really a spiritual man because I did not speak in tongues. He said if you really want to serve God in power then you need to seek the tongues you need to seek the gift.

I had great joy in telling them that there's many places in Scripture where people were filled with the Holy Ghost and there's no mention of tongues. Tons of places. This is a complete fallacy that the evidence of somebody being filled with the Holy Ghost is that they speak in tongues.

This simply is not so. For instance if you look at the very book of Acts itself in chapter 7 and verse 55 it mentions my namesake for whom I was named by my mother Stephen and it says but he being full of the Holy Ghost looked up steadfastly into heaven and saw the glory of God and Jesus standing on the right hand of God. And there's no mention of any tongues there.

All he did was to speak to the Jews in their own language. And as a result of what he said he got stoned to death. No mention of tongues there.

You see that in the ministry of our Lord he was filled with the Spirit and yet there's no evidence anywhere that he ever spoke with these other languages. The Bible tells us of Zacharias and of Elizabeth the parents of John the Baptist that both of them were filled with the Holy Ghost that Mary the mother of Jesus was filled with the Holy Ghost. But there's no mention of tongues.

And so it is in many other places. But of course there's another false premise and that is that every believer ought to seek this gift. Every Christian should seek this gift.

I've had it said to me on more than one occasion. Every Christian needs the anointing. They need to be filled with the Spirit.

I agree with the first part. I also agree with the second part. But I don't agree with what they mean by that.

But look at 1 Corinthians 12 verse 30. Even in the days when these things were being practiced in the church and I am a cessationist I make no apology for that. There are even others in the Reformed camp who are not cessationists.

But we can agree on this. By the way a cessationist is a person who believes that these special gifts of the Spirit have ceased. Because the Word of God is complete.

That's my view. I'm in very good company as well if you want to study the matter. But anyhow it tells us there from verse 29 of 1 Corinthians 12 in a series of questions they're rhetorical questions.

Are all apostles? And what's the answer to that? No. Are all prophets? And the answer to that is no. Are all teachers? No.

Are all workers of miracles? No. Because John the Baptist never did any miracles. There's an interesting one.

John did no miracle. Yet the Bible says he was filled with the Holy Ghost from his mother's womb. Didn't do any miracles.

Would have been no good to Benny Hinn. Couldn't have had John the Baptist to visit for a campaign. That would have been no good whatsoever.

Doesn't do any miracles. How are we going to get a crowd? Have all the gifts of healing? Again the answer is no. Do all speak with tongues? The answer is no.

But covet earnestly the best gifts. And if you read the context, you'll find that the Lord sets the members of the body in the body as it pleases Him. And He gives the gifts to each of them as it pleases Him.

So the idea that every Christian should be seeking to speak with tongues is unscriptural. The early Christians did not all speak with tongues. And then of course there's another fallacy and that is that tongues actually are not a language that can be understood by men at all.

But it's a heavenly language. You're communicating with God in a heavenly language. Now that of course is built upon a complete misunderstanding of 1 Corinthians chapter 13 and verse 1. Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels.

And people grasp onto that. Oh there's a tongue of angels. And then when you come to chapter 14 of 1 Corinthians, there's constant reference to the word unknown.

Unknown tongue. And there's great play made of 1 Corinthians 14 verse 2. For he that speaketh in an unknown tongue speaketh not unto men, but unto God. For no man understandeth him, howbeit in the Spirit he speaketh mysteries.

And they'll say, well there it is. There's a heavenly language. Well, look at it.

The word unknown is in italics in your authorised version. The word tongue is the same word that's used in Acts 2. It's the word for language. For he that speaketh in a language.

And what Paul means by it being unknown is to be understood by what he says later on in the chapter. Because he says in verse 23, If therefore the whole church be come together into one place, and all speak with tongues, and there come in those that are unlearned or unbelievers, will they not say that ye are mad? What does he mean unlearned? He means people that have never learned that language. That's what he means.

If I were to stand at the front and preach in Chinese tonight, which I'm not capable of doing, there wouldn't be much point in you being here unless you could understand Chinese, right? Just as there wouldn't be much point in me going in and preaching in English to a congregation of people who can only speak Chinese. Well I may be speaking the truth, alright, and when I offer prayer I'm speaking the truth, but they don't know it. In the spirit, I'm speaking mysteries.

Because it's an unknown tongue. Unknown to them, that is. Not unknown on the earth.

Let's get this clear. This is not talking about a tongue or a language that is not known on the earth. It's unknown only because people have not learned it.

It's not a heavenly language. Not in any sense. This is not scriptural, this idea.

You'll find that the word for tongues in Acts 2, 4 is dialects, and these were actual foreign languages in use at that time, and it was not meaningless gibberish, but gospel preaching that was going forth. Gospel

preaching. And verse 6 of Acts 2 and verse 11 will prove that men heard in their own language the wonderful works of God.

I personally believe, and our church believes, that the gift of tongues has been removed since apostolic days, but even if it does exist, it's not being practiced in charismatic circles today. That's one thing that's absolutely certain. Their tongues are not based on Scripture, and while they might claim to be filled with the Spirit, it's not the Holy Spirit.

My personal belief is that in many cases it's just the exercise of the flesh. I've known people who supposedly spoke in tongues, and actually what they did was just learn to say something wrote after somebody else. And of course they went to that meeting expecting to get the gift, so they weren't disappointed when they got it.

They were able to make these sounds, but it's of absolutely zero benefit. Zero. There is such a thing as being filled with the Spirit, and when the Spirit fills God's people, He forwards the church by giving them power to preach the Gospel.

And that's one thing that we greatly desire today, and greatly mourn that it's not more prevalent. Look at Acts 1 verse 8. It's still in the Bible. It's still there.

Yes, it was spoken to the disciples, but we can certainly claim this promise. But ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you, and ye shall be witnesses unto me. That's the sign that you're filled with the Spirit.

You're a witness for Christ. The Holy Ghost has come to make us effective witnesses that souls might be saved. I agree with Martin Lloyd-Jones when he writes, Pentecost has never been repeated, but neither has it been removed and withdrawn.

The Holy Ghost, as Spurgeon said, is here. Where saints in prayer agree. The apostles, as you read Acts chapter 2, when the Spirit came, were instruments in the salvation of about 3,000 souls.

Wouldn't that be a wonderful thing, just to preach the Word simply and to see hundreds of people come to the Lord? People might say, Well, that'll never happen again. Who says it'll never happen again? Who says it will never happen again? Where do we find that in the Bible? That God has stopped saving souls. I love to read of the Covenanters, and I read of one particular man by the name of John Livingstone at a place called the Kirk of Shots, Kirk being the Scottish term for church, Shots being the town.

There was to be a communion occasion, a communion Thanksgiving Monday it was, on the 29th of June, 1629, if my memory serves me correctly. And that young man, John Livingstone, was only 17 years of age. He was not yet ordained to the ministry.

But he was asked by some of the leading preachers of the day if he would bring the message at the communion Thanksgiving. Scared the life out of him. Oh, I thought, I couldn't preach in front of these mighty men.

And this multitude and throng of people. So he started to run away. And if we were there, I could take you to the place where it happened.

He started to run over the fields until that church was getting smaller and smaller and was almost out of sight. And it was almost as if the Lord said to him, he didn't speak audibly, but it was almost as if the Lord said to him, John, if you don't turn around and go back and preach at that service, you will never preach again. And Livingstone said, with fear and trembling, he turned back and he came to that service and he preached.

He preached for over an hour and a half. He got liberty. They make me look short.

In preaching that is. Anyway, he preached and he said, at one point in preaching there, on Ezekiel chapter 36, I believe it is, where the Lord promises to pour out his spirit upon men. He said as he was preaching, some drops of rain started to fall and the people started to go for their shawls and their raincoats and their covers to cover their heads.

And in a flight of oratory he said, if that's what you'll do because of a few drops of rain, what will you do when the wrath of God is poured out upon you in the day of judgment? He began to preach powerfully the gospel. Do you know how many people were converted? Five hundred. You say, how do you know? Because a study was done some ten years after the event.

A follow-up of people who had professed faith that day on the 29th of June, all those years before, and they said they never found one single backslider. Not one. Five hundred people.

A seventeen-year-old preacher. That same man left Scotland and went to Ireland, to the northeastern part of Ireland, to about ten miles from where I lived in Hollywood County Down. Made a lot of sense, that guy.

John Livingstone had a similar experience at Hollywood County Down where they reckoned that a similar number came to know Christ through his sermon. And as an old man back in Scotland by this time, Livingstone said, there were only two times in my life when I ever really preached. Once at that Hollywood, and the other at that blessed Kirk of Shots.

Only two times. You know why he said that? Because those were two occasions when that man preached in the power of the Holy Ghost. And folks, that's what we need today.

We don't need programs, organization, better methods, better ideas, somebody to come and do a seminar. We need the Holy Ghost. That's what we need.

We need the Holy Ghost. After the Holy Ghost prayer meeting of Acts chapter 4, it says of them, they began to speak the word of God with boldness. Let us not allow the devil to sidetrack us into seeking false experiences.

Because for everything that's true, there's a counterfeit. I don't want the counterfeit. I want the true power of Pentecost.

The power that will make me a winner of souls. The power that will make my words powerful. Even though they're spoken in human simplicity.

When we think of the Old Testament feast of Pentecost, let us remind ourselves of why the Spirit of God came. He came to fill, to fulfill God's word. He came to fill God's people.

And he came to forward God's church. And may we see God's church forwarded, not by our power, but by his power, as we pray. Let's all pray.

O God, our gracious Father, thou hast challenged us afresh through thy word tonight. O God, how conscious we are that we can talk about the Holy Ghost. We can sing about the Holy Ghost.

We can converse with one another about the Holy Ghost. We can read about the Holy Ghost. But O Father, we pray, in this age of the Spirit, when thou hast sent the Comforter, O Lord, wilt thou pour out of thy Spirit, in power and in blessing.

O Lord, we just read the simple statements of thy precious word about this. How much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him? Lord, how much do we pray for the Holy Ghost in our services? How much do we pray for the power of the Holy Ghost upon our lives from day to day? Lord, do we even think, ere we get up in the morning, Lord, today, fill me with the Holy Ghost, that I might serve thee in power, that I might witness in power. Lord, we need, we need thy Spirit.

Father, we pray, send us a breath of thy Spirit. Lord, send us revival. Send us an awakening.

Send us, Lord, that which man could never in a million years manufacture, but which God himself can just speak forth in a moment. Lord, come suddenly to your temple. Glorify thy name.

We pray for Jesus' sake. Amen.

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