

**June 9, 2019**  
**Sermon Manuscript**

**Acts 1:1-9, 2:1-11**

<sup>1:1</sup> In the first book, O Theophilus, I have dealt with all that Jesus began to do and teach, <sup>2</sup> until the day when he was taken up, after he had given commands through the Holy Spirit to the apostles whom he had chosen. <sup>3</sup> He presented himself alive to them after his suffering by many proofs, appearing to them during forty days and speaking about the kingdom of God.

<sup>4</sup> And while staying with them he ordered them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Father, which, he said, “you heard from me;<sup>5</sup> for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.”

<sup>6</sup> So when they had come together, they asked him, “Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?” <sup>7</sup> He said to them, “It is not for you to know times or seasons that the Father has fixed by his own authority. <sup>8</sup> But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.” <sup>9</sup> And when he had said these things, as they were looking on, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight...

<sup>2:1</sup> When the day of Pentecost arrived, they were all together in one place. <sup>2</sup> And suddenly there came from heaven a sound like a mighty rushing wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. <sup>3</sup> And divided tongues as of fire appeared to them and rested on each one of them. <sup>4</sup> And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance.

<sup>5</sup> Now there were dwelling in Jerusalem Jews, devout men from every nation under heaven. <sup>6</sup> And at this sound the multitude came together, and they were bewildered, because each one was hearing them speak in his own language. <sup>7</sup> And they were amazed and astonished, saying, “Are not all these who are speaking Galileans? <sup>8</sup> And how is it that we hear, each of us in his own native language? <sup>9</sup> Parthians and Medes and Elamites and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, <sup>10</sup> Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya belonging to Cyrene, and visitors from Rome, <sup>11</sup> both Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabians—we hear them telling in our own tongues the mighty works of God.”

**A Biblical Theology of the Holy Spirit, Part 1: How Many Baptisms?**

So if we count the days beginning at Easter Sunday, today marks the fiftieth day, which is why today in the Church Calendar we commemorate the initial coming of the Holy Spirit upon believers 50 days after Jesus’ resurrection and 10 days after his ascension into heaven on the Jewish Feast of Pentecost. And this momentous occasion was described for us in chapter 2 of Acts in our first lesson today.

So it’s only natural that our focus today would be on the Holy Spirit. But what I’d hope to address in particular is the enormous amount of confusion or disagreement about the Holy Spirit that exists among believers today, in hopes of bringing us to a place of better understanding and greater unity.

Now, as far as I can tell, the primary root of most contemporary confusion about the Holy Spirit can be traced to the variety of responses to the Pentecostal and charismatic movements, which emerged in the Church a little more than a century ago. Just to give you a little background, in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century a movement emerged out of the Methodist tradition known as the Holiness movement<sup>a</sup>, which was distinguished by its emphasis on charismaticism, or the supernatural spiritual

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<sup>a</sup> It is notable that Methodism was a movement within Anglicanism led by John Wesley, and was known for its exuberance and openness to the supernatural spiritual gifts, but broke off from the Anglican Church in 1784. By 1850 the Methodists had become the largest denomination in America. But the more it had become mainstream the less comfortable some Methodists were with manifestations of the Holy Spirit. And as a result, there were two dozen break-off denominations in the 1880s alone. And these

gifts<sup>b</sup> – such as healing and miracles and the gift of tongues – that are described in the New Testament. But charismaticism began to gain in popularity and exposure after 1906, when a man named William Seymour held a revival at Azusa Street in Los Angeles where participants experienced a variety of supernatural manifestations of God. And this revival marked the beginning of what is now known as the Pentecostal movement.<sup>c</sup> But in the 1960 and 70s charismaticism began to extend beyond Pentecostal traditions to gain traction in pockets of Roman Catholicism as well as Anglicanism, including both the Episcopal Church and the Church of England.<sup>d</sup> And its influence remains in Anglicanism to this day. In fact, I myself came into Anglicanism through a charismatic Episcopal Church in Southern California<sup>e</sup>, and have had some of the experiences that are considered the hallmark of the movement

But as a consequence of this history, the present-day reality within Anglicanism and even here in our particular parish is that there will be some who have had supernatural experiences – such as speaking in tongues or miraculous healing – which they have identified as the work of the Spirit. And then there will be others who've never experienced anything like this and aren't quite sure what to make of people who have. So one common area of confusion may be a difficulty in understanding the faith experience of those on the opposite side of that fence from wherever you are.

But an even greater level of confusion resulting from the emergence of charismaticism is how to properly understand what the Bible reveals about when a believer receives the Holy Spirit and the relationship between Holy Spirit and baptism. You see, prior to 20<sup>th</sup> century Pentecostal movement, the Church's traditional teaching on this question had basically gone unchallenged, which is that everyone who trusts in Jesus for forgiveness and is baptized – that is, everyone who enters into a spiritual relationship with the risen Lord and submits to baptism in the Name of the Trinity – can all be assured they have received the Holy Spirit. Now, this doesn't mean that a person who has entered into relationship with Jesus, but not yet been baptized doesn't have the Holy Spirit,<sup>f</sup> but rather that for one to be *assured* they have received the Holy Spirit the orthodox<sup>g</sup> teaching has required the two elements of faith and baptism.

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new "Holiness" churches affirmed what they called the "second blessing" of the Holy Spirit (in which the Spirit would cleanse the believer from addiction to sin") and some even believed in a "Third Blessing" (that would empower the believer for mission).

<sup>b</sup> Greek: *charismata*

<sup>c</sup> In 1900, Holiness revival preacher Charles Fox Parham instructed his students to study the New Testament and discover whether any specific outward sign always accompanied what he assumed to be the "Third Blessing." After surveying the Book of Acts, his students reported that the gift of tongues seemed to be what signified this blessing, and that very night one of the students began to speak in a language that was believed to be Chinese. That is the night the 20th century Pentecostal movement was born. The notion tongues was the sign of this blessing was significant, because it gave those in the Holiness or Pentecostal traditions a clear boundary and test to determine whether someone was a full and complete Christian. In 1906 Pentecostalism swept to the West Coast when the Azusa Street revival was sparked under the ministry of a preacher who had learned under Parham (William Seymour). And in 1914 this baptism of the Holy Spirit hit some Baptists in Arkansas, leading to the formation of the Assemblies of God.

<sup>d</sup> In 1960, Dennis Bennett, an Episcopal priest in Van Nuys, CA experienced this "baptism in the Holy Spirit" and began to advocate for this in the Episcopal Church. An English priest named Michael Harper had had a similar experience and advocated for Charismaticism in the Church of England. And for the first decade or so it was met with a good deal of negativism. But by 1970 the movement had hit Roman Catholicism and many Episcopalians and Anglicans began to warm to it, and it became a movement that impacted individuals in many parish, including this one. However, in time Anglican Charismatics did begin to move away from the centrality of tongues as well as the idea of separate "Baptisms" and saw the gifts of the Holy Spirit as a fulfillment of God's promises in our one Baptism.

<sup>e</sup> St Jude's Church in Burbank

<sup>f</sup> There is actually explicit scriptural precedence for this in Acts 10:44-48

<sup>g</sup> There is a difference between 'Orthodox' and 'orthodox'. Capitalized, the word refers to the Eastern Orthodox Churches as a denomination. Without the capital letter, it... means 'conforming to established doctrine'... To be orthodox means to have the right opinion." (Thomas Mackenzie, *The Anglican Way*, 2014)

However, in contrast to this, in the Pentecostal movement and in much of charismaticism<sup>h</sup> the Christian journey instead tends to be presented as including two distinct milestones of 1) forgiveness of sins and 2) being filled with the Spirit (understood as receiving the Holy Spirit in full), and that each of these events is marked by their own separate baptisms. It is typically taught that one first receives that baptism of repentance with water – and is thereby forgiven of their sins and adopted into the family of God – but that after that a second “Baptism of the Holy Spirit” should be sought from the Lord where one will either receive the Holy Spirit for the first time or more fully receive the Holy Spirit. And I should add that it is typically taught that the evidence that this second baptism has been achieved is the gift of speaking in tongues.<sup>i</sup>

But the problem with the discrepancy between these two teachings - the traditional doctrine that ties the full reception of the Holy Spirit to one single baptism and the Pentecostal teaching that there are two baptisms – is that **both doctrines cannot be true**. Either there is one baptism or there are two; either a person can be assured of having fully received the Holy Spirit at the time of water baptism or there is a second level that needs to be achieved.

So today my aim is to reduce some of the confusion surrounding all of this by exploring how each of these positions line up with the witness of Scripture, in hopes of bringing greater clarity as to whether believers should anticipate a second baptism or not. However, for any of us who believe we have had supernatural experiences or possess supernatural gifts of the spirit should understand that I will not be seeking to either confirm or deny those experiences. Instead, I’m hoping to equip us to be sure we are employing biblical categories to make sense of such experiences, whether they be ours or someone else’s.

But if we earnestly desire to the truth about these matters, what I must emphasize before proceeding is the importance of us seeking to determine what truths the Bible actually intends to communicate about these matters and be careful not to read our own perspective into verses of scripture where it’s not supported by the surrounding context. So to do this I’ll be employing the help of Frederick Bruner, who in his work on the Holy Spirit<sup>j</sup> has sought to determine just that: what the Bible actually says about the third person of the Holy Trinity, the Holy Spirit. #

So to do this, we’ll be looking at some of the lectionary passages appointed for today, and there are also a few more passages in the box on your bulletin insert that I may make reference to. But where I want to begin is with the primary passage for Pentecost that describes the occasion when the Holy Spirit first came upon believers: our reading from the book of Acts. #

You’ll notice I began this passage by adding a little context with a portion we read last week from chapter 1. There, Luke introduces the book of Acts by explaining that it will be a sequel to his Gospel, the Gospel of Luke. But then in verse 4 Luke picks the story back up when Jesus is about to ascend into heaven, but first Jesus instructs the Apostles to remain in Jerusalem and to wait for the promised Holy Spirit. And then in verse 8 Jesus re-emphasizes this promise, saying, “You will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and” – then he commissions them – “you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.” And only after saying these things was Jesus then lifted up and taken out of their sight (1:9).

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<sup>h</sup> Bruner: “Thus Pentecost according to Pentecostals – we may even say the doctrine of the Holy Spirit according to Pentecostals – is essentially the *experience* of the Holy Spirit, and the experience of the Holy Spirit in a special way: specifically, the post-conversion *filling* of the Holy Spirit, as evidence initially by *speaking in other tongues* through fulfilling conditions of *absolute obedience and faith*” (57)

<sup>i</sup> See footnote ‘c’ above for the historical background on this

<sup>j</sup> Frederick Dale Bruner, *A Theology of the Holy Spirit*, Eerdmans: 1974.

So here the Apostles have been left in some limbo, but only for about ten days, as the reading then takes us forward to the beginning of chapter two, when the Jewish Feast Day of Pentecost has arrived<sup>k</sup> and Jesus' apostles<sup>l</sup> are gathered together in one place. And verse 2 says,

“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.”

So when the Holy Spirit first comes upon the Apostles, this is accompanied by a loud sound like a mighty wind coming from heaven and flames of fire alighting upon each one of them. But in addition to these audible and visual signs, the Apostles are also given the miraculous ability to speak in the tongues of other nations existing at that time, such as “Parthians and Medes and...Cretans and Arabians”.

And this miracle turns out to be quite timely and useful, because there just so happens to be people present in Jerusalem from those nations, whose native languages are these other tongues. And the reason is because, every year on the Feast of Pentecost, Jews from all over the known world would make pilgrimage to Jerusalem.<sup>m</sup> So the Holy Spirit enables the Apostles to speak to these pilgrims in their native languages about “the mighty works of God”. And this certainly gets these pilgrims' attention – verse 6 says at first they were “bewildered”, and then verse 7 says “they were amazed and astonished”. So, having gotten their attention, if we were to read on in chapter 2 *beyond our passage*, Peter proceeds to preach them a sermon about Jesus' death and resurrection, which leads about 3,000 of them to respond by turning in faith to Jesus through repentance and being baptized. #

So the Holy Spirit's arrival immediately kick-starts the Apostles' into fulfilling Jesus' commission to be his witnesses to those in Jerusalem and all the way to the ends of the earth. And this Pentecost event has been viewed by many as a profound reversal of both the dispersion and confusion of languages precipitated by the Tower of Babel from Genesis 11.<sup>n</sup> #

So the proponents of both the one baptism and two baptism positions each employ this Pentecost passage to support their positions. The one baptism camp would say that once the Holy Spirit came this initial time at Pentecost following Pentecost, after that everyone who turns to Jesus and is baptized with water will receive the Holy Spirit. But those who argue there is a second baptism – the Baptism of Holy Spirit – believe this is what is occurring in Acts 2, as you'll note that verse 2:4 says the Apostles were “*filled* with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues”.

However, there are some important elements of the Baptism of the Holy Spirit doctrine that this text fails to supported. First, it is commonly taught that the baptism of the Holy Spirit is something that must be sought or asked for – or in particular the ability to speak in tongues should be sought, if it's the primary evidence for the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Yet, here the Apostles do nothing of the sort. They neither ask for the Holy Spirit or for the ability to speak in tongues.<sup>o</sup> *Instead*, the language

<sup>k</sup> The Day of Pentecost, known in the Old Testament as the Feast of Weeks, was appointed for 50 days after the first day of Passover.

<sup>l</sup> The “they” referred to in Acts 2:1 refers to the 12 apostles (including Matthias), as opposed to all of the 120 believers mentioned in Acts 1:15. Note that Acts 2:43b designates the Apostles as the ones doing the signs, saying, “and many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles.”

<sup>m</sup> If you're wondering why so many Jews lived in such faraway lands at this time, it was because in 586 B.C. Jerusalem had fallen to the Babylonians and the large majority of Jews were forced into exile in Parthia (Northeastern Iran). Well, even though within a hundred years after that exile the Jews were permitted to return to Israel, many of them didn't. Many chose to remain in Parthia, while others moved on to settle in these other locations across the Mediterranean (listed in Acts 2:9-10). But three times a year, for the three major Jewish feasts, Jews from all over the Mediterranean would come on pilgrimage to Jerusalem. And though Pentecost was the least popular of those feasts, even then Jerusalem was still very crowded with pilgrims.

<sup>n</sup> See sermon from May 20, 2018.

<sup>o</sup> And Bruner notes that they don't seek or ask for this in Acts 8 or 10 either.

Luke uses is entirely the language of a divine gift. Chapter 1, verse 8 Jesus promises the Holy Spirit will “come upon” them. In chapter 2 the sounds comes from heaven and the divided tongues of fire rest upon them. Moreover, we should note the Holy Spirit comes to every believer gathered there – there aren’t some who qualify and others who don’t; it is entirely a gift bestowed upon *whomever* believes.<sup>p</sup>

But I should also clarify that Luke (the writer of the Acts) also seems to ***distinguish*** this miraculous ability the Apostles are given in Acts 2 to speak in other languages – to distinguish it – from the *spiritual gift* of tongues, which some believers are described as possessing for example in 1 Corinthians 12:10 (on your insert)<sup>a</sup>. You see, in Acts 2:4 Luke uses the word ‘other’ – the word ‘heterais’ in the Greek – in front of the word tongues to refer to the languages of other nations, where in the two places the *spiritual gift* of tongues is mentioned in the book of Acts – in chapters 10 and 19 – Luke leaves off this word “other”.<sup>q</sup> And, in those instances, the implication is that those *spiritual gift of tongues* is an ability to speak in a language not of this world, since foreign-language speakers are not being engaged in those contexts.<sup>r</sup>

So given that Acts 2 neither supports the notion of a “Baptism of the holy spirit” needing to be sought<sup>s</sup> **or** of it being evidenced by the spiritual gift of tongues<sup>t</sup>, we have every reason to read Acts 2 as a one-time miraculous episode where the Holy Spirit facilitates the Apostles being able to witness the gospel to peoples present from other nations.<sup>u</sup> In other words, just as Jesus did miraculous signs to aid ministry in Luke’s Gospel, so the Holy Spirit will be doing in Luke’s second book of Acts.

But what about the Pentecostal notion of a two-tiered Christianity: that there is this basic level of Christianity with just Jesus – or maybe with a little of the Spirit, but not all of Him – but then after that we can seek this more advanced level Christianity and be *filled* with the Holy Spirit, which is understood as receiving all of the Holy Spirit? Well, let’s step back and review for a moment what has happened here in these first two chapters of Acts. In chapter 1, before ascending heaven, Jesus commissions His Apostles – he gives them a task – to be his “witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth” (1:8). However, this is actually a task that they are completely powerless to accomplish without him. Jesus had told them in John 15 that apart from him they would be unable to bear *any* fruit!<sup>v</sup> But then he leaves!! But what happens once the Holy Spirit comes ten days later? The Apostles immediately begin bearing fruit, in a very obvious, miraculous way. Well, what this demonstrates is what may seem to some like a very obvious truth: that this Holy Spirit is the spirit of Jesus. When the Holy Spirit descends upon the Apostles, this is no less than the spirit of Jesus.

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<sup>p</sup> Bruner: “The means used by Luke to this point to define the gift of the Spirit 0 whether in verbs (indicative, passive inclusive second person plural), nouns (‘promise,’ ‘gift’), or even prepositions (‘upon’) – all point to the pure grace and divinity of the Holy Spirit.” (169)

<sup>q</sup> Acts 10:46a – <sup>46</sup> *For they were hearing them speaking in tongues and extolling God.*

Acts 19:6 <sup>6</sup> *And when Paul had laid his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came on them, and they began speaking in tongues and prophesying.*

<sup>r</sup> Bruner notes: “There was no one present at Caesarea (acts 10) or Ephesus (Acts 19) who needed a speaking in other languages;; only at Pentecost do we have that record.

<sup>s</sup> Bruner: “In the first place it is important to observe that the Holy Spirit, according to the text, was *not* given because he was asked for. This is sometimes overlooked. The disciples asked for boldness in speaking the Word. Nevertheless – or therefore! – the result *is* the filling of the spirit. Interestingly, there is no record in Acts of men praying that they might receive the holy spirit. We may be sure that it is proper, indeed desirable, for believers to ask for the Spirit continually (so Luke 11:33), but it is not necessary to do so in so many words in order to have the Spirit’s presence of assistance, as (Acts 4:31) teaches.” (171)

<sup>t</sup> See the end of the note on Acts 8 in the appendix.

<sup>u</sup> Bruner observes: “The initial Pentecost even did not institute replicas, it institutes Christian preaching and Baptist. It is not little Pentecosts that are either here recorded or are in Acts intended to follow the one Pentecost. Pentecost endows the church with Word and sacrament.” (169-70)

<sup>v</sup> In John 15:5b Jesus tells his disciples, “Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing.”

And this is supported by what Jesus had said when he was preparing the disciples for all of this back in John 14 after the Last Supper. There, in verse 16 he promises, “I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper, to be with you forever, even the Spirit of truth.” But then in v18, as he assures them, “I (Jesus) will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you...” And in Romans 8, our second lesson, verses 9 and 11 affirm that the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of Jesus as well.

And this must be true, because while the Holy Spirit is a *different* person within the Trinity, the Father, Son, & Holy Spirit are still all the same one God. Therefore, one must conclude that making distinction between coming into spiritual relationship with Jesus and receiving the Holy Spirit is in opposition to the witness of scripture. Furthermore, any suggestion that someone might receive only *part* of the Holy Spirit at first and then receive Him in full at a later even violates the logic that the Holy Spirit is a person, and a person cannot be divided up into percentages or fractions; it’s all or nothing.  
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But what about the relationship between receiving the Holy Spirit and baptism? Well, instead of affirming any notion there are two baptisms, scripture seems instead to affirm the traditional position that everyone who enters into a spiritual relationship with Jesus and is baptized can be assured they have received the Holy Spirit.

And one example in support of this is the baptism of none other than Christ himself. In that episode, which I’ve included on your insert from Matthew 3, where the Holy Spirit descends on Jesus like a dove and the Father says from heaven, “This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased.” So here Jesus has both his status as God’s son affirmed<sup>w</sup> and the Holy Spirit fall upon Him in that single event.

But a second example comes in Acts chapter 2 in the sermon that follows the apostles speaking of the mighty works of God in the native languages of the Jewish pilgrims. There, in 2:38 in the box on your insert, Peter links repentance, baptism and the reception of the Holy Spirit all together, saying in 2:38, “Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.”<sup>x</sup> And, as **Bruner says, the implication is that from that point forward baptism is Pentecost, that anyone who has** trusted in Jesus and been baptized can be assured they have received the Holy Spirit.<sup>y</sup> ##

So if the baptism of the Holy Spirit is unbiblical, this doesn’t mean that if you’ve had a supernatural experience that you’ve thought of as being “the Baptism of the Holy Spirit” or were taught that’s what it was, this doesn’t mean those experiences weren’t real or valid. I merely want to suggest we seek out categories other than “the baptism of the Holy Spirit” to talk about those experiences or to teach about the Christian life to others.

But some may wonder, “Well what’s it really matter if a person wants to interpret their experience as a second baptism? Or call it that?” Well, words matter. And in this instance they especially do. And let me explain why.

First, any time a mindset is adopted that divides Christianity into two tiers, this will inevitably encourage the bad fruit of those who think themselves on the top tier looking down upon others who they believe are on the bottom tier. And if *that* is the outcome Pentecost, it hasn’t reversed the

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<sup>w</sup> Jesus obviously didn’t have any sin to repent of, but he submitted to John the Baptist’s baptism of repentance partly as a model to us.

<sup>x</sup> Paul’s writing provides another example, where he links adoption to faith and baptism in Galatians 3:26 and adoption to the reception of the Holy Spirit in Romans 8:15-16...

Gal 3:25-26 - <sup>25</sup> But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a guardian, <sup>26</sup> for in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith. <sup>27</sup> For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ.

Romans 8:15-16 - <sup>15</sup> For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, “Abba! Father!” <sup>16</sup> The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God...

<sup>y</sup> Of course it can be understood that a person who has trusted in Jesus could have received the Holy Spirit prior to baptism (there explicit scriptural precedence for this in Acts 10:44-48), but for *assurance* of having received the Holy Spirit scripture sets forth the two requirements of faith and baptism.

division from Babel, it's made it worse!!! So for any of us believes we possess one or more of the miraculous spiritual gifts – whether tongues or something else – then well and good. But we must be careful not to interpret this as being indicative of any sort of spiritual achievement; such things are gifts from God, not something we've earned.

But the second baptism doctrine's bad fruit doesn't stop there. You see, if there are two tiers of Christianity and the first tier is entered into by faith in Christ, then a second tier is inevitably going to have to require something beyond faith alone through grace alone in Christ alone.<sup>z</sup> And Bruner's research into theologians advocating for the Baptism of the Holy Spirit bears this out, as all of them end up prescribing conditions in addition to faith that must be met in order to receive this Baptism of the Holy Spirit.<sup>aa</sup> For example,

- Some have said that to receive the Baptism of the Holy Spirit a person has to expect it or have intense desire for it,
- others have said you must have others who have been filled in the spirit pray for you to receive it,
- others that one must separate themselves from people who are especially sinful,
- or reach a state of complete obedience,
- or of complete surrender or emptying of oneself

In these traditions, people who are unable to demonstrate they've been baptized in the Spirit by the supposed evidence of tongues are frequently asked questions like: "Have you obeyed God fully? Have you yielded to him at every point?"<sup>bb</sup> So it is often framed that one can have faith toward Christ, which may or may not be total, but one must have a faith toward the Holy Spirit, which should or must approach "total faith" in order to be given the Baptism of the Holy Spirit. So where the teaching ends up is that *there is faith, and then there is FAITH*, this higher level of total faith or ultimate faith. So the upshot of this teaching is that while one is saved by grace through faith alone – that's level 1 Christianity – but beyond that there is a further tier that requires next-level faith. But this is contrary to the gospel! This is different from the gospel put forth in Holy Scripture.

<sup>z</sup> Ephesians 2:8 "For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast"

<sup>aa</sup> Bruner's survey of most of the most prominent theologian proponents of the Baptism of the Holy Spirit reveals (92):

There appear to be as many suggested conditions for the reception of the baptism in the Holy Spirit as there are, in fact, advocates of the doctrine. The following are representative lists.

<i>Skibstedt</i>	<i>Conn</i>	<i>Pearlman</i>
Worship	Separation from sin	Right attitude
Joyous faith	Repentance and baptism	Prayer of Christian workers
Earnest expectation	Hearing of faith	United prayers of the church
Praise and thanksgiving	Obedience	Purification by faith
Unconditional obedience	Intense desire	Individual prayer
Unity	Asking of God	Obedience
Endurance		
<i>Baur</i>	<i>Riggs</i>	<i>Gee</i>
Prayer	Regeneration	Repentance
Faith	Obedience	Baptism
Separation from sin	Prayer	Faith <sup>52</sup>
Separation from sinners	Faith	
Reparation and restitution		

<sup>52</sup> Skibstedt, *Geistestaufe*, pp. 104-13; Conn, *Pillars*, pp. 96-104; Pearlman, *Doctrines*, pp. 316-19; Baur in Dalton, *Tongues Like As of Fire*, pp. 73-74; Riggs, *Spirit Himself*, pp. 102-12; Gee, *Gift*, pp. 55, 57. The lists could be continued indefinitely.

<sup>bb</sup> Bruner 103

And Bruner contends that in this way the doctrine of the Baptism of the Holy Spirit and tongues as evidence bears the marks of the demands by some in the early Church for **circumcision**, which was renounced at the Council of Jerusalem in Acts 15 and later railed against by Paul, because it requires fulfillment of conditions beyond mere faith in Christ. And Bruner observes that whenever the gospel has been supplemented, that supplement become the new center for those adherents, rather than Christ. And one could argue this was true not only for circumcision party of the first century Church, but for many who proclaim the Baptism of the Holy Spirit today. #

So the notion of a two-tiered Christianity is unbiblical. However, there is a distinction put forth by scripture in regard to the Holy Spirit, but is not between those believers who have the full Holy Spirit and those who don't. Instead, it's a decision set before every believer all the time between what Paul calls the "life of the Spirit" and the "life of the (sinful) flesh" such as in our second lesson from Romans 8 today. Here, Paul is *taking for granted* that all believers have the Holy Spirit. He says in verse 9, "Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him". So when scripture talks about being "filled" with the Spirit,<sup>cc</sup> this is really a day-by-day, hour-by hour, and moment-by-moment opportunity before each one of us to live with an awareness that Christ is with us, and in accordance with his truth, and in reliance on his power for victory over sin and to live in love of our neighbor. Verse 5 says, "For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit. For to set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace."

So for those hearing this today who have never had any mystical experiences or possessed any supernatural spiritual gifts, the good news is that there is nothing inferior about you. Providing spiritual gifts and experiences are entirely the Lord's prerogative. And we'll dig more deeply into the place and purpose of them in our second part next week.

I'm sure there are many of us who have had passages on the Holy Spirit like Acts 2 presented to us not in ways that seem to demand we prove how spiritual we are; and thus present not as a blessing, but a curse. But the good news is that the life of Christian discipleship consists of just one single tier, following Christ or not. And every one of us are equally in need of His grace and His Help to do that, to love God and our neighbor and to not make a complete mess of things. And that why He has imparted His Holy Spirit to us.

In the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, amen.

#### **Appendix A: Excerpts of Bruner's exegesis of other relevant texts**

##### **Acts 5:32**

*"And we are witnesses to these things, and so is the Holy Spirit, whom God has given to those who obey him."*

Bruner: "The obedience spoken of in Acts 5:32 rather than being a condition is the result of the gift of the Holy Spirit. The text does *not* say either that the Holy Spirit *will* be given to those who shall obey him, or that the Holy Spirit *was* given to those who previously obeyed him, but interestingly and suggestively, that the Holy Spirit was given in the past to those who are *now* obeying him. The text reads literally: 'and so is the Holy Spirit whom God gave (past tense) to those who are (present tense)

obeying him.' One meaning of the text is at least this: obedience is the present *result* of the *prior* gift of the Spirit." (172)

##### **Acts 8:14-17**

*<sup>14</sup> Now when the apostles at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent to them Peter and John, <sup>15</sup> who came down and prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit, <sup>16</sup> for he had not yet fallen on any of them, but they had only been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. <sup>17</sup> Then they laid their hands on them and they received the Holy Spirit.*

"In the account of the Samaritan conversion we have the only record in the New Testament of persons who believed, accepted Christian baptism, and had nevertheless not yet received the Holy

<sup>cc</sup> See appendix note on Ephesians 5:18



Spirit...”

“It was evidently not the divine plan, according to Luke’s understanding, that the first church outside Jerusalem should arise entirely without apostolic contact. For this to have occurred could have indicated the indifference of the apostolic tradition...and of the unity of the church. Both the traditions and the union were preserved through (this) apostolic visitation. The Samaritans were not left to become an isolated sect with no bond of union with the apostolic church in Jerusalem. If a Samaritan Church and a Jewish church had arisen independently, side by side, without the dramatic removal of the ancient and bitter barriers between the two, particularly at the level of ultimate authority, the young church of God would have been in schism from the inception of its mission. “Furthermore, speaking in tongues is not mentioned in the text. If it were Luke’s of the early church’s conviction that no one should suppose he had received the Holy Spirit until he had spoken in tongues... why does Luke so consistently fail to mention this *sine qua non*?” (173-4, 176, 179)

#### Acts 19:1-7

*And it happened that while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul passed through the inland country and came to Ephesus. There he found some disciples. <sup>2</sup> And he said to them, “Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?” And they said, “No, we have not even heard that there is a Holy Spirit.” <sup>3</sup> And he said, “Into what then were you baptized?” They said, “Into John’s baptism.” <sup>4</sup> And Paul said, “John baptized with the baptism of repentance, telling the people to believe in the one who was to come after him, that is, Jesus.” <sup>5</sup> On hearing this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. <sup>6</sup> And when Paul had laid his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came on them, and they began speaking in tongues and prophesying. <sup>7</sup> There were about twelve men in all.*

Bruner: “Apostolic laying on of hands, tongues, and prophecy all occurred with the coming of the Spirit here. All accompanied the gift tangentially; none is taught as the Spirit’s precondition either essentially or peripherally and none is sought by or required of the Ephesians disciples. The teaching of Acts 19:1-7 is that the Ephesians lacked the Holy Spirit due to no failure to summon, intentionally, either apostles, full surrender, or tongues, but unintentionally in having been baptized into John’s baptism rather than into Jesus Christ’s.

“As in Acts 8 and 10, so here in Acts 19 eloquently,

the reverse of either a conditional, second, spiritual baptism or a sought required initial spiritual evidence is taught. Christian baptism with its coefficient of faith in Christ and the gift of the Spirit is the burden and the light of this passage. That the Ephesian converts here spoke in tongues is merely interesting – nothing more. (212)

#### Ephesians 5:18

*“And do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery, but be filled with the Spirit...”*

Bruner observes this verse is “often used to teach Christians that they have less of the Holy Spirit than the fullness offered at Pentecostal baptism in the Holy Spirit.” But he explains: “It needs only to be pointed out that this verb contemplates not the once-for-all reception of the Holy Spirit (in that case the aorist imperative would have been used), but the Christian’s present and continuing responsibility and privilege of *being* (passive) filled with the Spirit.” (171)

#### Appendix B: Hymn lyrics for “There’s a Spirit In The Air”

1. There's a spirit in the air / telling Christians everywhere: / 'Praise the love that Christ revealed / living, working, in our world!' (x2)
2. Lose your shyness, find your tongue / tell the world what God has done: / God in Christ has come to stay. / Live tomorrow's life today! (x2)
3. When believers break the bread, / when a hungry child is fed, praise the love that Christ revealed, / living, working, in our world. (x2)
4. Still the Spirit gives us light, / seeing wrong and setting right: / God in Christ has come to stay. / Live tomorrow's life today! (x2)
5. When a stranger's not alone, / where the homeless find a home, / praise the love that Christ revealed, / living, working, in our world. (x2)
6. May the Spirit fill our praise, / guide our thoughts and change our ways. / God in Christ has come to stay. / Live tomorrow's life today! (x2)