

FAITHFUL TO THE WORD

Systematic Theology Series

PNEUMATOLOGY

The Doctrine of the Holy Spirit

UNIT 4: THE HOLY SPIRIT AND THE LIFE OF CHRIST

Lesson 10

The Spirit, the Resurrection, and Pentecost

The Spirit Who Raised Christ and Was Sent by Christ

The Epoch-Making Outpouring That Changed Everything

Key Texts: Romans 8:11; John 16:7; Acts 1:8; Acts 2:1–21, 33; John 7:37–39

“Having Received from the Father the Promise of the Holy Spirit, He Has Poured Forth This”

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Series Verse

*“But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes,
He will guide you into all the truth;
for He will not speak on His own initiative,
but whatever He hears, He will speak;
and He will disclose to you what is to come.”*

John 16:13, NASB 1995

Introduction

Lesson 9 traced the Spirit's presence across the entire arc of Jesus' earthly life, from the miraculous conception in Mary's womb to the supreme pneumatological act of the cross. Every dimension of Christ's incarnate existence was marked by the Spirit's presence, enabling, and mediation. Lesson 10 completes Unit 4 by moving through the final sequence of pneumatological events in the life of Christ: the resurrection, the post-resurrection ministry and promise, the ascension, and the outpouring of Pentecost. These are not the concluding footnotes to the Spirit's Christological work; they are the pneumatological hinge upon which the entire New Testament turns, the transition from everything that the Spirit has done in and for Christ to everything that the Spirit will do in and for the church.

Pentecost is the pneumatological event of the New Testament in the sense that it is the event to which all previous pneumatological history has been pointing and from which all subsequent pneumatological experience flows. The creation pneumatology of Lesson 6, the Old Covenant selective empowerments of Lesson 7, the prophetic promises of Lesson 8, and the Christological Spirit-ministry of Lesson 9 all converge on a single Sunday morning in Jerusalem when the sound of the mighty wind rushed through the house and tongues of fire rested on the disciples and they began to speak in other languages as the Spirit gave them utterance. This was not a religious enthusiasm. This was not a spontaneous spiritual revival. This was the fulfillment of every Old Testament pneumatological promise, the direct consequence of the ascension and exaltation of the Son, and the inauguration of the New Covenant age of the Spirit in which the church has lived ever since.

The central theological argument of this lesson is one of the most important in all of Pneumatology, and it has profound practical implications: Pentecost is a unique, once-for-all, unrepeatable redemptive-historical event, not a model for subsequent individual or corporate Spirit-reception, not a pattern for second-blessing experiences, not a template for tongues-speaking as normative Christian evidence, and not a moment to be tarried for or prayed toward. It is the epoch-making turning point in salvation history at which the New Covenant age was inaugurated, the church was constituted as the Spirit-indwelt temple of God, and the global mission was empowered. Like the resurrection and the ascension, it happened once and its effects are permanent. Every New Covenant believer since Pentecost has been born into the pneumatological age that Pentecost inaugurated and has received the Spirit that Pentecost poured out. There is no Pentecost to seek; there is a Pentecost to inhabit.

This lesson proceeds through five essential movements: the Spirit's role in the resurrection; Jesus' post-resurrection pneumatological promise and its relationship to His ascension; the theology of Pentecost as a redemptive-historical event; the three-part significance of Pentecost (New Covenant inauguration, constitution of the church as Spirit-temple, empowerment for global mission); and the critical negative definition, what Pentecost is not, which guards against the distortions that have characterized the modern Charismatic movement's reading of the event.

I. The Spirit and the Resurrection of Christ

Romans 8:11, The Spirit Who Raised Jesus Is the Spirit Who Dwells in You

A. The Pneumatological Dimension of the Resurrection

The resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead is attributed in the New Testament to each Person of the Holy Trinity, reflecting the unity of the divine action in redemption. The Father raised the Son (Romans 6:4; Galatians 1:1; Ephesians 1:20). The Son raised Himself (John 10:18: “I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again”). And the Spirit raised the Son, a pneumatological claim that is most explicitly stated in Romans 8:11: “If the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you” (NASB 1995). The verse presupposes the Spirit’s role in the resurrection as an established fact and deploys it as the ground for a future eschatological promise: the same Spirit who raised Jesus will raise believers.

The pneumatological agency of the resurrection is further indicated by 1 Peter 3:18, which states that Christ “was put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the Spirit.” The contrast between flesh and Spirit in this verse is not a contrast between body and soul within Christ (as if His body died while His spirit survived); it is a contrast between the two modes of existence, the mode of weakness and mortality (flesh) and the mode of divine power and life (Spirit). Christ was put to death according to the conditions of creaturely existence; He was raised according to the power of the Spirit, the divine, life-giving, creative power of the Third Person who is, as Lesson 6 established, the source of all creaturely life and the One who renews the face of the ground (Psalm 104:30).

The resonances between the Spirit’s role in the resurrection of Christ and His earlier roles in the pneumatological narrative are rich and mutually illuminating. The same Spirit who hovered over the primordial void and brought order and life from chaos (Genesis 1:2) hovers over the sealed tomb and brings resurrection life from death. The same Spirit who breathed the breath of life into Adam’s clay (Genesis 2:7) breathes resurrection life into the crucified body of the Second Adam. The same Spirit who brought new life into the valley of dry bones in Ezekiel’s great vision (Ezekiel 37:9–10) brings the ultimate new life into the bones of the crucified and buried Son. The resurrection is not a pneumatological novelty; it is the eschatological consummation of the same Spirit-life that the Spirit has been imparting to the created order from the very beginning.

B. The Resurrection as the Pneumatological Pledge for Believers

Paul’s pneumatological argument in Romans 8:11 moves from the past (the Spirit raised Jesus) to the present (the Spirit dwells in you) to the future (the Spirit will give life to your mortal bodies). The structure of the argument is built on the identity of the Spirit in both cases: the same Spirit who raised Christ is the Spirit who indwells believers, and because He is the same Spirit, the resurrection that He accomplished in Christ is the guarantee of the resurrection that He will accomplish in those who are united to Christ by faith. The Spirit is not merely the power that raised Jesus; He is the personal, permanent, eschatological guarantor that what He did in the Head He will do in the members.

This pneumatological pledge for the believer's resurrection is one of the most practically powerful pneumatological truths in the entire New Testament. The Spirit who dwells within the believer today is not a temporary houseguest who will eventually depart; He is the *arrabōn*, the down payment, the earnest, the first installment, of the full eschatological redemption that includes the resurrection and glorification of the body. Romans 8:23 makes the connection explicit: "not only this, but also we ourselves, having the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our body." The Spirit who raised Christ is the firstfruits of the resurrection harvest that will be fully reaped when Christ returns.

II. The Post-Resurrection Promise and the Necessity of the Ascension

John 16:7 and Acts 1:8, Why Jesus Had to Go

A. John 16:7, It Is to Your Advantage That I Go Away

In the Farewell Discourse, Jesus makes a statement that must have seemed to the disciples incomprehensible and even offensive: "But I tell you the truth, it is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I go, I will send Him to you" (John 16:7, NASB 1995). The disciples have spent three years in the physical presence of the incarnate Son of God, hearing His teaching, witnessing His miracles, receiving His instruction, experiencing the extraordinary privilege of immediate access to the Word made flesh. And Jesus tells them that it is better for them if He goes.

The pneumatological logic of this claim is crucial. The physical, localized presence of the incarnate Christ is necessarily limited by the conditions of the incarnation: Jesus in His human body can be in only one place at a time, can teach only those who are physically present with Him, can comfort only those who are within earshot of His voice. The Spirit, by contrast, is omnipresent, and when poured out upon the church after the ascension, He will be simultaneously and wholly present with every believer in every place on earth, in every generation of the church's history, without any of the spatial and temporal limitations that necessarily constrain an embodied human presence. The Paraclete, the Helper, Advocate, Comforter, who comes after Jesus' departure will be what Jesus was to the Twelve, but universally and permanently: the immediate, intimate, personally present divine Helper of every member of the community that Jesus has gathered.

There is also a deeper Trinitarian logic to the necessity of Jesus' going. The Spirit is not sent until the Son has completed His redemptive mission: the cross, the resurrection, and the ascension to the Father's right hand. The outpouring of the Spirit is the direct fruit of the Son's completed work, the eschatological reward of the victorious Messiah poured out upon His people as the spoils of His victory over sin, death, and the devil (cf. Psalm 68:18; Ephesians 4:8). The Spirit comes in His New Covenant fullness not before but after and because of the Son's exaltation. The ascension is the pneumatological precondition of Pentecost.

B. Acts 1:8, The Spirit as the Power of Global Witness

The final word of the risen Christ before His ascension is a pneumatological commission that defines the church's identity and mission for the entire New Covenant age: "But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth" (Acts 1:8, NASB 1995). The verse is structured as a direct correspondence between the Spirit's coming and the church's witness: the Spirit gives power (*dunamis*), and the Spirit-powered community becomes Christ's witnesses to the ends of the earth.

The commissioning of Acts 1:8 is the New Covenant realization of the Isaiah 61:1–2 pattern examined in Lesson 9: as Jesus was Spirit-anointed for His messianic mission ("The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He anointed Me to preach the gospel"), so the church is Spirit-anointed for its missional participation in His ongoing mission. The Spirit who empowered the Head now empowers the body; the commission of Luke 4 is reproduced in the commission of Acts 1:8; and the geographical progression, Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, the ends of the earth, provides the structural outline for the entire book of Acts, which is the narrative of the Spirit-empowered mission fulfilling exactly this commission.

Two details of Acts 1:8 deserve particular attention. First, the commission is not given to a spiritual elite within the community but to the entire gathered community of disciples. The Spirit will come upon you, all of you, fulfilling Joel's promise that all flesh will receive the Spirit. Second, the scope is unambiguously universal: the remotest part of the earth has no geographic limit. The Spirit's witness-empowerment is not for Jerusalem alone, not for the Jewish community alone, not for a particular cultural or linguistic expression of Christianity. The Spirit is the eschatological power of universal mission, and His coming in Acts 2 immediately begins to fulfill the universal scope of the commission.

"The Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you" | "It is to your advantage that I go away" | "You will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you"

Romans 8:11; John 16:7; Acts 1:8, NASB 1995

III. The Ascension and the Outpouring: Acts 2:33

The Enthroned Christ Pours Out the Promised Spirit

The pneumatological argument of Peter's Pentecost sermon reaches its climax in Acts 2:33, which is the most concentrated statement in the entire New Testament of the relationship between the ascension of Christ and the outpouring of the Spirit: "Exalted to the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He has poured forth this which you both see and hear." The verse establishes an irreversible logical sequence: exaltation → reception of the promised Spirit → outpouring upon the gathered community. Pentecost is not an independent divine event; it is the direct, immediate, and necessary consequence of Christ's exaltation to the Father's right hand.

The Trinitarian structure of Acts 2:33 is as precise as it is theologically decisive. The Son is exalted by the Father to the Father's right hand (the throne of cosmic sovereignty). At this exaltation, the Son receives from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, the promise that He will pour out the Spirit upon His people (Joel 2:28–29; John 7:38–39; 14:16–17; 16:7). And the exalted Son then pours out the Spirit, the Third Person proceeding from and sent by both the Father and the Son, upon the gathered community of disciples. The entire verse is a Trinitarian pneumatological event: Father exalting, Son receiving and pouring, Spirit poured out. Pentecost is the external, temporal expression of the eternal Trinitarian relations of generation and procession, now enacted within the history of redemption for the benefit of the church.

The connection between Christ's Lordship and the Spirit's outpouring has profound implications for the church's understanding of Pentecost. The Spirit is not poured out by a defeated Savior whose disciples have been left to improvise a movement in His memory; He is poured out by the victorious, exalted, enthroned Lord whose redemptive work is complete and whose eschatological gift to His people is the very Spirit that His finished work has secured. The resurrection and ascension of Christ are not the Spirit's background conditions; they are the Spirit's immediate cause. The Spirit who comes at Pentecost comes bearing the full weight and authority of the enthroned Messiah who sends Him, which is precisely why Peter's Pentecost sermon concludes not with a pneumatological confession but with a Christological one: "Let all the house of Israel know for certain that God has made Him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified" (Acts 2:36, NASB 1995).

IV. The Event of Pentecost: Redemptive-Historical Significance

What Pentecost Accomplished, Once for All

A. The New Covenant Inauguration

The first and most fundamental significance of Pentecost is the inauguration of the New Covenant age of the Spirit. The outpouring of the Spirit on Pentecost is the fulfillment of the cluster of Old Testament promises surveyed in Lesson 8, Isaiah 32:15 (the Spirit poured out from on high), Ezekiel 36:26–27 (the new heart and the indwelling Spirit), Joel 2:28–29 (the Spirit poured out on all flesh), and it marks the decisive transition from the Old Covenant's selective, temporary, task-specific pneumatological arrangement to the New Covenant's universal, permanent, comprehensive indwelling. Everything that the Old Testament's pneumatological promises had been anticipating arrived on that Pentecost morning.

Peter's interpretation of the Pentecostal phenomena in terms of Joel 2:28–32 is, as noted in Lesson 8, the most important piece of pneumatological biblical theology in the New Testament. His key interpretive move, the substitution of Joel's "after this" with "in the last days" (Acts 2:17), declares that Pentecost is not merely the fulfillment of a prophecy but the inauguration of the eschatological age. The "last days" of Old Testament prophecy, the age of the Spirit's universal outpouring, has begun. The church has been living in the last days since Pentecost,

and the Spirit's presence among God's people is the defining eschatological reality of the age between the first and second advents of Christ.

B. The Constitution of the Church as the Spirit-Indwelt Temple

The second great significance of Pentecost is the constitution of the church as the Spirit-indwelt temple of God, the community in which and through which the divine presence dwells on earth in the New Covenant age. In the Old Covenant, the divine presence was localized in the tabernacle and then in the temple, the shekinah glory dwelling between the cherubim above the ark of the covenant. When Solomon's temple was dedicated, the glory of the Lord filled the house so overwhelmingly that the priests could not stand to minister (1 Kings 8:10–11). And when the Spirit departed from the temple in Ezekiel's vision (Ezekiel 10–11), the temple became an empty house awaiting destruction.

At Pentecost, the Spirit descends not upon a building but upon a community, upon the gathered disciples who are the new covenant assembly of God's people. The tongues of fire that rest upon each of them individually echo the fire of the theophany that filled Solomon's temple, but now resting on each believer rather than on the architectural structure of a sacred building. What had been localized in a tent and then in a stone building is now universalized among a Spirit-indwelt community. Paul draws the explicit implication in 1 Corinthians 3:16: "Do you not know that you are a temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?" and in 6:19: "Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own?" The church, gathered and individual, is the New Covenant temple of God, the Spirit's dwelling place on earth, because the Spirit of God dwells within it as He dwelt in the Old Covenant's sacred structures.

C. The Empowerment for Global Mission

The third great significance of Pentecost is the empowerment of the church for its global mission, the fulfillment of the commission of Acts 1:8 in the immediate experience of the disciples and the launching of the missionary movement that the rest of Acts narrates. The speaking in other languages at Pentecost (Acts 2:4–6) is not merely a dramatic sign of the Spirit's presence; it is a pneumatological reversal of Babel (Genesis 11:1–9). At Babel, God confused the languages of humanity and scattered the nations. At Pentecost, God enables the proclamation of the gospel in the languages of the nations gathered in Jerusalem, a sign that the Spirit's New Covenant mission is the gathering of the scattered nations through the preaching of the word of Christ. The reversal of Babel is the pneumatological inauguration of global mission.

The three thousand who believed and were baptized on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:41) represent not merely the first converts of the Christian era but the firstfruits of the global harvest that the Spirit's missionary empowerment will accomplish. They come from "every nation under heaven" (Acts 2:5), diaspora Jews from across the Mediterranean world who will carry the gospel back to their home communities when they return. Pentecost is the pneumatological launching pad for the mission that will reach, through the Spirit's empowerment, to Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and the ends of the earth.

V. What Pentecost Is Not: The Critical Negative Definition

Guarding Against the Distortions That Have Marred Its Reception

A. Not a Repeatable Personal Experience

The most fundamental and most consequential mistake in the modern Charismatic and Pentecostal reading of Pentecost is the treatment of Acts 2 as a paradigmatic personal experience to be sought, waited for, and received as a second and distinct blessing subsequent to conversion. On this view, Pentecost is not a unique, once-for-all redemptive-historical event but a pattern, the believer is first converted (as the disciples were converted during Jesus' ministry) and must then wait for and receive the Spirit in a second definite experience (as the disciples waited in Jerusalem and received the Spirit at Pentecost). This is the Pentecostal subsequence doctrine examined in Lesson 2, and it rests on a fundamental confusion between the redemptive-historical character of the Pentecostal event and the personal soteriological experience of individual believers.

Pentecost is no more repeatable than the incarnation or the resurrection or the ascension. These are not paradigmatic personal experiences; they are unique, epoch-making, once-for-all events in the history of redemption. The incarnation happened once; Christ does not repeatedly become flesh. The resurrection happened once; Christ does not repeatedly rise from the dead. The ascension happened once; Christ does not repeatedly ascend to the Father's right hand. And Pentecost happened once; the Spirit does not repeatedly constitute the church as His temple and inaugurate the New Covenant age. The Spirit who was poured out at Pentecost has not been withdrawn and does not need to be poured out again. He is present, universally, permanently, in the hearts of all who believe, as the permanent reality of the New Covenant age that Pentecost inaugurated.

The confusion of the Pentecostal narrative with a model for personal Spirit-reception reflects a broader hermeneutical error: the failure to read the book of Acts as redemptive-historical narrative rather than as devotional biography. Acts is the story of the Spirit-empowered mission of the church from its founding at Pentecost to Paul's imprisonment in Rome, the narrative of how the commission of Acts 1:8 began to be fulfilled. It is not a prescriptive model for what every believer must personally experience; it is a descriptive account of what God did, once for all, in founding the church and launching the mission. The transitions narrated in Acts, Pentecost in Jerusalem, the Samaritans' reception of the Spirit (Acts 8), Cornelius and the Gentiles (Acts 10), the Ephesian disciples (Acts 19), are the Spirit's progressive extension of the New Covenant's pneumatological blessings to previously excluded groups, not a model for repeated personal second-blessing experiences.

B. Not a Template for Tongues as Normative Evidence

The initial evidence doctrine, the Pentecostal teaching that speaking in tongues is the normative and necessary evidence of Spirit baptism, faces a multiple-front scriptural refutation. First, 1 Corinthians 12:30 asks rhetorically: "All do not speak with tongues, do they?", and the Greek construction expects a negative answer: No, not all speak in tongues. Paul's explicit

teaching is that tongues is one spiritual gift among many, distributed by the Spirit as He wills (v. 11), and that it is not given to all believers. The initial evidence doctrine directly contradicts this apostolic teaching. Second, the Pentecost narrative itself, the tongues of Acts 2, is not glossolalia in the technical Corinthian sense; it is xenolalia, the miraculous ability to speak in previously unknown human languages for the purpose of being understood by speakers of those languages (Acts 2:4–6, 8–11). The sign has a specific redemptive-historical purpose: the gathering of the nations through the proclamation of the gospel in their own languages.

Third, the cessationist argument, developed in Lesson 2 and consistently maintained throughout this series, provides the most comprehensive rebuttal: the sign gifts, including tongues, revelatory prophecy, and apostolic healing, served the specific redemptive-historical purpose of authenticating the apostolic message and confirming the transitions of the new covenant's progressive extension to new groups (Hebrews 2:3–4). With the completion of the apostolic canon, the foundation has been laid, the authentication accomplished, and the confirmatory purpose of the sign gifts fulfilled. The church no longer needs tongues to validate the gospel; it has the complete, authoritative, self-authenticating Word of God. The Spirit's present ministry is the illumination of that Word, not the production of new revelatory speech acts.

C. Not the Pattern for the Christian Life, But the Foundation of It

The correct pastoral response to Pentecost is not “seek what the disciples experienced at Pentecost” but “inhabit what Pentecost has provided.” The disciples waited for Pentecost because Pentecost had not yet happened; no New Covenant believer since Pentecost needs to wait for the Spirit because the Spirit has been poured out. The command to “be filled with the Spirit” (Ephesians 5:18) is not a command to seek a Pentecostal experience; it is a command to live in continuous, obedient, responsive dependence upon the Spirit who already indwells the believer by virtue of his or her New Covenant membership. The filling of the Spirit is the ongoing, moment-by-moment reality of a life that is continually yielded to the Spirit's leadership, not the punctuated dramatic event of a one-time spiritual breakthrough.

Pentecost is the foundation of the Christian life, not a model within it. Every dimension of what the Spirit does in and for the believer, regeneration, illumination, sanctification, intercession, gifting, sealing, is available because of Pentecost. Every New Covenant believer lives in the pneumatological reality that Pentecost inaugurated. The Spirit who fell on Jerusalem on that first Pentecost morning has not been withdrawn; He is still being poured out in regeneration, still producing the fruit of righteousness in those who walk by Him, still interceding for the saints with groanings too deep for words, still sealing the redeemed as the earnest of their final inheritance. Pentecost was a beginning, not an end; an inauguration, not a consummation. The fullness of what Pentecost began will be seen only at the resurrection, when the Spirit who raised Christ raises the mortal bodies of all who are in Christ, and the New Covenant age reaches its eschatological completion in the new creation.

*“Exalted to the right hand of God,
and having received from the Father the promise of the
Holy Spirit,
He has poured forth this which you both see and hear.”*

Acts 2:33, NASB 1995

VI. The Significance of Pentecost for the Believer Today

Living in the Age of the Spirit's Fullness

The theological conclusion of Unit 4, and of the entire arc of pneumatological history surveyed in Units 3 and 4, is a practical one: every believer who has been united to Christ by faith and who has received the Spirit in the New Covenant's universal outpouring stands in the most pneumatologically privileged position in the entire history of redemption. Greater than Moses, who longed for what he could not have (Numbers 11:29). Greater than Isaiah, who proclaimed what he did not yet see. Greater than David, who prayed against the possibility of the Spirit's withdrawal (Psalm 51:11). Greater even than John the Baptist, of whom Jesus said there had been none greater born among women, yet the least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he (Matthew 11:11), because the Spirit who was given without measure to the Son has been given to those who believe, in the fullness of the New Covenant's pneumatological age.

The practical implications of this pneumatological privilege are not abstract. They mean that every act of genuine repentance is the Spirit's work. Every illuminated reading of Scripture is the Spirit's gift. Every prayer that rises from a faith-filled heart is the Spirit's intercession. Every act of genuine love, every exercise of genuine patience, every fruit of genuine holiness, these are the Spirit's fruit in the life of the believer who walks by Him. The missionary who speaks the gospel in a distant culture and sees a life transformed, this is the Spirit of Acts 1:8 at work, fulfilling the commission of Pentecost in the uttermost parts of the earth. The bereaved widow who finds comfort in God's Word in the depths of her grief, this is the Paraclete of John 16:7 fulfilling His ministry as the Helper and Comforter. The struggling disciple who finds himself praying when he does not know how to pray as he should, this is the Spirit of Romans 8:26–27 interceding with groanings too deep for words.

None of these pneumatological realities was available in the same form, with the same universality and the same permanence, before Pentecost. They are all the fruit of the single, once-for-all, epoch-making event on that Jerusalem morning when the enthroned Christ poured out the promised Spirit upon His waiting people. To understand Pentecost as a redemptive-historical event is not to diminish its significance; it is to recognize that its significance is permanent and comprehensive rather than occasional and personal. The church is not waiting for Pentecost; the church is living in the age that Pentecost inaugurated and breathing the air that Pentecost made available, the pneumatological oxygen of the New Covenant's Spirit-filled life, which was purchased at the cost of Christ's blood and poured out at the cost of Christ's absence.

Theological Terms and Definitions

Term	Definition
Redemptive-Historical Event	An event within the history of redemption that is unique, once-for-all, and unrepeatable in character, effecting a permanent change in the redemptive situation of God's people. Redemptive-historical events are distinguished from repeatable personal experiences: the incarnation, the crucifixion, the resurrection, the ascension, and Pentecost are all redemptive-historical events, each happened once and its effects are permanent. Understanding Pentecost as a redemptive-historical event rather than a personal experiential model is the foundational hermeneutical correction to the Pentecostal subsequence doctrine.
Xenolalia	Greek: speaking in foreign languages (xenos, foreign + lalia, speech). The pneumatological phenomenon at Pentecost (Acts 2:4–11) in which the disciples spoke in previously unknown human languages that were immediately understood by the speakers of those languages who were present. Xenolalia is distinguished from glossolalia (ecstatic speech that requires interpretation) and represents the Spirit's reversal of Babel: where God confused the languages to scatter the nations (Genesis 11:7–9), the Spirit enables cross-linguistic proclamation to gather the nations through the gospel.
Reversal of Babel	The pneumatological-missiological significance of the tongues at Pentecost as a reversal of the judgment of Genesis 11:1–9. At Babel, God confused the languages and scattered the nations in response to human pride and the refusal to obey the creation mandate to fill the earth. At Pentecost, the Spirit enables the proclamation of the mighty works of God (Acts 2:11) in the languages of the nations gathered in Jerusalem, signaling that the Spirit's New Covenant mission is the gathering of the scattered nations through the preaching of Christ. The reversal of Babel is the pneumatological charter of the church's universal mission.
Subsequence Doctrine	The classical Pentecostal teaching that Spirit baptism is a second definite work of grace that occurs after and distinct from conversion. The subsequence doctrine reads the Pentecost narrative, in which the disciples (already converted during Jesus' ministry) receive the Spirit at Pentecost, as a paradigmatic pattern for all subsequent believers. The correct reading, maintained throughout this series, is that the disciples' experience is unrepeatable precisely because it is redemptive-historical: they lived through the transition from the Old Covenant's pneumatological arrangement to the New Covenant's, a transition that cannot be relived by any subsequent generation. See also 1 Corinthians 12:13 for the clear New Testament teaching that all believers have been Spirit-baptized at conversion.

Term	Definition
Initial Evidence Doctrine	The Pentecostal teaching that speaking in tongues is the normative and necessary sign of Spirit baptism. Refuted by 1 Corinthians 12:30 (“All do not speak with tongues, do they?”), expecting the answer No) and by the distinction between Pentecostal xenolalia (intelligible speech in human languages) and Corinthian glossolalia (requiring interpretation). The Spirit distributes gifts “just as He wills” (1 Corinthians 12:11), including tongues to some but not to all, and tongues’ function as an authenticating sign gift has been fulfilled with the close of the apostolic age (Hebrews 2:3–4).
New Covenant Inauguration	The redemptive-historical significance of Pentecost as the event by which the Old Covenant age was superseded and the New Covenant age was formally inaugurated. Peter’s Pentecost sermon identifies Pentecost as the fulfillment of Joel’s promise of universal Spirit-outpouring in “the last days” (Acts 2:17, Peter’s modification of Joel’s “after this”). The New Covenant age is therefore the eschatological age of the Spirit’s permanent, universal, transforming indwelling, and every believer since Pentecost has been born into this age and received the Spirit that its inauguration made available.
Spirit-Indwelt Temple	The New Covenant description of both the corporate church (1 Corinthians 3:16–17; Ephesians 2:21–22) and the individual believer’s body (1 Corinthians 6:19) as the dwelling place of the Holy Spirit, the New Covenant successor to the tabernacle and temple of the Old Covenant. At Pentecost, the Spirit descends not upon an architectural structure but upon a gathered community, constituting the church as His living temple. The tongues of fire echoing the theophanic fire that filled Solomon’s temple signal that what was localized in a stone building has now been universalized in a Spirit-indwelt community of persons.
Dunamis	Greek: power, might, capability. The word used in Acts 1:8 for the power that the Spirit gives to the witnessing community: “You will receive power (dunam) when the Holy Spirit has come upon you.” Dunamis is the power that enables the impossible, the power that raised Christ from the dead (Ephesians 1:19–20), the power that produces signs and wonders (Romans 15:19), and the power that makes the proclamation of the gospel effective in bringing people from death to life. The Spirit’s dunamis is not raw miraculous energy but the divine enabling of obedient human witness, the power that makes the preached word the instrument of salvation (Romans 1:16; 1 Corinthians 1:18).
Paraclete	Greek: one called alongside to help, advocate, comforter, counsel. The title Jesus uses for the Holy Spirit in the Farewell Discourse (John 14:16, 26; 15:26; 16:7, translated “Helper” or “Comforter” in English versions). The Paraclete is the one who comes alongside the believer as an advocate before God (cf. 1 John 2:1, where the same word is applied to Christ as our advocate with the Father), as a comforter in suffering, as a teacher of truth, and as a witness to Christ. Jesus declares in John 16:7 that it is to the disciples’ advantage that He goes, because the Paraclete who will come in

Term	Definition
	His absence will be what Jesus was to the Twelve, but universally and permanently.
Firstfruits of the Spirit	Paul's designation in Romans 8:23 for the Spirit's present indwelling as the firstfruits (aparachēn) of the full eschatological redemption: "even we ourselves, having the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our body." The firstfruits were the initial harvest offering, pledging and anticipating the full harvest to come. The Spirit's presence now is the firstfruits of the new creation, the beginning of the resurrection harvest that will be completed when Christ returns and the bodies of all who are in Him are raised by the same Spirit who raised Christ (Romans 8:11). Pentecost inaugurated the firstfruits; the parousia will complete the harvest.

Practical Application

A. For the Mind: *What Must We Believe?*

We must believe that Pentecost is not a spiritual experience to be sought but a redemptive-historical event that has already happened, whose effects are permanently and universally available to every New Covenant believer. This conviction liberates the believer from the anxious, performance-based, second-blessing spirituality that characterizes much of the modern Charismatic movement, the perpetual seeking for an experience of the Spirit that, on the Reformed and cessationist understanding of Pentecost, the believer already possesses by virtue of regeneration and union with Christ. There is no Pentecost to seek; there is a Pentecost to inhabit. The Spirit who was poured out at Pentecost is the Spirit who regenerated you, who seals you, who intercedes for you, and who is conforming you to the image of Christ. He is already present. He is already at work. The call is not to receive Him but to walk by Him, to be filled with Him, to grieve Him not, and to quench Him not.

We must also believe that the Spirit's role in the resurrection of Christ is the pneumatological pledge of our own bodily resurrection. Romans 8:11 is not a doctrinal abstraction; it is one of the most practically comforting truths in the New Testament. The Spirit who raised Jesus from the dead dwells within you. The power that overcame the grave is the power that inhabits your mortal body. The God who vindicated the crucified Son by raising Him on the third day has pledged, through the Spirit's indwelling, to give life to your mortal body at the last day. Every moment of the Spirit's sanctifying work in your life is a foretaste of and a pledge toward the resurrection that the same Spirit will accomplish in the fullness of time.

B. For the Heart: *What Must We Feel and Desire?*

Let the pneumatological sweep of Unit 4, the Spirit conceiving Christ (Lesson 9), the Spirit raising Christ and being sent by the ascended Christ (Lesson 10), produce in you a deep and specific gratitude for the costliness of the Spirit's gift. The Spirit is present with you today because Christ went away. The Helper came because Jesus departed from the visible, physical mode of His presence with His people. The disciples' grief at the prospect of Jesus' departure (John 16:6: "sorrow has filled your heart") was the cost that purchased the Spirit's coming. The absence of the physically present Christ is the presence of the omnipresent Spirit. That trade was made for your benefit, and the Spirit who came as a result of it is the most precious and most inexhaustible gift that the ascended Christ could have given.

Desire to live in the full pneumatological reality of the New Covenant age rather than in the reduced and anxious pneumatological consciousness that much of evangelical Christianity actually inhabits. The New Covenant believer lives in the age of the Spirit's universal outpouring, the age of all-flesh prophesying, of sons and daughters speaking the word of God, of servants and free persons equally Spirit-endowed for witness and service. This is the age you live in. The question is whether you are inhabiting it or merely confessing it from a safe theological distance while functionally living in a kind of private Old Covenant pneumatology,

uncertain of the Spirit's presence, waiting for a confirming experience, seeking what you already have.

C. For the Hands: *What Must We Do?*

- Read Acts 2:1–41 in one sitting as the founding narrative of the New Covenant church. As you read, identify each of the three great pneumatological significances of Pentecost: (1) the New Covenant inauguration (Peter's citation of Joel and his "in the last days" interpretation); (2) the constitution of the church as Spirit-temple (the tongues of fire resting on each person individually); (3) the empowerment for global mission (the immediate proclamation in foreign languages, the three thousand who believe, the promise to "all who are far off" in Acts 2:39). How does reading Acts 2 with these three lenses enrich your understanding of what Pentecost accomplished?
- Study the Pentecostal transitions in Acts carefully: the Samaritans (Acts 8:14–17), Cornelius (Acts 10:44–48), and the Ephesian disciples (Acts 19:1–7). In each case, identify: Who received the Spirit? What were the circumstances? What sign accompanied the reception? What was the redemptive-historical significance of each group's reception of the Spirit? Why is each of these a unique redemptive-historical transition rather than a repeatable model? (Hint: each represents the Spirit's extension to a previously excluded group, Samaritans, Gentiles, Old Covenant disciples of John.)
- Memorize Romans 8:11: "If the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you." Meditate on the structure: past pneumatological act (raised Jesus) → present pneumatological reality (dwells in you) → future pneumatological pledge (will give life to your mortal bodies). Let this verse inform the way you think about your physical body, not as the residue of a fallen order to be escaped but as the dwelling place of the resurrection Spirit, destined for glorification.
- Read John 16:5–15 carefully, Jesus' extended teaching on why the Spirit's coming is advantageous for the disciples. Identify every specific aspect of the Spirit's ministry that Jesus describes in these verses: conviction (v. 8–11), guidance into truth (v. 13), disclosure of what is to come (v. 13), glorification of Christ (v. 14), taking what is Christ's and disclosing it (v. 14–15). How does each of these Spirit-ministries correspond to or exceed what the physically present Jesus provided during His earthly ministry? In what ways is the Paraclete's presence genuinely advantageous over the presence of the incarnate Christ, as Jesus claims?
- Evaluate your own pneumatological posture honestly: are you "waiting for Pentecost" (seeking an experience of the Spirit that you don't have) or "inhabiting Pentecost" (living in the pneumatological reality that Pentecost has already provided)? What specific practices, in your prayer life, your reading of Scripture, your engagement with community, your participation in mission, would change if you consistently lived from the conviction that the Spirit of the resurrection is already dwelling within you and that Pentecost's provision is already fully yours?

Study and Discussion Questions

Opening Question

1. The lesson argues that the correct pneumatological posture for the New Covenant believer is not “seek Pentecost” but “inhabit Pentecost.” Which of these two postures more accurately describes the actual pneumatological consciousness of the church communities you have been part of? What are the practical and pastoral consequences of each posture for the individual believer’s spiritual life?

Observation Questions (What Do the Texts Say?)

2. Read Romans 8:9–11. Paul mentions the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, Christ in you, and the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus, all in three verses. What does the density of pneumatological language in these verses suggest about the relationship between the Spirit’s presence and the believer’s condition? Note the specific claim of verse 11: it is not just that the Spirit was involved in raising Jesus but that the same Spirit who raised Jesus “dwells in you.” What does the present tense (“dwells”) indicate about the permanence of the Spirit’s indwelling?
3. Read John 16:5–7. Jesus says it is “to your advantage” that He goes away. The disciples are sorrowful (v. 6), which makes sense if they are thinking of Jesus’ going as a loss. But Jesus reframes it as a gain. What specifically makes the coming of the Paraclete advantageous? Is Jesus claiming that the Spirit is greater than the incarnate Christ, or is He making a different kind of claim? What does the condition “if I do not go away, the Helper will not come” reveal about the relationship between the Son’s mission and the Spirit’s mission?
4. Read Acts 2:1–36. Identify the specific elements of the Pentecost narrative: the location, the sound, the visual phenomena (wind and fire), the speaking in languages, the crowd’s reaction, and Peter’s response. Then trace Peter’s argument in his sermon: how does he move from the Pentecost phenomena to Joel’s prophecy to David’s psalms to the resurrection and ascension of Christ to the pneumatological conclusion of verse 33 to the Christological conclusion of verse 36? What is the logical spine of the sermon, and why is the Christological conclusion (“God has made Him both Lord and Christ”) the appropriate conclusion to a sermon about Pentecost?
5. Read Acts 2:38–39. Peter’s call to action includes the promise: “You will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off, as many as the Lord our God will call to Himself.” Who receives the promised Spirit? What is the scope of “all who are far off”, does it refer to later generations, to Gentiles, to both? How does this promise connect to Joel 2:28–29 (“all flesh”) and to Acts 1:8

(“the remotest part of the earth”)? What does the promise’s scope imply about the availability of the Spirit to every New Covenant believer?

6. Read 1 Corinthians 12:11–13. Paul says in verse 11 that the Spirit distributes gifts “just as He wills,” and in verse 13 that “by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body.” How does verse 13’s affirmation that all believers have been Spirit-baptized relate to the Pentecostal subsequence doctrine? What does the past tense (“were baptized”) and the universality (“we were all”) suggest about when and how every believer receives the Spirit?

Interpretation Questions (What Does It Mean?)

7. The lesson argues that Pentecost is a “redemptive-historical event” comparable to the incarnation and the resurrection, unique, once-for-all, and unrepeatable. The Pentecostal movement reads Acts 2 as a paradigmatic personal experience. What are the hermeneutical principles at stake in this disagreement? What is the difference between reading Acts as descriptive history and reading it as prescriptive model? And how does the reader determine which passages in Acts are normative for all believers and which are unique to the redemptive-historical situation they describe?
8. The lesson distinguishes the xenolalia of Pentecost (intelligible foreign languages, Acts 2:4–6) from the glossolalia of Corinth (unintelligible speech requiring interpretation, 1 Corinthians 14). How significant is this distinction for the evaluation of the initial evidence doctrine? If Pentecostal tongues were xenolalia with a specific redemptive-historical purpose (the reversal of Babel, the multi-lingual inauguration of global mission), does the expectation that tongues will accompany Spirit-baptism as “initial evidence” rest on a confusion of two distinct phenomena?
9. Acts 2:33 presents the Trinitarian structure of Pentecost: the Father exalts the Son, the Son receives the promised Spirit from the Father, and the exalted Son pours out the Spirit. How does this Trinitarian structure illuminate the relationship between Christ’s ascension and the Spirit’s coming? Why is it theologically significant that the Spirit is poured out by the Son (not just by the Father), what does this tell us about the Spirit’s identity and about the filioque?
10. The lesson argues that the “filling with the Spirit” of Ephesians 5:18 is not a command to seek a Pentecostal experience but a command to live in continuous, obedient, responsive dependence on the Spirit who already indwells the believer. What is the linguistic and contextual evidence for this reading of the Ephesians 5:18 command? What does the present tense of the command (“be being filled”, continuous aspect in Greek) suggest about the nature of the Spirit’s filling?
11. The lesson concludes that “Pentecost was a beginning, not an end; an inauguration, not a consummation.” What does it mean for the Christian’s eschatological expectation that we live in the age of the firstfruits of the Spirit (Romans 8:23) rather than the fullness of the harvest? What are we still waiting for that Pentecost has not yet provided? How

does the Spirit's present indwelling relate to the "groaning" of Romans 8:23, can the Spirit's presence be both a profound gift and a source of eschatological longing simultaneously?

Application Questions (What Does It Demand of Us?)

12. The lesson proposes a pneumatological posture shift: from "waiting for Pentecost" to "inhabiting Pentecost." In your own spiritual history, have you lived primarily in one of these postures or the other? If you have lived more in the "waiting" posture, what theological conviction would need to change for you to begin inhabiting the pneumatological reality that Pentecost has already provided? What would the first practical step of that change look like?
13. Romans 8:11 teaches that the Spirit who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in the believer. The lesson suggests that this truth should change the way we think about our physical bodies, not as the residue of a fallen order to be escaped but as the dwelling place of the resurrection Spirit, destined for glorification. How does this pneumatological-eschatological perspective on the body affect the way you care for your body, relate to physical suffering, or think about death? What difference does it make, practically, to understand your body as the Spirit's temple and the Spirit who dwells in it as the pledge of your bodily resurrection?
14. The lesson argues that the Pentecostal transitions in Acts 8, 10, and 19 are unique redemptive-historical events (the Spirit's extension to Samaritans, Gentiles, and Old Covenant disciples) rather than repeatable personal models. Study one of these three passages carefully. What is the specific redemptive-historical group involved? What was their prior relationship to the covenant community? What is the significance of the Spirit's extension to them specifically? And what would be lost in our understanding of the Spirit's missionary work if we read these passages as prescriptive models for individual second-blessing experiences?
15. The lesson closes by calling believers to "inhabit the pneumatological reality of the New Covenant age." Looking back across the ten lessons of this series so far, from the eternal procession (Lesson 5) to creation (Lesson 6) to the Old Covenant promises (Lessons 7–8) to the life of Christ (Lessons 9–10), what single pneumatological conviction has been most transformative for you personally? And looking forward to Unit 5 (the Spirit and the Application of Redemption), what question or concern do you most hope the remaining lessons will address?

Prayer Focus

Open the final lesson of Unit 4 with the full reading of Acts 2:1–41, the founding narrative of the New Covenant church and the fullest account of the pneumatological event that defines the age in which every New Covenant believer lives. Read it slowly, as a community, as those who are living in the age that this narrative inaugurates. Attend to every detail: the sound of the rushing wind, the tongues of fire resting on each one individually, the speaking in foreign languages, the bewilderment of the crowd, the courage of Peter, the structure of his argument, the power of his conclusion, the piercing of the hearers' hearts, and the three thousand who believed. This is the day on which the church was born and the age of the Spirit's fullness was inaugurated. It was also, in the most direct sense, the day on which you were incorporated into the community whose founding this narrative describes.

Spend time in a structured Trinitarian prayer that follows the pneumatological logic of Acts 2:33. Begin with the Father: praise Him for exalting the Son to His right hand, for vindicating the crucified Christ by resurrection and ascension and for placing Him above every name and every authority. The Father's exaltation of the Son is the pneumatological precondition of Pentecost, and the Pentecost's provision to you is the fruit of the Father's sovereign will to redeem a people for Himself through the Son and the Spirit. Move then to the Son: praise Him for receiving from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit and for pouring Him out. Thank Him that His going away was His gift to you, that the absence of His localized, embodied presence was the condition for the universalized, omnipresent presence of the Paraclete. His ascension was His generosity to you. Move finally to the Spirit: thank Him for coming, for being poured out on all flesh as Joel promised, for resting on you as He rested on the disciples in the upper room, for constituting you as part of the temple of the living God, for empowering you as a witness to the ends of the earth.

Pray then for the specific missional dimensions of Pentecost's gift. Acts 1:8 commissions the Spirit-empowered community to witness in Jerusalem (your immediate community), Judea (your regional context), Samaria (the communities that feel distant or foreign to you), and the ends of the earth (the unreached peoples beyond your horizon). Pray specifically for each of these four dimensions of the church's Spirit-empowered witness. Name the specific communities, the specific people, the specific unreached groups. The Spirit who reversed Babel at Pentecost by enabling multi-lingual proclamation is still the Spirit of global mission, still empowering the witness that moves from Jerusalem to the ends of the earth. Pray for that witness with the confidence that the Spirit who poured Himself out at Pentecost has not withdrawn and will not withdraw until the last sheep is gathered.

Close with an act of corporate declaration drawn from Acts 2:36, the Christological conclusion to the pneumatological sermon: "Let all the house of Israel know for certain that God has made Him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified." The Spirit's coming points to Christ; Pentecost ends with a Christological confession. Let the prayer time end the same way: with the declaration that the Spirit who has come is the Spirit of the One who is both Lord and

Christ, the Spirit who “will not speak on His own initiative” but who takes what is Christ’s and discloses it, who glorifies not Himself but the Son who sent Him. The Spirit came to make Christ known. Let your prayer make Christ known.

*“Exalted to the right hand of God,
and having received from the Father the promise of the
Holy Spirit,
He has poured forth this which you both see and hear.”*
Acts 2:33, NASB 1995

Key Texts: Romans 8:11, 23; 1 Peter 3:18; John 16:5–7, 12–15; Acts 1:8; Acts 2:1–41; John 7:37–39; 1 Corinthians 12:11–13; 1 Corinthians 6:19; Ephesians 5:18; Joel 2:28–29; Psalm 68:18; Ephesians 4:8

Soli Deo Gloria

To God Alone Be the Glory

FAITHFUL TO THE WORD

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