

We're going to look tonight at Acts chapter 2, verses 1 through 13. There's a number of events in world history that we would maybe categorize as unforgettable events. There's the fall of the Berlin wall. The assassinations of JFK and MLK and Abraham Lincoln. There are dates in history that we'll never forget. If you're my age, Y2K was a big nothing after all. But then there's some others like September 11th, December 7th, and, of course, July 4th. And of course, there's the personal moments and dates in our lives that we remember. But as important as all of those events, and dates are and how important they are to help us understand our lives and human history, all of those really ultimately pale in comparison to those events in biblical history that theologians refer to as epical events. Things like creation, the fall, exodus, the conquest, exile, the incarnation, the atonement, and included in that would be the event we're going to look at tonight, the day of Pentecost. And so let's look at this day of Pentecost in Acts chapter 2 beginning in verse 1. When the day of Pentecost arrived, they were all together in one place. And suddenly there came from heaven a sound like a mighty rushing wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. And divided tongues as a fire appeared to them and rested on each one of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance. Now there were dwelling in Jerusalem Jews, devout men from every nation under heaven. And at this sound the multitude came together and they were bewildered because each one was hearing them speak in his own language and they were amazed and astonished saying, are not all these who are speaking Galileans? And how is it that we hear each of us in his own native language? Parthians and Medes and Elamites and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya belonging to Cyrene and visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabians, we hear them telling in our own tongues the mighty works of God. and all were amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, What does this mean? But others, mocking, said, They are filled with new wine." Well, this is the Word of our God. Thanks be to God for His holy and inerrant Word. So this was a unique event in redemptive history, and it's an important thing for us to recognize that it was, in fact, a unique event. You see, yes, there are more instances in the book of Acts in particular that record the outpouring of the Holy Spirit in a similar fashion to how we see it here. For example, Acts chapter verses 15 to 17, Acts chapter 10, Acts chapter 19. But it's important to recognize that each of those occurrences that you read about in the book of Acts came at very pivotal moments in the extension of the gospel into areas that it had not yet gone. In fact, it is in the book of Acts, it is those areas that had been outlined at the beginning of the book of Acts, in Acts chapter 1-8, when it said, you will receive power, Jesus speaking to His followers, His apostles, that if 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 ends of the earth. And so, as we see this outpouring of the Spirit manifested as we have it described here in Acts chapter 2, it happens in these very specific times. Acts chapter 8, we see the outpouring of the Spirit to Samaria. Acts chapter 10, the outpouring of the Spirit to the Gentiles. Acts chapter 19, the outpouring of the Spirit in Ephesus, which could easily be understood as the ends of the earth. And while the New Testament certainly records other instances of the use of these signed gifts, as they're called, tongues and prophecy in particular, in 1 Corinthians, for example, the reality is that the manifestation of these gifts was quite rare, even in biblical history. And it's

significant to note that Paul in his pastoral letters, which are the last letters that Paul wrote and contain the things that Paul was urging the church and his leadership, Timothy and Titus, for example, to continue to emphasize and to do in their ministries makes no mention of these gifts to continue. Now, why do I share that? Well, that's my 30,000 foot overview or argument for the cessation of the view or the gifts that we see in Acts chapter two. But the fact that they occur here in Acts chapter two is significant in redemptive history. And so we're gonna look at why they are significant and why they are important or what it demonstrates about what is important to our lives even today. But we begin the chapter with this description that the disciples were all together in one place. Now, we don't know exactly where they were gathered. It could have been in the upper room, which is where they had been gathered in Acts chapter 1, but we don't know for sure. Nor do we know exactly how many were gathered at this time, though it may have been approximately 120, since that was the number of disciples recorded in chapter 1. But Nevertheless, we assume that they were waiting. They were waiting in anticipation of the fulfillment of what Christ had promised was going to come. In fact, right, the anticipation of the Holy Spirit that was to come, as Jesus had told them it would, or He would, after His ascension. In Acts chapter 1, verse 5, He had made that promise. And so here in Acts chapter 2 verse 1, the scripture says that when the day of Pentecost arrived, and commentators have actually noted that the Greek word there, *sumphlereo*, is more than just the idea of something arriving, that it actually carries the idea of fulfilling or completing something. And so it seems that Luke here is communicating that there is something special about this day of Pentecost. And certainly there was, as we read here and as we'll discuss, that God's, because God's people had been celebrating Pentecost for over 1,500 years, right, or about 1,500 years. It was one of the great feasts that Israel celebrated every year. But this day of Pentecost had a much greater significance to it. This day of Pentecost marked the fulfillment of God's promise to his people, right? Remember, Jesus had told his disciples in Acts 1, verse 4, to wait for the promise of the Father. Um, earlier in the gospel of John, Jesus had told his disciples that the helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring to remember. It's all that I have said to you. And so the coming of the spirit, the outpouring of the spirit that we see here in Acts chapter two was marking the fulfillment of the promise that God had given that he would send another helper to be with his disciples after Jesus left. But there's more than that as well, isn't there? It marked the fulfillment of God's covenant promise. that in the last days he would pour out his spirit on his people. We'll see that in the next section when Peter proclaims in his sermon in Acts chapter two, the second part of Acts chapter two, and he cites Joel chapter two when he says, right, this is what was uttered through the prophet Joel, in the last days I will pour out my spirit on all flesh. And so this day of Pentecost marked the fulfillment of God's promise, but also the inauguration of the last days. It was the public announcement, I think it was described by one commentator, of the fact that the messianic age had begun, that the blessings of the messianic age, particularly the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, were now being brought upon God's people. In other words, this was the day of Pentecost in all of its fullness. It marked very distinctively the passing from promise to fulfillment, from shadow to reality, from anticipation to realization. And so needless to say, it was a significant moment in redemptive history. But to understand the full significance of Pentecost and its implications for us today, we need to take a closer look, a

deeper dive into what we read here, what occurred here in Acts chapter two. In particular, what the disciples saw and heard and why what they saw and heard was so significant. And Dennis Johnson, Jim Boyce, Hendrickson, they all do a much better job of explaining this than me, and so I'd encourage you to read what they have to say. But there were three things in particular that the disciples saw and heard when the Spirit was outpoured. They heard the sound of a mighty rushing wind. Secondly, the tongues of fire, and third, of course, the speaking in tongues. And so, we'll look at each one of these. First, with respect to the mighty rushing wind, right? Verse two says, there came from heaven a sound like a mighty rushing wind. Some of you will remember, right, that there is throughout scripture this very close connection between the spirit and the wind. One way that we know there's a close connection is because the word that's translated spirit in both ancient Greek and Hebrew, *pneuma* and *ruach*, respectively, are the same term that's used for wind. But also, right, we have certain passages in scripture that show this close connection between the spirit and the wind. For example, you might remember in John chapter three, when Jesus was speaking with Nicodemus, he said the following words, in verses seven through eight, do not marvel that I said to you, you must be born again. The wind blows where it wishes and you hear its sound, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who's born of the Spirit. Or the creation account in Genesis chapter 1, verses 1 through 2, right? In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. The earth was without form and void and darkness was over the face of the deep and the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters. The imagery, right, that comes from that description of the mighty rushing wind as the Spirit is coming upon God's people, it provides this vivid, really, description that the divine life-giving wind of God, as James Boyce describes it, the Spirit of God blowing across the waters, breathing life into His creation. And so there seems to be this sense in which Luke is communicating through this imagery the reality of what God's people experienced as the Holy Spirit was poured out upon them. That they were being re-created, as it were. That they were part of the new creation. That the coming of the Spirit marks, in a very real sense, the beginning of the re-creation. And so those who received the Spirit are, right, marked as those who are part of that recreation, the new creation as Paul describes it in 2 Corinthians 5.17. And it is this same recreation that happens in each one of our lives, right? When we come to know the Lord and the Holy Spirit takes up residence in us, that the life-giving Spirit of God dwells within us and brings us to life in a very, very real sense. And so that was the first sign that we saw, that we see here. The second is that the outpouring of the Spirit came as tongues of fire, right? Acts 2, 3, verse 3 says that the divided tongues as a fire appeared to them and rested on each one of them. Again, fire, right? A familiar image in scripture. Yes, it's the fulfillment of John the Baptist's words in Matthew chapter three, right, when he said, I baptize you with water, but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. But of course, the fire imagery is much deeper than that, right? In Genesis 15, the smoking fire pot and flaming torch passed through the midst of Abraham's sacrifice indicating God's promise is unbreakable. Or when God revealed himself to Moses in Exodus 3 out of the midst of a burning bush in a flame of fire. Or Exodus 13 when the Lord led the people out of Egypt in a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night. In other words, the fire imagery gives us the, or communicates God's presence with his people. And that's exactly what we see here in Acts chapter 2, right? In verse 3 we read that the tongues of fire appeared to them and rested on

each one of them. And so it communicates this reality that God would be with them in a very real sense. that God would now be with them and go with them wherever they went. Just as the Lord had been with his people and had led them through various circumstances in the past, so now he would be with his people and lead them in the present. Though in a much fuller sense we can say. Because now, because of what Christ has done, God's people are now indwelt with the Holy Spirit and equipped to serve God in a very special way. As Dr. Ferguson says, the Holy Spirit, the same Holy Spirit that indwelt Christ and empowered him and equipped him for ministry now indwells and equips us. But also, right, we are the dwelling place of God on earth. That the Spirit of God dwells in each one of us and strengthens us to love and to serve Him. And so the implications of that are immense, aren't they? That wherever we go, whatever we are involved in, He is involved in as well. And of course there's a convicting component to that, isn't there? That whatever we're involved in, we in a sense involve God in that same thing. But there's the comforting aspect as well. The fact that God is always with us, guiding us, directing us, means that we're never truly alone. No matter how difficult our lives may become, our circumstances might be, no matter how uncertain our future may be, how dark our world may seem, that God is there in the midst of it. that there's no situation or circumstance in life, no trouble that we can face that is beyond God's control and that He is not there with us to see us through. And so when we feel like we are at our end or we've run out of answers, when life just seems too difficult to bear, God is there with us. But also, and I think it's particularly significant in this context that we understand that the promise of God's presence with his people, and this is certainly true as we'll see in this passage, that God was with his people in their witness to the world of who he is and what he has done. Right, this was the promise that Jesus had given to his disciples back in verse eight of chapter one, that you'll receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, Judea, and Samaria, to the end of the earth. that God doesn't just send us out on our own to figure it out for ourselves and to pull up our bootstraps, but he is the one that goes with us and before us so that we might be his witnesses in all the earth, to every nation, to every tribe and tongue and people, and, of course, to our neighbor. And so whenever we might feel nervous, intimidated, fearful about shining the light of Christ in the world in which we live, we can remember that God is with us and he will give us the words to speak. And of course, we see this played out in a very particular way here in Acts chapter 2, as we see the third sign of the day of Pentecost, and that is the speaking in tongues, or as Dennis Johnson calls them, the tongues of the nations. Verse four says that they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance. Now without going into the details about the differences between biblical tongues as we see them in Scripture and the tongues that we might encounter today, we'll simply say that the tongues spoken in Scripture were known human language or languages, that were a mode of God's revelation, and we see in Scripture that they gradually passed out of the life of the church after the apostolic era. In this particular context, on the day of Pentecost, the sign of speaking in tongues had a very specific purpose, didn't it? That it communicated to those who saw and heard that the promises of God were going forth to every people, tribe, and language group. Right, it says here, Luke says, that each one was hearing them speak in his own language. And then Luke goes on to list a table of nations. that was, that heard what was said in verses 9 through 11. And he, I'm not going to reread it, but he lists people from east and

west, north and south, from one side of the known world to the other, to emphasize the fact that the Spirit of God was to be poured out, would be poured out on all flesh, as Peter proclaims in Acts 2.17. And of course, the listing of the table of nations here in Acts chapter two ought to point us back to another table of nations in the early part of the Bible, Genesis 10, when God had scattered the nations because of their sin and dispersed them right throughout the earth. But what we see in Acts chapter two, with the outpouring of the Spirit, is the beginning of the reversal of that judgment at Babel. That as a result of the outpouring of God's Spirit on the earth, because of what Christ had accomplished and was applying to His church, His people, the promise of God was extended to all the nations. The people from every tribe and tongue and nation would now be regathered, as it were, to fulfill their true created purpose, which is to worship God, their creator, for all eternity. And it shouldn't be missed that the events of the day of Pentecost are only the first fruits of that in-gathering. Right, the Feast of Pentecost, if you remember, was always a celebration of the gathering of the first fruits of the harvest with the expectation that there was more to come. And of course, what we see on this day of Pentecost is the first fruits of a harvest much greater than any seasonal harvest could produce. The harvest of souls, the elect from every nation. And we begin to, we see it, the first fruits of it here in Acts chapter two as the gospel is poured out, as the spirit is outpoured beginning in Jerusalem, and then we will see through the book of Acts, Judea, Judea, Samaria, and the ends of the earth. But of course, the gathering that was begun on the day of Pentecost, as it were, does not end with the book of Acts. Rather, it continues until the end of the age, as Christ himself promised it would, And so we as his people today are not only the recipients or part of the in-gathering of those nations, but we are part of the gathering of the nations. The spirit-indwelled ambassadors of God sent out to gather the nations to worship God for all eternity. Now not all of us will be called overseas to serve as missionaries, though some of you may be. But all of us are called and equipped by God to be his witnesses in the place that he has put us, beginning here in Columbia and to the ends of the earth. And so we go forth by the power of his Spirit to call people from every tribe and tongue and nation to worship Him. All right, well, let us turn now to pray to the Lord of the Harvest. Let's begin first by praising God for His goodness, His righteousness, His righteousness, pouring out his spirit upon us and calling us to himself. So let's just pray from where you are out loud so we can all hear.