

Holy Spirit Baptism for the Slow of Heart and Mind

HOLY SPIRIT BAPTISM FOR THE SLOW OF HEART AND MIND

BY

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PREFACE

I never intended to write a book on the Holy Spirit. In fact, early in my life I preferred not to engage the Scriptures in reference to the Holy Spirit. By background and inclination I was not sympathetic with the kind of “experiential religion” that majors in supposed Holy Spirit matters. Furthermore, ambiguity, vagueness, and discrepancies in logic seemed to be everywhere, not just in my own conclusions, but in everyone else’s. Nearly all who discussed the Spirit very quickly fell back on the supposed “mystery” of Spiritual activity as described by the Lord to Nicodemus (John 3). I despaired of clarity. Sometimes I would think something to be true, but did not have the evidence to fully support it. I was “slow of heart and mind” in regard to the doctrine of the Holy Spirit.

But one can hardly study the New Testament and understand very well what one is reading if one fails to comprehend the Holy Spirit. So I had to study the Spirit, and I did, but with little significant progress. I made lists of all the Biblical passages on the Holy Spirit. I studied each one. I went so far as to make a large notebook in which I wrote a commentary for myself on every passage in Scripture that contained material on the Spirit. I collected and read books devoted to the theology of the Holy Spirit. I prepared and delivered Bible class lessons; I studied for and preached sermons on the Holy Spirit. I learned much, but still I was unsatisfied.

A few years ago, however, when doing research for a commentary on Acts, I at last had a “eureka” of sorts in understanding, and incorporated my investigations into the Commentary. I realized later that not many people would purchase a commentary on Acts, and that those who did would have to study the Commentary systematically in order to fully apprehend the concept of the Spirit suggested there. So the logical step was to take those ideas, expand on them, add to them the teaching about the Spirit found in the remainder of the NT, and put them together in book form.

It would be inaccurate to say that the present work represents a complete NT theology of the Holy Spirit. But most, if not all, of the significant themes are at least touched on. Some of the important concepts suggested herein were developed directly from the text, although later I discovered they had already been introduced by one or more students of the text. For example, early in my research I discovered that all of Luke’s citations to the Spirit were references to prophetic empowerment. I had never seen this suggested. Later I found authorities who had already said something similar.

My goal is to explain simply and accurately what the NT says about the Holy Spirit—taking the Holy Spirit baptism as the starting point. I would hope that when readers finish the final chapter they will feel as if the issues have been set forth with clarity. And I trust they will have in their minds a specific, focused, well-defined concept; one with which they can either agree or argue. If the exegesis below of certain passages from Acts seems unfounded, I would refer readers to my *Commentary on Acts* as a kind of companion volume.

PRINCIPAL ABBREVIATIONS

Amp	Amplified New Testament
ASV	American Standard Version
BAGD	Bauer, Arndt, Gingrich, Danker. <i>Greek-English Lexicon</i> , 1979.
BDAG	Bauer, Danker, Arndt, Gingrich. <i>Greek-English Lexicon</i> , 2000.
Barclay	The New Testament: A Translation by William Barclay
BC	The Beginnings of Christianity. Edited by F. J. Foakes Jackson and Kirsopp Lake. 5 vols. London: Macmillan, 1920-1933.
Beck	William F. Beck The New Testament in the Language of Today
Berkley	The Modern Language New Testament: The New Berkley version
CBW	Charles B. Williams, The New Testament in the Language of the People
CEV	Contemporary English Version
Conf	Confraternity Version
ETR	The New Testament: A new easy to read version
Gdspd	Edgar J. Goodspeed. The New Testament: An American Translation
GWNT	God's Word New Testament
JB	Jerusalem Bible
JNT	Jewish New Testament
Knox	R. A. Knox, The New Testament: A New translation
McCord	McCord's New Testament Translation
Moffatt	The New Testament in the Moffatt Translation
NASB	New American Standard Bible
NEB	New English Bible
NET	The Net Bible, New English Translation
NIV	New International Version
NJB	New Jerusalem Bible
NLT	New Living Translation
NRSV	New Revised Standard Version
Phillips	J. B. Phillips. The New Testament in Modern English
REB	Revised English Bible
RSV	Revised Standard Version
SEB	Simple English Bible
TDNT	Theological Dictionary of the New Testament. Edited by G. Kittel and G. Friedrich. Translated by G. W. Bromiley. 10 vols. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964-1976.
TCNT	The Twentieth Century New Testament
TEV	Today's English Version
Weym	Richard Francis Weymouth, The New Testament in Modern Speech.
Williams	Charles B. Williams, The New Testament in the Language of the People.

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CHAPTER 1—INTRODUCTION

...we did not so much as hear whether the Holy Spirit was given. (Acts 19:2 ASV)

“Holy Spirit baptism” is a good starting point for understanding the whole doctrine of the Holy Spirit in Scripture. The following is a complete list of the passages where the phrase is used:

- Matthew 3:11 *I indeed baptize you in water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you in the Holy Spirit and in fire:*
- Mark 1:8 *I baptized you in water; But he shall baptize you in the Holy Spirit.*
- Luke 3:16 *John answered, saying unto them all, I indeed baptize you with water; but there cometh he that is mightier than I, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to unloose: he shall baptize you in the Holy Spirit and in fire:*
- John 1:33 *And I knew him not: but he that sent me to baptize in water, he said unto me, Upon whomsoever thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and abiding upon him, the same is he that baptizeth in the Holy Spirit.*
- Acts 1:5 *For John indeed baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized in the Holy Spirit not many days hence.*
- Acts 11:16 *And I remembered the word of the Lord, how he said, John indeed baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized in the Holy Spirit.*

Some would add 1 Corinthians 12:13, *For in one Spirit were we all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether bond or free; and were all made to drink of one Spirit.* Later, however, it will be shown that this passage does not belong in the list, at least not as it is usually interpreted.

What are some of the diverse ideas Bible students have when they speak of being “baptized in the Holy Spirit.” The following list summarizes several of these:

- Some will say that it is the Holy Spirit entering a person and bringing him “regeneration.” It is salvation, as they suppose, that is accomplished.
- Similarly, others hold it is the saving presence or action of the Holy Spirit at baptism—water being the external part of the baptism and the Spirit the internal part. Some of these will teach that the Holy Spirit in baptism is “non-miraculous.” Others will say that it sometimes, or always, involves miracle power.
- People who hold the “Pentecostal” viewpoint will affirm that at conversion one receives an indwelling of the Spirit. Then, subsequent to conversion, Christians should seek to receive power from the Holy Spirit. The empowerment must involve speaking in “unknown tongues.” This, they say, is Holy Spirit baptism.
- Still others explain that the baptism in the Holy Spirit is a special measure of power (the “baptismal” measure) that was bestowed exclusively on the apostles and the house of Cornelius.

Are any of these correct? The thesis here is that none of them is exactly right. The following statement is Holy Spirit baptism in a nutshell:

The Holy Spirit baptism is that event of the first century in which God gave divine notice to the world of the commencement of the age of salvation in Christ. He did so by imparting to many people a variety of extraordinary Holy Spirit empowerments, including especially prophetic proclamation. This event was initiated on the day of Pentecost, as depicted in Acts 2. It ceased with the fading of the apostolic period. The manifestations were not only attention-getting, but also served to advance and confirm the gospel. Receiving the Holy Spirit in this office, though associated with an attitude receptive to the gospel, was not the means or the instrument of one’s personal salvation; nor was it the Pauline doctrine of the indwelling Spirit; rather, it was simple empowerment.

Here it is suggested that one should not say, “Holy Spirit baptism” but, “*the* Holy Spirit baptism.” It was a specific event which had a beginning and an end. Much of discussion in this book will set forth a defense of the preceding definition.

The Spirit received for empowering proclamation. To confirm the distinction made, in Acts, between reception of the Holy Spirit as opposed to salvation itself one first needs to look carefully at Luke 4:18-19. There Jesus quotes Isaiah 61:1-2:

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, Because he anointed me to preach good tidings to the poor: He hath sent me to proclaim release to the captives, And recovering of sight to the blind, To set at liberty them that are bruised, To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord.

The Messiah receives the Spirit to preach or proclaim the good news of salvation, the arrival of the acceptable year of the Lord. He did not receive the Spirit for his own personal sanctification or for imparting the Spirit to others for indwelling sanctification. Throughout Luke-Acts the Spirit was received by persons, and then it is specified that the recipients thus proclaimed and preached the gospel.¹ The gospel of salvation is *proclaimed* through the empowerment of the Spirit. *Salvation* comes when the hearer of the proclamation responds obediently to that which is proclaimed.

In this connection one should especially note Luke 24:46-49; Acts 2:38-39; and 5:31-32. In Luke 24 forgiveness of sins upon repentance is first mentioned (24:46-47). Then separately the conferral upon the apostles empowering them for preaching is noted (24:48-49). The preaching of salvation by the Spirit is not the salvation. The same order and distinction is found in Acts 2:38-39. Peter first proclaims repentance and baptism in the name of Jesus Christ for remission of sins. Then he mentions the reception of the Spirit—a reception that in Luke-Acts, time and again, is an empowerment for proclamation. In Acts 5:30-32 first there is the proclamation of the gospel, the promise of repentance, and the forgiveness based thereon. Second, there is the mention of the Spirit who empowers testimony. The role of the Spirit is to empower the proclamation, not to indwell directly and sanctify by his presence, as described in Paul's letters. The forgiveness or salvation comes when the gospel is preached and the correct response follows—repentance and baptism. In summary, one (a) learns about the salvation from preaching inspired by the Spirit; (b) and one responds to the preaching and obtains forgiveness by a penitent baptism in the name of Jesus Christ. The two matters are not identical.

As noted, among the powers bestowed during the period of the Holy Spirit baptism was the gift of inspiration, prophetic utterance. Inspiration was a special empowerment, although it was not technically “miraculous.” A miracle is an event that causes amazement or wonder. Preaching or writing under inspiration is not something that would have caused such a reaction. Nevertheless, inspiration was usually accompanied by miracles, manifestations, predictions, and tongues which authenticated the inspiration.

How conferred? If the baptism in the Holy Spirit consisted in a widespread bestowal of special Holy Spirit powers conferred upon the inaugural generation of the church, how was that power imparted? Certain principles, set forth especially in Acts, arise from the New Testament description.

It will be shown (1) that the extraordinary empowerment was conferred *directly* (without apostolic hands) only upon the Twelve at Pentecost, and the house of Cornelius; (2) that through apostolic hands alone was such power conferred to many others (Cornelius received the “same” gift as the apostles so far as the manner of reception—direct from heaven—but not that measure of power given to the apostolic office, which included the ability to confer the Holy Spirit); (3) that the power necessarily ceased with the apostolic age; and, very important, (4) that the reception of such power was only indirectly related to individual personal salvation.

Basic facts. Briefly, what are some of the basic facts about the event of the Holy Spirit baptism? As noted, the expression “baptize in the Holy Spirit” or its verbal equivalent occurs only six times in Scripture (Matthew 3:11; Mark 1:8; Luke 3:16; John 1:33; Acts 1:5; 11:16). Acts has the most to say about it—the expression itself however occurs in Acts only in quotations from Jesus. The author of Acts, in his own usage, wanted to reserve the word *baptize* for (water) immersion. Instead, Luke speaks of the Holy Spirit baptism typically by such phrases as “filled with the Spirit.”

The first reference in Acts is as follows:

¹ One should notice John the Baptist (Luke 1:14-17); Elizabeth (Luke 1:41-45); Zechariah (Luke 1:67—79); Simeon (Luke 2:25-35); Jesus (Luke 4:14-15, cf. 16-21; 10:21-22); disciples (Luke 12:12); the Twelve (Acts 1:8; 2:4ff, cf. 2:17ff; 4:8ff, 31; 10:19ff, 34ff; 11:12, 14); Stephen (Acts 6:5, 8-10ff; 7:1ff, cf. 7:51); Philip (8:29ff); Paul (9:17, 20); the house of Cornelius (10:44-46); Paul and Barnabas (Acts 13:2, 4ff); and the Ephesian 12 (Acts 19:6). Other Luke-Acts material could be cited which suggest something similar.

... he charged them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Father, which, said he, ye heard from me: For John indeed baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized in the Holy Spirit not many days hence...you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and to the end of the earth (Acts 1:4-5, 8).

Note the following facts from these verses:

- (1) The baptism in the Holy Spirit was “the promise of the Father.”
- (2) The event would occur, for the apostles, within a few days.
- (3) The event would bring to its recipients an empowerment for witness.

The preamble to Acts 1 is Luke 24:36-53, “And behold, I send forth the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city, until ye be clothed with power from on high” (Luke 24:49). Note again that “the promise of the Father” (the Holy Spirit baptism) would include “power from on high.”

With reference to the apostles (others would receive empowerment in due time), the “promise of the Father” was plainly kept on the day of Pentecost, when they were filled with the Holy Spirit from heaven (Acts 2:1-13). They were empowered to speak in tongues. The whole event was accompanied by a sound from heaven like wind (which filled the entire chamber); and flames in appearance like fire, resting on each of them. Peter explains in Acts 2:33 that the Father had imparted the promised Holy Spirit to Jesus, and that Jesus then “poured out” upon the apostles that which had been seen and heard. This was the event which empowered the apostolic witness (see Acts 1:8).

When Peter began his sermon in Acts 2, he said,

...but this is that which hath been spoken through the prophet Joel: And it shall be in the last days, saith God, I will pour forth of my spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams: yea and on my servants and on my handmaidens in those days will I pour forth of my spirit; and they shall prophesy. And I will show wonders in the heaven above, and signs on the earth beneath; blood, and fire, and vapor of smoke: the sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the day of the lord come, that great and notable day. And it shall be, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved (acts 2:16-21).

There is no ambiguity in Peter’s introduction: “This is that...” The event which had just been witnessed: the sound, the fire-like phenomenon, and the languages were the fulfillment (or the inauguration of the fulfillment) of the prophecy found in Joel.

We pointed out that the prophecy of Joel is the “promise of God” – the promised “pouring out” of his Spirit. Therefore when John the Baptist spoke of the baptism in the Holy Spirit, and when Jesus is quoted in Acts 1:5; 11:16, the reference is to the prophecy of Joel in chapter 2:28-32. Clearly, if anyone is to understand the baptism in the Holy Spirit, he must understand Joel’s prophecy.

Summary. To summarize the above, in Acts the following are related or correlated: (1) the baptism in the Holy Spirit, (2) the promise of the Father, (3) the coming of the Holy Spirit, (4) the reception of power from on high, and (5) the events of Acts 2:1-4. This included (6) being filled with the Spirit, (7) the sound that filled the house, (8) the fire-like flames, (9) the empowerment to speak in tongues, (10) the fulfillment of Joel 2:28-32, and thus, (11) the pouring out of God’s Spirit.

Pour out becomes baptized in. The prophet Joel does not call the event a “baptism” in the Spirit, but a “pouring out” of the Spirit. Why and how does the OT terminology, *pouring out*, change in the NT to *baptism*? For the answer, see pp. 31ff.

Does Spirit baptism replace water baptism? John the Baptist declared that he baptized with water, but the Lord would baptize with the Holy Spirit. Did John affirm that water baptism was going to be replaced with Spirit baptism? Many Bible students take it this way. However, it is quite indisputable that Jesus ordained a water baptism for his church (Acts 8:36-39; 10:47-48; 22:16; Ephesians 5:26; et al.).

Please note carefully (it is frequently overlooked) that the word *baptizō*, when used literally and without any specification of a medium, has inherent in it the element of water (Oepke, *TDNT* 1:539; and see most Greek lexicons). *Baptizō* should therefore, in many passages, be rendered “immerse in water.” By definition in such

passages it cannot be understood to refer to a baptism “in Spirit.” John was not teaching that Jesus was going replace water baptism with Spirit baptism.

Since the elements of the two baptisms are not the point of contrast, what is? The comparison is rather John’s ministry, his preparation for the kingdom, versus its later inauguration with the coming of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost. John’s ministry could not claim the fulfillment of Joel 2. His ministry was a baptism of water only, looking forward to the coming of Christ. Christ, in the new age, not only authorizes a water baptism, but at the inaugural he confers an overwhelming of the Holy Spirit on the infant church.

John’s ministry (thus his baptism) was preparatory; Jesus’ ministry (including the baptizing in the Holy Spirit), in contrast, was the consummation. From another perspective (looking toward the future), Jesus’ ministry, with its culmination on the day of Pentecost, was initiatory.

More. The following will be further explained as we go along: (1) The Holy Spirit baptism was the fulfillment of the prophecy of Joel 2:28-32. (2) The Holy Spirit baptism was a signal of the inauguration of the age of salvation. (3) The Holy Spirit baptism was not directly instrumental in the personal salvation of individuals. For the development of truth, see especially Chapter 14, pp. 59ff. (4) The Holy Spirit baptism was not a rival to or substitute for immersion in water.

CHAPTER 2—THE HOLY SPIRIT: SANCTIFICATION AND/OR MANIFESTATION?

“They had received the Spirit, namely, of remission of sins: but the Spirit of miracles they had not received”—John Chrysostom, Acts, Homily xviii.

“The Samaritans had the Spirit of adoption conferred on them already, the extraordinary graces of the Spirit are added as a culmination” —John Calvin Commentary on Acts 8:16.

What does Luke specifically mean when he writes of people “receiving” the Spirit? Answering this question will enable one to understand Luke’s interpretation of Joel’s prophecy (Joel 2:28-32) concerning the pouring out of the Spirit.

Distinct roles. From the beginning of the church until relatively recent times, Bible students usually held that there was a distinction between the ordinary gifts of the Spirit and the extraordinary, between the fruit of the Spirit and the manifestations or empowerments of the Spirit. Expositors at least as ancient as Chrysostom and as recent as Calvin were able to see this difference. A simple way to observe the distinction is to look at 1 Corinthians 12-14. In those chapters one can see how richly blessed the Corinthians were in manifestations of the Spirit, and at the same time how lacking they were in love, the fruit of the Spirit.

Modern skepticism’s influence on exegesis. In modern times, with its widespread denial of the miraculous and its reaction to charismatic movements, the above distinction is no longer generally held. At some point, it became the rule in most academic circles to dismiss the descriptions of miracles in Scripture as simply misinterpretations or exaggerations of ordinary occurrences, the idea being that ancient “superstitious” people were not capable of discerning between the two kinds of events.

The text of Scripture, per this approach, must be reinterpreted so that one replaces the extraordinary with the ordinary. In this way, the extraordinary role of the Spirit in empowerment and the ordinary role of the Spirit in indwelling have become, in much of modern exegesis, indistinguishable. This dismissal of the miraculous not only shows lack of faith in Scripture, but it does damage to the interpretation of the text. It certainly causes confusion when trying to understand the Holy Spirit baptism.

On the contrary, the ancient writers, in reflecting upon what they regarded as divine events, neither considered them all miraculous, nor all ordinary. The text of Scripture refers to both kinds of events, but it exercises considerable restraint in the number and nature of those it identifies as miraculous. The pious of ancient times were sober-minded, rational people who could recognize ordinary events as ordinary, and the extraordinary as extraordinary.

Luke, for example, certainly believed that the inauguration of the gospel age of salvation, beginning on the day of Pentecost, was marked by miracles, signs, and wonders. How, if he was unable to differentiate ordinary from extraordinary, would he have been able to narrate such a history? Any and every ordinary happenstance could have been interpreted as miraculous and a pointer to the “beginning.”

The ancients deserve more confidence. The human authors of Scripture believed they could discern ordinary God-credited events, such as daily bread on the table, the clothing of the lilies, and the feeding of the birds; from extraordinary God-credited events such as the multiplying of loaves and fishes and walking on water. If one is going to interpret correctly, one must interpret Bible authors on their own terms, not on modern terms.

Two roles. The Spirit sometimes empowered people without indwelling and sanctifying them. In other individuals he took up an indwelling, sanctifying role. By sanctification we here refer to the full measure of sanctification granted by God and associated with forgiveness;² not to any of the lesser degrees or functions sometimes termed sanctification.³

Did the Spirit sometimes perform both functions (sanctification and empowerment) in the same person? Yes, but the roles were still distinct. When one looks at Scripture as a whole, the Spirit is depicted in his miraculous, empowering office far more often than in any other.

² Acts 20:32, Romans 15:16, 1 Corinthians 1:2, etc.

³ As in 1 Corinthians 7:14, Hebrews 9:23, and Romans 6:19; cf. 1 Thessalonians 5:23.

Generally, the prophetic extraordinary office is found in the OT, in the four gospels, in Acts, and (in part) in Paul's letters. Reflections on the "ordinary" indwelling is principally found in Paul. In the remainder of the NT, the Spirit is also mentioned primarily in his prophetic office, although there are some ambiguous usages.

Paul's distinguishing of the roles of the Spirit. In his writing on the Spirit, Paul characteristically speaks of the indwelling Spirit—the sanctifying presence of the Spirit in Christians. If there is an identity or significant overlap in the indwelling role and the empowering role of the Spirit, Paul's letters would be the key place to find it. Yet Paul never confuses the two. The following passages seem to be the most relevant for seeing the distinction Paul makes in the two offices of the Spirit:

Romans 12:6-8. One finds described in Romans 12 ministries imparted to Christians for reinforcing the infant church. Some of ministries sound almost like the fruit of the Spirit of Galatians 5. However, they should be interpreted as formally recognized and empowered functions within the congregation (see Kasemann, *Romans*, pp. 340-342). The functionaries received an extraordinary level of competence from the Spirit as follows: (1) prophecy (inspired preaching), (2) service (special competence in furnishing congregational assistance), (3) teaching (inspired teaching), (4) exhortation (special proficiency in the cure of souls), (5) giving or contributing (highly competent in the distribution of congregational alms), (6) ruling (expert in organizing), (7) mercy (gifted in the ability to efficiently distribute aid for the sick and abandoned). The same types of offices need to be exercised today in congregations—even though functionaries do not have the extraordinary abilities granted by the empowering Spirit. Clearly the proper use of one's gifts was considered by Paul an important expression of "spiritual worship" (Romans 12:1-2).

Romans 15:16-19. Paul's Gentile converts were sanctified by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit (verse 16). However, Paul does not credit himself with their conversion except as his preaching was empowered by God. In humility Paul defers to Christ's work through him, being gifted, as he was, in word and in the power of signs and wonders (verses 18-19).

1 Corinthians 1:5-7. Paul searches for some way to commend the Corinthians. In their current disorder, he cannot bring himself to speak of their holiness in faith and love (contrast Ephesians 1:15; Philippians 1:9; Colossians 1:4; etc.). But they are well endowed with miraculous gifts, far removed from the fruit of the Spirit such as he enumerates in Galatians 5:22-23. So the best he can muster is a thanksgiving that they have the empowerments of the Spirit (1 Corinthians 1:5-7).

1 Corinthians 12:3. In an assembly of inspired Christians, if one believer stands to speak, claiming inspired speech, how does one test his giftedness? The content of his words must be in harmony with "Jesus as Lord." Certain of the Corinthians were specially empowered to discern in exactly such cases (1 Corinthians 12:10).

1 Corinthians 12:13. Baptism "by the Spirit" speaks of the Spirit as an agent in baptism (immersion in water). Specifically, the Spirit is present as an earnest, whereby a provisional resurrection to new life is accomplished. "Drinking of one Spirit" is the reception of extraordinary gifts of the Spirit—as described in the context. See also p. 53.

1 Corinthians 12-14. Nothing in chapters 12-14 confuses the issue of the special gifts with that presence of the Spirit associated with sanctification. The list of special gifts in 1 Corinthians 12 are not intermixed with the fruit of the Spirit such as love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, and so forth. In fact, there is a contrast: the most excellent way is not the way of the manifestations, but the way of love (1 Corinthians 12:31ff.). Paul expressly declares that one might have great powers from the Spirit, and yet lack the supreme fruit of the Spirit, love (1 Corinthians 13:1-2). The weakness of the extraordinary is specifically contrasted with the continuing validity of faith, hope, and love (1 Corinthians 13:8-13).

2 Corinthians 12:12. The signs Paul performs are signs of apostleship rather than signs of true spirituality.

Galatians 3:1-5. As is well known, the Apostle was upset with the Galatians. They were in the process of deserting Christ (Galatians 1:6), of being severed from Christ, and of falling from grace (5:4). They were ceasing to obey the truth (5:7). They were warned about works of the flesh—rather than commended for bearing the fruit of the Spirit (5:19-21). Yet, despite all indications of deficiency in the indwelling sanctification of the Spirit, the Galatians were still enjoying empowerments of the Spirit (Galatians 3:1-5). The Galatians received the indwelling gift of the Spirit upon their obedience to the gospel—although they were insufficiently impacted by it. They were able to do miracles because, in consequence of responsiveness to the gospel, and presumably, by the hands of apostles, they received special gifts.

Romans 1:11-13. See p. 27.

The references to “power” in 1 Corinthians 1:18-2:4 and 1 Thessalonians 1:5 seem most likely to be references to the power of the word, the gospel.

In summary, Paul always makes a distinction between, on the one hand, the indwelling Spirit, with its sanctifying presence; and, on the other hand, the visitations of the Spirit—the empowerment of the Spirit with its extraordinary manifestations. The same Spirit was present in the early Christians in at least two distinct roles: (1) an empowerment, and (2) an indwelling sanctification. These functions are not confused and confounded in Scripture. Christians today ought to recognize the difference.

Prophetic empowerment not the same as sanctification. In particular, one should note an absence of evidence that the coming of the “prophetic” empowerment of the Spirit upon any of the figures of the OT or the NT served to “sanctify” them. The phrase “holy prophets” refers to the endowment with special gifts of the Holy Spirit, not to “regeneration” or saving “sanctification” (see note on sanctification, p. 13). The reception of the Spirit and endowment with extraordinary gifts were hardly instrumental in individual saving sanctification in any of the following instances: the messengers of Saul (1 Samuel 19:20ff); Caiphas (John 11:49-50); Bezalel and Oholiab (Exodus 31:1ff; 35:31ff); Othniel (Judges 3:9-10); Gideon (Judges 6:34); Jephthah (Judges 11:29); Samson (Judges 13:24f.; 14:6, 19; 15:14); Saul (1 Samuel 10:6, 10; 11:6); Amasai (1 Chronicles 12:18); Balaam (Numbers 24:2ff.; nor his donkey? Numbers 22:28-30). If the Spirit visited an individual for the role of empowerment it was not the same as coming to him for the purpose of indwelling him and making his home with him. It seems relevant that in Matthew 7:21-23 Jesus allows for the possibility of miracles having occurred with invocation of his name, yet those having invoked the name and having done the miracles, being distinctly unholy due to their disobedience. No doubt lying wonders are also referenced in these words from the Lord, but if that is all he means his lesson on obedience is unduly minimized. There are also other possible references to powers being exhibited by unrighteous persons.⁴

Most Christians of all times have thought they could distinguish between the ordinary and the extraordinary; the non-miraculous and the miraculous; the fruit of the Spirit and manifestations from the Spirit; the holy indwelling of the Spirit and the temporary empowering visitations of the Spirit. Modern Christians must again learn to make these distinctions.

The Holy Spirit in Acts

Granting a distinction between the ordinary and the extraordinary, between sanctification and empowerment, it ought to be determined whether one or both of these roles of the Spirit is depicted in the book of Acts. A careful examination will show that, in Acts, the Spirit is the grantor of the special, the extraordinary, the miraculous, or the prophetic gifts; and that nothing is mentioned as to the (non-miraculous) indwelling or sanctification of the Spirit.

As noted, Paul is the apostle who most frequently speaks of the indwelling Holy Spirit. In recent interpretations of Acts, Paul’s treatment of the Holy Spirit with regard to indwelling and its related “sanctification” is taken and overlaid like a transparency on top of Luke’s discussion. This practice causes a tangle of interpretive problems. If one believes that it would have been impossible for a companion of Paul not to reference Paul’s doctrine in regard to sanctification of the Spirit, then of course one will be unable to accept the following proposition. But nonetheless it is the case that Luke sees fit to speak only of the extraordinary empowerments of the Spirit. This is due to the narrowly focused goals Luke had in penning the document. In particular, he is anxious to put the imprimatur of the prophetic Spirit on the doctrine of the universality of the gospel. So long as the attempt is made to find a doctrine of personal “regeneration of the Spirit” or sanctifying indwelling in Acts, confusion will result.

Significant terminology omission. It should be observed that absent from Acts is doctrine or terminology relative to any of the following: personal sanctification by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, new life by the Holy Spirit, sonship by the Spirit, justification by the Spirit, earnest of the Spirit, sealing by the Spirit, or personal “regeneration” or renewal by the Spirit. Paul in his letters speaks often of an indwelling of God’s Spirit in Christians—yet that vocabulary is entirely absent from Acts. This point—that Acts speaks only of empowerment—is so important that we should do a quick survey of the Spirit in Acts to confirm it.

⁴ See Luke 10:20; Deuteronomy 13:1-3; Judas (Matthew 10:1); Exodus 8:7ff. (?); Matthew 24:24; 1 Corinthians 9:27; Acts 16:16-17.

The Holy Spirit in Acts (all passages in Acts referring to, or specifically related to, the Holy Spirit)

The point to be decided in each passage is whether the reference is to a visitation of the Spirit which empowered miraculous activity, or to an indwelling of the Spirit. We have placed either **(empowerment)** or **(indwelling)** after each passage to indicate our preference.

- Acts 1:2. Jesus' command to preach the gospel universally was inspired by the Holy Spirit. His utterance was prophetic, an oracle, or a divine revelation such as ordinary persons could not speak. **(empowerment)**
- Acts 1:4. The "promise" here mentioned was the particular prophecy found in Joel 2, as recorded by Luke in Acts 2:17-21. The promise was that God would pour out his Holy Spirit, and that it would fall not merely on eminent persons such as the prophets, the leaders, and the specially chosen (as previously); but even the youth, male and female, servants and masters, would prophesy. Not all in OT days were prophets. But the inauguration of the kingdom would bring to the first generation of Christians widespread empowerment to prophesy and speak by revelation. As a result of the Holy Spirit conferral, wonders and signs would be manifested. **(empowerment)**
- Acts 1:5, 8. God promised (in accordance with Joel 2) that the apostles would receive empowerment. They would have power in their work of testifying to the gospel. They would manifest prophetic gifts. They would possess confirmatory, extraordinary attesting powers. See also Acts 14:3. **(empowerment)**
- Acts 1:16. David had the prophetic gift. He was empowered to speak authoritatively by the inspiration of God. **(empowerment)**
- Acts 2:1-4. The Holy Spirit manifested itself as a sound like a mighty wind, and as tongues like fire. Joel 2 predicted the pouring out of the Spirit on this occasion. The result was to be prophecy, visions, dreams, wonders, and signs. The wind-sound and the fire-like tongues were certainly wonders. The gift of tongues was self-validating prophecy. **(empowerment)**
- Acts 2:5-12. The gift of tongues is further described. They cause bewilderment, amazement, wonder, and perplexity. **(empowerment)**
- Acts 2:17-21. Here Peter turns his listeners' (and Luke turns his readers') attention specifically to Joel 2, and declares that they are seeing the beginning of its fulfillment. He declares that apostolic empowerment (resulting in widespread prophetic gifts distributed among the early Christians) marks the inauguration of the church-kingdom. The gifts of prophecy, visions, dreams, wonders, and signs are to be widely, "universally" spread in the early church. **(empowerment)**
- Acts 2:22. Christ himself also was attested by God by mighty works, wonders, and signs. (Cf. 1:8; 10:38). **(empowerment)**
- Acts 2:25-31. David prophesied. The Spirit is not mentioned. But compare 1:16-20. The prophetic word is an authoritative word. David was empowered to foresee. Such ability is not available to the ordinary religious teacher. **(empowerment)**
- Acts 2:33. God poured out the Spirit and thus the signs and empowering gift of tongues that were witnessed by the hearers of Peter's sermon on Pentecost. These extraordinary Holy Spirit manifestations of Pentecost were the fulfillment of Joel 2. **(empowerment)**
- Acts 2:38-39. This passage, which is so familiar and so important, deserves an extended treatment, which it will get later. It will only be observed briefly that in its context the "promise" is the promise of the Holy Spirit, already identified by 1:4-5; 2:15-21; and 2:33 as the extraordinary gifts (see also the preamble to Acts 1-2 in Luke 24:49). Also notice the curiosity of the future tense in reference to the Spirit. Observe that the *eis* (*for* or *unto*) of 2:38 cannot be assumed to be grammatically construed with the gift of the Holy Spirit. Many expositors have therefore correctly identified this promised gift of the Holy Spirit as identical with the previous discussion of extraordinary spiritual empowerment. **(empowerment)**
- Acts 2:43. The apostles do many wonders and signs as a result of their empowerment by the Holy Spirit (cf. 2:17ff). **(empowerment)**

- Acts 3:1-12. Peter and John heal the lame man, causing wonder and amazement. This is a result of their empowerment (3:12) with the Holy Spirit (1:8; 2:1-4ff.). The apostolic testimony is confirmed by the miracle (cf. 2:17ff). **(empowerment)**
- Acts 4:7-12. Peter is filled with the Holy Spirit and prophesies and speaks with authority beyond that of ordinary teachers. This is an expression of the power of the Spirit (4:7). As David and the other prophets of the Old Testament were empowered to speak inspired messages from God, so Peter was likewise endowed. **(empowerment)**
- Acts 4:16. The healing of the lame man was a sign, a manifestation of power from the Holy Spirit which confirmed the words of the apostles (2:17ff). **(empowerment)**
- Acts 4:25-26. David prophesied. He foresaw. He did something extraordinary, as empowered by the Spirit. See Acts 1:16 above. **(empowerment)**
- Acts 4:29-33. The apostles pray that they might preach boldly and that their words might be accompanied by healings, signs, and wonders. The apostles are freshly infilled by the Holy Spirit. The infilling is accompanied by an earthquake, a manifestation of divine power. They keep on preaching by inspiration, with authority, with power, and with manifestations (2:17ff). **(empowerment)**
- Acts 5:1-11. The apostle Peter is lied to by Ananias and Sapphira. Peter says they have lied to the Holy Spirit. As a prophet, Peter knows (by revelation) that they have lied. The couple is miraculously struck down by God. Peter is empowered by the Holy Spirit with prophetic insight. Nothing is hidden from the eyes of God. **(empowerment)**
- Acts 5:12. Additional signs and wonders are done by the apostles—because they have been empowered by the Holy Spirit (2:17ff). **(empowerment)**
- Acts 5:14-16. Peter, even by means of his shadow, heals all who come responsively to the hearing of the gospel. He was empowered by the Holy Spirit. (1:8; 2:17ff). **(empowerment)**
- Acts 5:19. A sign occurs in which an angel miraculously releases the apostles from prison (2:17ff). **(empowerment)**
- Acts 5:32 (see also p. 64 below). This passage is a reference backward to the special empowerment of the Holy Spirit granted at Pentecost to the apostles. The sense of it is best captured by the *Simple English Bible* translation: "...The Holy Spirit has shown you that we are telling the truth! God has given the Spirit to those who obeyed him." Peter is saying that his miraculous release from prison (along with other signs and wonders) was confirming testimony by the Holy Spirit to the resurrection of Christ—a result of the extraordinary empowerments of the Holy Spirit given at Pentecost. There is no mention of (water) baptism. The reception of the Spirit referred to here is not to any ordinary indwelling, but to the extraordinary gifts of the Spirit (cf. Alexander, 1:229-230). **(empowerment)**
- Acts 6:3, 5, 10. The similarity of language in verses 3, 5, and 10 suggests that in all three passages the import of the reference to the Spirit should be similar. Why should one think of miraculous gifts here? There are three reasons. First, the phrase "full of the Spirit" occurs in verses 3 and 5. This reminds one of the extraordinary endowment mentioned in Acts 2:4 (see also the paragraphs below on "filled with the Spirit," pp. 23ff). Second, it seems likely that here in Acts 6 there is reference to circumstances in the early history of Israel (Numbers 11:10-30; Exodus 31:1-3; 35:31). Prophetic gifts of the Spirit were conferred among them, making them wise and competent for various tasks. Thus, also, in the early days of the church, new Israel, Spirit-filled men were endowed with special gifts of wise administration. Third, the immediate context references, in connection with these very men, extraordinary manifestations (6:8, 10, 15; 7:51-52, 55-56; 8:4-13). For example, in Acts 6:10, Stephen's prophetic oracles could not be matched by ordinary human wisdom and eloquence. And Philip is also empowered (Acts 8:6). In Acts 6:5, "faith" is not the ordinary faith, it is an inspired, and thus a true, grasp of the nature of the gospel, especially as it pertained to the universality of the gospel (see Acts 1:2 where it is noted that the Lord's command to preach universally was inspired by the Holy Spirit). **(empowerment)**
- Acts 7:51. The resistance of the listeners to the Holy Spirit would appear to be expressed in their rejection of the signs, wonders, and inspired wisdom and preaching as done by Stephen and the apostles. In the same

way, the ancestors had rejected the prophetic oracles and signs of the Old Testament prophets. **(empowerment)**

- Acts 7:55. The Holy Spirit empowers in Stephen a vision of heaven and the glory of God. **(empowerment)**
- Acts 8:4-13. Philip (one already noted as gifted with the Holy Spirit, 6:5) performs signs, healings and great miracles, along with his preaching. His genuine miracles trump the tricks of Simon (8:13). **(empowerment)**
- Acts 8:14-24. The “promise” was to all whom the Lord would “call” (2:39); therefore, the apostles are sent to confer the Spirit on the converts of Samaria also. It was the visible gift (8:18), as promised in 2:17ff. The apostles possessed the specific power that Simon coveted, that of conferral of the Spirit (8:19). The Samaritans of this passage were people who had already called on the name of Lord, been baptized, and been saved. Now they need the special prophetic gifts in order that they themselves might preach by inspiration, and that they might also validate the gospel by signs performed among those whom they evangelize. This will further confirm the arrival of the age of salvation in Jesus Christ. Simon saw manifestations of special gifts. The apostles had power to confer prophetic gifts. **(empowerment)**
- Acts 8:26-40. Philip, a Spirit-filled man, receives prophetic guidance in his evangelistic outreach. An angel spoke to Philip, as did the Spirit. When there is a reference to extraordinary gifts and events, the role of Spirit seems to merge with that of angels. **(empowerment)**
- Acts 8:39. This is a reference to miraculous translocation, similar to certain events in the OT (2 Kings 2:11-17). **(empowerment)**
- Acts 9:10-16. Ananias receives a vision (2:19). He is told to go and perform a miracle of healing. One may presume that Ananias is a recipient of the Holy Spirit empowerment according to the promise (2:17ff). **(empowerment)**
- Acts 9:17-19. Ananias lays hands on Saul, and Saul is healed. The most natural reading of the text leads one to believe that Ananias performs an apostolic function in conferring the Holy Spirit on Saul. Ensuing events show that afterward Saul also possessed extraordinary Holy Spirit power. **(empowerment)**
- Acts 9:31. The early church was comforted by the Holy Spirit. How? Presumably by the inspired prophecies, visions, signs, and wonders which were prevalent in its midst empowered by the Holy Spirit. Hackett quotes DeWette’s explanation: “The power of consolatory discourse conferred by the Spirit on those who preached” (1882, p. 126). If one is forced, due to the brevity of the reference, to fall back on the wider context of Acts as a whole, it surely favors a reference to manifestations of special gifts and prophetic utterances (2:17ff). By these empowerments the early church was comforted. It is conceivable that Luke has Isaiah 63:14 in mind: “Like cattle that go down into the valley, the Spirit of the Lord gave them rest. So thou didst lead thy people, to make for thyself a glorious name.” The church was comforted and encouraged by the manifestations of special gifts and by the prophetic messages which came to the church through the Spirit. **(empowerment)**
- Acts 9:32-43. Peter had been empowered by the Holy Spirit (2:17ff). He heals Aeneas. He raises Dorcas from the dead. **(empowerment)**
- Acts 10:9-16; 11:4-10; 15:7. Peter experiences a vision in connection with the one Cornelius had (2:17ff). **(empowerment)**
- Acts 10:19-23; 11:12. Peter receives a revelation from the Holy Spirit in coordination with the visit from the messengers of Cornelius (2:17ff). Acts 10:19 references a prophetic message given by the Spirit to guide Peter. **(empowerment)**
- Acts 10:38. The Lord was attested above all others by the prophetic powers he possessed. **(empowerment)**
- Acts 10:44-48; 11:15-17; 15:8. The house of Cornelius receives the Holy Spirit’s empowerment and they begin to speak in tongues as at Pentecost. The salvation comes afterward, when they are baptized in the name of the Lord. **(empowerment)**
- Acts 11:1-18. See the comments on passages in Acts 10 above. **(empowerment)**

- Acts 11:12. See above, on Acts 10:19. **(empowerment)**
- Acts 11:15-16. See above on 10:44-47 and Acts 1-2. **(empowerment)**
- Acts 11:17 (NASB). The apostles, who had come to a true and faithful conviction about Jesus, received the Spirit at Pentecost, and manifested that in tongues and other signs. **(empowerment)**
- Acts 11:24. See comments on 6:3ff. above, on “filled with the Spirit.” Barnabas was inspired by the Holy Spirit so that he might proclaim a true perception of the faith—that it was to be universally available. See also the Seven in Acts 6. **(empowerment)**
- Acts 11:27-28. Agabus prophesies. Apparently he had received prophetic Holy Spirit gifts as promised in 2:17ff. Agabus was one of those many persons in the early church endowed with the gift of prophecy. **(empowerment)**
- Acts 12:7-11. Peter is released from prison through a miracle. See also Acts 2:19. **(empowerment)**
- Acts 12:23. Herod is smitten dead. See also Acts 2:19. **(empowerment)**
- Acts 13:1-4. The four prophets (Acts 2:17ff) of Antioch receive a revelation from the Holy Spirit. **(empowerment)**
- Acts 13:9-12. Being filled with the Holy Spirit, Paul strikes Elymas blind, and causes astonishment. Paul manifests the empowerment of the Spirit. **(empowerment)**
- Acts 13:52. See comments on 6:3ff. above, on “filled with the Spirit.” See also the comments on 9:31 and the note below, on page 24, on the Disciples of Pisidian Antioch. **(empowerment)**
- Acts 14:3. Paul and Silas spoke the gospel, while the Lord bore witness to the word, granting signs and wonders to be done by their hands (Acts 2:17ff). **(empowerment)**
- Acts 14:8-18. Paul heals (2:17ff) the crippled man at Lystra. It causes amazement. **(empowerment)**
- Acts 14:19-20. (No reference to Spirit here. Included for the sake of completeness). If a miracle is intended, it is not likely a resurrection. Such an event as a resurrection would surely merit more comment by Luke. Possibly it was an example of divine protection, so that the falling stones did no real damage. The early Christians were able to distinguish between real miracles and merely fortuitous events. Absent from the account here are any words such as *Spirit, miracle, sign, wonder, amazement*, etc.
- Acts 15:7-9. See above on Acts 10. God does not base decisions on favoritism to Jews versus Gentiles. He made clear that the Gentiles were equally eligible for salvation by sending prophetic gifts upon them. See Acts 10:44-47. **(empowerment)**
- Acts 15:12. Barnabas and Paul relate accounts of the miracles performed through them (2:17ff). **(empowerment)**
- Acts 15:28. The Holy Spirit continues to guide the early church into the universal mission through inspired men such as the apostles (15:4, 8, 12; 2:1-4, 17ff). The early church was widely gifted with prophetic guidance. **(empowerment)**
- Acts 16:6-10. The Holy Spirit guides the outreach of the church by visions and oracles (2:17ff). **(empowerment)**
- Acts 16:18. Paul heals by the Holy Spirit power given to him (2:17ff). **(empowerment)**
- Acts 16:25-30. Paul and Silas are miraculously released from prison (2:17ff). **(empowerment)**
- Acts 18:9-10. Paul receives a vision from the Lord (cf. 2:17ff). **(empowerment)**
- Acts 19:1-7. Paul knows that the twelve disciples of Ephesus, if they are believers, are eligible to receive the Holy Spirit gifts (2:38-39). He doesn’t know if an apostle has been there to confer those gifts. When he discovers that they had not even heard that the Holy Spirit had been poured out at Pentecost, he knows something is amiss with their faith. Following their conversion, Paul confers the Holy Spirit on them (2:17ff), and they are empowered with extraordinary gifts. **(empowerment)**

- Acts 19:11-12. Paul performs miracles at Ephesus (2:17ff). **(empowerment)**
- Acts 19:21. This is not a reference to the Holy Spirit, but to Paul's spirit. **(empowerment)**
- Acts 20:9-12. Paul performs a miracle of resurrection (2:17ff). **(empowerment)**
- Acts 20:22. This not a reference to the Holy Spirit, but to Paul's spirit. **(empowerment)**
- Acts 20:23. Prophets in the various cities, informed by the Holy Spirit, warn Paul of upcoming events (2:17ff). **(empowerment)**
- Acts 20:28. The Holy Spirit, by means of prophetic utterance, pointed out men for the eldership. See also Acts 13:1-3 where prophets in the early church pointed by inspiration to certain individuals to be selected for service. (Cf. Conley, *Acts*) **(empowerment)**
- Acts 21:4. Prophets, by the Spirit, warn Paul of coming events (2:17ff). See Acts 20:23. **(empowerment)**
- Acts 21:11. Agabus warns Paul, by the Spirit, of future events (2:17ff). See Acts 20:23. **(empowerment)**
- Acts 22:6-15. Paul sees a vision. He hears a divine voice, and receives divine instructions (cf. 2:17ff). See above on 9:3-9. **(empowerment)**
- Acts 22:17-21. Paul receives divine revelations (2:17ff). **(empowerment)**
- Acts 23:9. Luke places in the mouths of the Pharisees the possibility (which was in fact the truth) that Paul had received revelations from the Spirit (2:17ff). **(empowerment)**
- Acts 23:11. Paul receives divine revelations (2:17ff). **(empowerment)**
- Acts 26:12-22. See above on 9:3-9; 22:6-15. **(empowerment)**
- Acts 27:23-25. Paul receives a prophetic revelation (2:17ff). **(empowerment)**
- Acts 28:25. The authority of a prophet is the divine authority of the Holy Spirit. The early church received the same divine power (2:17ff). **(empowerment)**

As one can see from this survey, the role of the Spirit in Acts is that of prophetic empowerment. It is the exclusive role of the Spirit in Acts. If one looks at the 55 specific references to the Holy Spirit in Acts, less than 5 or 6 of them seem even remotely like Paul's doctrine of the indwelling, sanctifying Spirit. But each of these few contested passages is more reasonably interpreted consistent with the defining reference to the Spirit in Acts 1:8, *you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you*, and with the predominating certain references to the empowerment of the Spirit found throughout Luke and Acts. Luke therefore concentrates his attention entirely on the prophetic Holy Spirit, the fulfillment of the Joel 2 prophecy. When this is recognized, it will help identify the nature of the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

CHAPTER 3—THE TERMINOLOGY OF HOLY SPIRIT EMPOWERMENT

...and the Holy Spirit was upon him (Luke 2:25)

The Gift of the Holy Spirit

It has been said that there is a distinction to be made between the “gift of the Holy Spirit” (as in Acts 2:38), and the “gifts of the Spirit.” The first is said to be the Spirit himself as he indwells people “non-miraculously.” The second is affirmed to be miraculous empowerment. However, right away one should observe that every time the “Spirit” terminology of Acts 2:38 occurs elsewhere in Acts (as in *receive, give* and *gift*), the reference is to the Holy Spirit as an empowering visitation (8:15-20; 10:44-47; 11:16-17).

Further, in Scripture generally, the Spirit is often spoken of as coming upon someone or being given to someone. The context then makes clear that the Spirit has visited someone for the purpose of gifting them in some way. There is no reason to think that in any of these cases such language means something other than the Spirit himself has arrived upon or within someone. Therefore, the correct question becomes, “What is the role or office or function for which the Spirit himself has come upon a person?” When the Spirit performs an office within someone he is himself, in some sense, present. This is sustained throughout Scripture by the Biblical terminology.

Mary. For example, to Mary the angel said, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you...” (Luke 1:35). Bible students will recognize the parallelism of Hebrew poetry in this passage. The power of God was expressed in Mary, but the Holy Spirit was not absent, he was himself present. And in that particular presence he functioned to empower the conception of Jesus the Christ. The Spirit took a particular role, and one would hardly think that the Spirit was absent when he did so. Was the Spirit present in all ways, in all functions, and for all Holy Spirit purposes? No. The Spirit has exercised in people many and various offices through divine history. In Mary’s case there was a special empowering function which resulted in the conception of Jesus.

Simeon. In Luke 2, there is the story of Simeon.

Now there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name was Simeon, and this man was righteous and devout, looking for the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was upon him. And it had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he should not see death before he had seen the Lord’s Christ. And inspired by the Spirit he came into the temple; and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him according to the custom of the law, he took him up in his arms and blessed God and said, ‘Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word; for mine eyes have seen thy salvation’ (Luke 2:25-30).

The Holy Spirit was upon Simeon. For what purpose was he given? It is stated that Simeon experienced a revelation from the Spirit that prior to his death he would see the Christ. The Spirit also inspired Simeon to enter the temple at the time Jesus was brought there by his parents. Simeon was empowered to recognize the child for who he was, and to express an oracle concerning him and his destiny (Luke 2:29-35).

Nothing is said about the Spirit indwelling Simeon to “regenerate” him or to engender in him the fruit of the Spirit. He was being empowered for a prophetic utterance. It is not at all mentioned that the Spirit present in Simeon had any effect in changing him into the likeness of Christ (2 Corinthians 3:18) or in giving life to his mortal body (Romans 8:11) or in putting to death the deeds of the body (Romans 8:13) or in sealing him and guaranteeing his eternal inheritance (Ephesians 1:13-14). It was simple empowerment for the special purpose of God. Nonetheless the Spirit himself was upon Simeon.

Elizabeth. Elizabeth was similarly enabled: “Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit and she exclaimed with a loud cry, ‘Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb!’” (Luke 1:41-42). The Spirit himself came upon Elizabeth and was presumably present in her. What event did he make possible? He empowered a divine oracle. No doubt the Spirit could have come upon her to fulfill other offices, but the text is specific.

Jesus. Jesus doubtless had the Spirit of God from his conception. But continuing affirmations of his possession of God’s Spirit are found, as in Luke 3:22 and 4:1. Luke also says, “And Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit into Galilee...” (Luke 4:14). And again, “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed” (Luke 4:18). The prophetic ministry of Christ was empowered by the presence of the Spirit himself.

Disciples. The first disciples of Jesus were assured of the empowering role of the Spirit in them: “And when they bring you before the synagogues and the rulers and the authorities, do not be anxious how or what you are to answer or what you are to say; for the Holy Spirit will teach you in that very hour what you ought to say” (Luke 12:11-12). It seems reasonable that the Spirit himself would be present in those disciples as he empowered their inspiration.

Apostles. Again, Jesus said to the apostles, “And behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you; but stay in the city, until you are clothed with power from on high” (Luke 24:49). Nothing specific is said of the Spirit here, but we know from Acts that the Spirit was to be the source of the empowerment: “...wait for the promise of the Father ... before many days you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit” (Acts 1:4-5). “...you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be my witnesses ...” (Acts 1:8). The Holy Spirit himself was to come upon the apostles. He was to be present in the apostles. And what function was he to perform in them? Not any and all possible offices, but the office of empowerment.

Paul. When Paul discoursed on the Spirit, he frequently focused on the special indwelling presence in the Christian. In that *abiding* presence, the Spirit himself fulfilled a special role and office. However, it was not empowerment, but rather that function related to indwelling and to an earnest of resurrection life.

Acts. In Acts the Spirit was given to various men and women, young and old. He himself was present with them, but he was present in a specific office: to empower prophetic actions.

Old Testament. This phraseology is also found in the Old Testament:

- “Would that all the Lord’s people were prophets, that the Lord would put his spirit upon them!” (Numbers 11:29). The phraseology is that of the Spirit himself coming upon the people.
- “The Spirit of the Lord came upon him, and he judged Israel; he went out to war, and the Lord gave [the] king of Mesopotamia into his hand; and his hand prevailed” (Judges 3:10). Thus Othniel received the Spirit himself, but in the office of empowerment. He achieved victory with this empowerment of God.
- “But the Spirit of the Lord took possession of Gideon” (Judges 6:34). Gideon received the Spirit himself, but in the office of empowerment. Gideon went on to achieve victory.
- “Then the Spirit of the Lord came upon Jephthah (Judges 11:29).” Jephthah received the Spirit himself, but in the office of empowerment. He attained victory with this empowerment of God.
- “And the Spirit of the Lord came mightily upon [Samson], and he tore the lion asunder as one tears a kid; and he had nothing in his hand” (Judges 14:6). Samson received the Spirit himself, but in the office of empowerment.
- “When [Samson] came to Lehi, the Philistines came shouting to meet him; and the Spirit of the Lord came mightily upon him, and the ropes which were on his arms became as flax that has caught fire, and his bonds melted off his hands” (Judges 15:14). Samson received the Spirit himself, but in the role of empowerment.
- “Then Saul sent messengers to take David; and when they saw the company of the prophets prophesying, and Samuel standing as head over them, the Spirit of God came upon the messengers of Saul, and they also prophesied” (1 Samuel 19:20). The messengers received the Spirit himself, but in the office of empowerment.
- “The Spirit of God came upon [Saul] also, and as he went he prophesied.” (1 Samuel 19:23). Saul received the Spirit himself, but in the role of empowerment.
- “Then the Spirit came upon Amasai, chief of the thirty, and he said, ‘We are yours, O David; and with you, O son of Jesse!’” (1 Chronicles 12:18). Amasai received the Spirit himself, but in the office of empowerment.

The Spirit himself came upon various people down through Biblical history. Receiving the Spirit did not mean however that his office in them was the same in each instance. It is the case that, in the OT and until the beginning of the church on the day of Pentecost, the role of the Spirit was almost entirely, if not exclusively, some form of special empowerment. Following the beginning of the church at Pentecost, in the terminology of the Apostle Paul, the Spirit was further given, at baptism, to all Christians in his role as an indwelling presence and an earnest of resurrection life.

Therefore, in Acts 2:38 the gift of the Spirit is the Spirit. But what is the role of the Spirit? It is not indwelling, but rather it is empowerment, as shown in 1:8 and throughout the material in Luke-Acts.

“Filled With the Spirit”

“Filled with the Spirit” is mostly a Lukan phrase. Out of its 19 occurrences in Scripture, 13 are found in Luke-Acts. The phrase is thought to be found once in Paul. The other citations are from the OT. The background of Luke’s usage would seem to come especially from Exodus 31:3; 35:31; and Deuteronomy 34:9.

Ephesians 5:18. The single reference in Paul is said to be, “And be not drunken with wine, wherein is riot, but be filled with the Spirit” (Ephesians 5:18). However, there is a problem in considering this analogous to the other references. First, the expression in Ephesians is an imperative, “be filled.” Such an imperative is not found anywhere in the other 18 references to Spirit-filling. In all the other usages “filled with the Spirit” is a promise, not a command. Several authorities believe that Paul’s phrase may mean, “be filled in spirit,” a lowercase “s” referring to the human spirit (Abbott, 1897, p. 162; Westcott, 1906, p. 81; ASV mg.). Further, the parallel in Colossians 3:16 indicates something similar: “Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly,” that is, “Let it fill your heart and mind.” The singular nature of the expression in Ephesians indicates that it means something other than the similar language found elsewhere in Scripture. See also the discussion on p. 54.

Filled: indwelling or empowerment? What of the other 18 occurrences? It has been held that “filled with the Spirit” has no necessary reference to extraordinary empowerment. But this is impossible to sustain. In Exodus 31:3 and 35:31, certain men are “filled with the Spirit” for the construction of the tabernacle. Their craftsmanship abilities are elevated above the ordinary. This is a reference to extraordinary, not ordinary gifts.

Joshua. In Deuteronomy 34:9, Joshua is filled with the spirit (Spirit) of wisdom as a result of the laying on of Moses’ hands. The people of Israel were thus to follow his leadership. The context implies that this was a prophetic gift, although of lesser measure in Joshua, since Moses is recalled as the prophet of Israel who did signs, wonders, and manifested mighty works more powerfully than anyone else (Deut 34:10-12; Numbers 27:12-23; cf. 11:25).

Micah. In Micah 3:8, in regard to his prophetic gift, Micah says, “But as for me, I am filled with power, with the Spirit of the Lord, and with justice and might, to declare to Jacob his transgression and to Israel his sin.” This filling refers, at the least, to his ability to speak prophetically.

John the Baptist. Luke’s usage, if anything, is even clearer. In Luke 1:15 the promise that John the Baptist will be filled with the Spirit is followed by a depiction of John as going forth in “the spirit and power of Elijah.” John did no sign, but he was empowered for prophetic utterances.

Elizabeth and Zechariah. In Luke 1:41-45 Elizabeth was filled with the Spirit and was inspired to identify the babe to be born as “the Lord.” In Luke 1:67-79 Zechariah is said to be filled with the Holy Spirit and to “prophesy.” His oracle occupies eleven verses of Scripture.

Jesus. Our Lord himself is said to have been full of the Holy Spirit (Luke 4:1). He defeated the temptations of Satan. And then he returned “in the power of the Spirit into Galilee” (Luke 4:14). Soon he entered the synagogue at Nazareth and claimed for himself the Messianic promise of the Spirit (Isaiah 61:1-2; Luke 4:18ff). He proceeded to identify himself as a prophet (Luke 4:24). Such a context leaves little room for questions about what “filled with the Holy Spirit” means with reference to Christ. It was empowerment for his prophetic role.

The Twelve. In Acts 2:4 the apostles are “filled with the Spirit” and begin to speak in the miracle of tongues. This is in fulfillment of the promise that they would be “clothed with power” (Luke 24:49), and that they would “receive power” (Acts 1:8), all of which is coordinate with the assurance that they would be baptized in the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:4-5), in accordance with the promise of Joel (Acts 2:16ff). This is another express reference to prophetic empowerment.

Peter. In Acts 4:8ff. Peter is freshly infilled with the Spirit and preaches to the Sanhedrin. This message must be regarded as prophetic inspiration (Acts 2:17)—the substance of which is worthy to occupy a paragraph in Holy Scripture.

Some find a certain incongruence between the fact that the apostles had received and been filled with the Holy Spirit in Acts 2:1-4, and yet in 4:8 Peter is again said to be filled (see also 4:31; 6:3, 5; 7:55; 13:9). To make a difference between “full of” and “filled with” seems to be too fine a distinction (see Barrett, 1:226). Some conclude that the presence of the Spirit was intermittent (LC 43). But this ignores the significance of initial Spirit reception (1:5, 8; 2:4, 16, 33; 2:38; 8:15-17; 9:17), which appeared to have implications for the ongoing manifestations which follow. Stephen was “full of the Holy Spirit” when he addressed the Sanhedrin (6:8-10, 15), yet even in the midst of that event, he is freshly or additionally filled, enabling a vision of heaven (7:55).

Perhaps the difficulty in precisely describing the phenomenon arises since modern readers do not possess extraordinary empowerment from the Spirit. It has been said that the Holy Spirit was “quiescent between crises” (Bartlet 165). Bengel said, “the power which dwelt in him [Peter] manifested itself” (p. 771). These seem to be acceptable depictions. Since in Acts a person’s initial reception of the Spirit was an important event, one should reject any view which minimizes that aspect of it.

The apostles pray for the Lord to sustain them in their ministry despite opposition (Acts 4:24-31). They pray for the Lord to grant that they might speak the word, and speak it with boldness; and that healings, signs, and wonders might be performed. An earthquake reassures them of the Lord’s response. They too are freshly filled with the Spirit and continue exactly the ministry requested, a prophetic ministry.

The seven. In Acts 6 seven men are selected to oversee benevolence to the widows. The apostles call for a selection of those who are “full of the Spirit” (6:3, 5). In the light of events in Acts 1-5, it is reasonable that they are referring to men with prophetic gifts. And it is specified that Stephen, one of the seven, “did great wonders and signs among the people” (Acts 6:8). Those who debated him “could not withstand the wisdom and Spirit with which he spoke” (Acts 6:10). Stephen’s sermon, a passage which occupies almost a full chapter of Holy Scripture (7:1-53), is preceded by a kind of transfiguration (6:15), a sign that God inspired his message in a special way. Stephen goes on to be granted a prophetic vision of the heavenly Christ—which occurs at the moment of a fresh infilling of the Spirit—(Acts 7:55-56). All this indicates that Stephen was filled with the special empowerment of the Spirit.

Philip. Philip, who was also one of the seven, did signs, healed the sick, and performed great miracles (Acts 8:6-7, 13). Philip is directed to the side of the eunuch both by an angel and by the Spirit (Acts 8:26, 29). Later Philip is miraculously translocated (Acts 8:39). The depiction is again of a man powerfully gifted by the Holy Spirit. It is hard to accept that the seven are illustrations of men filled with merely ordinary gifts of the Spirit (see also the discussion on p. 17).

Saul. Saul is told he will be filled with the Spirit (Acts 9:17). It is unnecessary to recount all the powerful signs, wonders, and miracles he performed, including the imparting of a measure of the Spirit to others (Acts 19:6). Paul received a fresh infilling of the Spirit before he miraculously struck Elymas blind (Acts 13:9). Surely Paul was not one only ordinarily gifted.

Barnabas. Barnabas was said to be full of the Spirit (Acts 11:24). In Acts 13:1 he is called a prophet. In Acts 14:3 he did “signs and wonders.” Again in Acts 15:12 Paul and Barnabas “related what signs and wonders God had done through them.” Like Paul, Barnabas is not a good candidate for one filled with merely “ordinary” gifts of the Spirit.

Disciples of Pisidian Antioch. Perhaps the best suggestion for being filled with the Spirit in a non-empowering sense would be the disciples of Pisidian Antioch (Acts 13:52). These were “filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit.” Some authorities understand the phraseology to mean, “filled with the gift of joy from the Holy Spirit” (BAGD). This sounds more like Pauline indwelling than empowerment. However, even granting the translation, one is still left to ask how the Spirit filled them with joy. It is reasonable to understand the phrase to mean that the recipients were joyful, having been filled with empowerments of the Holy Spirit. But many translators prefer to render the phrase as referring to two gifts, that of joy and of the Holy Spirit, thus joy and the empowerment of the Spirit. See the analogous Acts 9:31, and the comments on p. 18. At the least, empowerment cannot be excluded. One should say that the evidence favors interpreting this reference in harmony with *every other usage* in Luke-Acts.

Summary. In the light of its OT background and its consistent usage in Luke-Acts, it seems unfounded to postulate an “ordinary” or “non-miraculous” indwelling in the phrase “filled with the Spirit.” There is no sure place in Scripture where the expression has reference to any ordinary “indwelling” or providential influence of the Spirit, and virtually all passages are certainly extraordinary. The expression is therefore an alternative way of communicating that someone has received extraordinary power.

Filled with / baptized in? Is the phrase “filled with the Spirit” identical to the event of the Holy Spirit baptism as depicted in Acts? This is certainly not the case. People were filled, empowered, with the Spirit long before Pentecost. But prior to Pentecost there was no widespread, blanket outpouring which could be characterized as a “baptism.” Previously only a highly select number of people had such empowerment. The Holy Spirit baptism was a particular historical event which began at Pentecost, which concluded with the end of the apostolic period, and in which the many who were eligible (that is, those who had been called by the gospel, who were responding to that message), and who had a conferral from an apostle, were filled with the Spirit.

CHAPTER 4—THE LAYING-ON OF HANDS

Joshua ... was full of the spirit of wisdom, for Moses had laid his hands upon him ...” (Deuteronomy 34:9)

Most modern commentators reject that in the early church the laying-on of apostolic hands was required for reception of the Spirit. But what is the evidence? The explicit affirmation of Acts is that apostolic hands were required.

One should begin with the related OT background. The backdrop for Luke’s history of the beginning of the church is the history of the beginning of old Israel. At that time, measures of the Spirit were conferred from Moses to the 70 elders so they could be empowered for assisting him in administration (Num 11:10-30). In a similar way, we are told that, “... Joshua the son of Nun was full of the spirit of wisdom, for Moses had laid his hands upon him ...” (Deuteronomy 34:9). In Acts with the establishment of the (new) people of God, Spirit-endowed assistance was again required and bestowed on the core leadership (Acts 6:1ff.). There are other meanings and contexts for the phrase the “laying on of hands” in the OT, but they are unrelated to the events in Acts.

It has been suggested that in the conferral of the Spirit, prayer was the essential element, and the hands dispensable. Prayer is certainly mentioned. No doubt it was always included. But the only element of the conferral that is specifically and consistently mentioned is apostolic hands. The OT background is the key (Num 11:10-30; Deuteronomy 34:9).

What does Acts have to say about an initial reception of the Spirit in connection with the laying on of the apostles’ hands? Setting aside for the moment the matter of the 3,000 (Acts 2:38-39), one is left with the following five receptions of the Spirit: (1) the Twelve apostles, (2) Cornelius and his house, (3) the Samaritans, (4) the “12” Ephesian disciples, and (5) Saul. One should also look closely at Romans 1:11 and 2 Timothy 1:6.

The Twelve Apostles on Pentecost. A rule for Holy Spirit conferral only by apostolic hands cannot, of course, be found in the reception of the Spirit by the Twelve. That event happened without apostolic hands. It is evident that the apostles could not have laid hands upon themselves. The reception of the Spirit by the Twelve on Pentecost, therefore, is not really an exception to the rule—it precedes and empowers the rule.

Cornelius. What of the Spirit-reception at the house of Cornelius? There was no laying-on of apostolic hands (although it was not without an apostolic presence--Peter). The Spirit was imparted directly from heaven. Any overview of the case must, however, take into account that these were the first Gentile converts, and that the whole book of Acts hinges on this matter. The conversion of Gentiles, as Gentiles (that is, without submission to the Law of Moses), clearly needed divine authority of the highest kind. This was, therefore, a highly extraordinary episode. If there were any situation which deserved an exceptional impartation of the Holy Spirit, this was it. Nothing could have more plainly indicated that God regarded the Gentiles as eligible for salvation in Christ than his usurpation, on that occasion, of the rule of apostolic hands. One will not find that which is normative in the reception of the Spirit at the house of Cornelius.

The other examples (aside from that of the 3,000 of Pentecost) are the Samaritans, the Ephesian 12, and Saul. If one cannot obtain a rule pertaining to the initial conferral of the Spirit from Luke’s discussion of these three instances, one will not be able to obtain any rule. All of these involve the laying on of hands. In two of these (the Samaritans and Saul) prayer is also mentioned.

The Samaritans. The key discussion for Spirit conferral is that of the Samaritans (see also pp. 56ff). In recording his history, we suggest that here is the first convenient place Luke has had to describe the conferral of the Spirit. He could have said something about it in Acts 2, but he wanted rather to focus the readers’ attention on the apostles (not the 3,000), and on the seminal initial events in Jerusalem. Now as the gospel is on the verge of reaching out into the wider world, he finds occasion to give an extended discussion of the imparting of the Spirit.

Three times during this account it is noticed that the apostles’ hands are involved in the conferral. “They laid their hands on them and they received the Holy Spirit”...“Simon saw that the Spirit was given through the laying on of the apostles’ hands” ... “give me also this power that anyone on whom I lay my hands may receive the Holy Spirit” (Acts 8:17-19).

What if the text had said, “They prayed for them and they received the Holy Spirit” ... “Simon saw that the Spirit was given through the prayer of the apostles” ... “Give me also this power that anyone for whom I pray may receive

the Holy Spirit?" We can only imagine that the case would have been once-and-forever closed as to the means of conferral, that is, by prayer. Or suppose it had said, "They received the Holy Spirit by casting lots." and, "Simon saw that the Spirit was given by casting lots?" The case for casting lots would never be questioned. Therefore, one would think that, apart from any definitive opposing evidence, the three specific statements would be sufficient to establish a rule for conferral: "the Spirit was given through the laying on of the apostles' hands."

The timing of the reception of the Spirit by the Samaritans is explained by many authorities as an "exceptional" situation, the exception arising because of the supposed enormous leap in taking the gospel to the Samaritans. But this theory is based on highly questionable premises. In Acts the Samaritans are not regarded as Gentiles. The Samaritans were a racial mixture of Assyrians and Jews. Despite Luke 17:8, Matthew 10:5-6, and many authorities it is certain that Luke-Acts does not regard the Samaritans as Gentiles (cf. 1:8; 9:31. See Marshall, 1980, pp. 152-153). The Samaritan mission is undertaken without fanfare (8:1, 14, 25). The conversion of the Gentiles is reported to the Samaritans (15:3)! The outreach to the Gentiles is specifically and elaborately connected, not with the Samaritan mission, but with the evangelizing of the house of Cornelius (10:1ff; 11:1, 18; 15:7, 14)—an event which was divinely precipitated by four miracles, and merited three recountings in Acts.

Conversely, this account of the conversion of Samaritans is not presented in Acts as some exceptional or doubtful step being taken by the early church. Later Gentile outreach is connected with Paul, Antioch, and the first mission tour.⁵ The Holy Spirit is specially given to the Samaritans through the apostles (Peter and John) not to endorse the (non-controversial) mission there, but to empower the Samaritan Christians (as promised, 2:17ff., 38-39) with the special gifts, gifts that the non-apostle, Philip, could not confer. If the extension of the gospel to the Samaritans required something exceptional in the way of Spirit impartation, why was it not the direct conferral of the Spirit from heaven such as we see at the house of Cornelius and Pentecost? The structure of Acts, the emphatic, repeated accounts of the conversion of Cornelius, and the explicit statements of Acts 15:7, 14 make it virtually certain that the first Gentile converts were Cornelius and his house.

The Ephesian 12. The rule of the imposition of apostolic hands is again at work in Acts 19:6. Clearly the Spirit is conferred by the hands of the apostle Paul, not by (water) baptism. Again, some regard this reception of the Spirit to be non-normative. But no exceptional outreach situation is envisioned. In no sense does the text indicate that Paul needs to be convinced of anyone's eligibility for baptism.

The case of Saul. The most natural reading of Acts 9:17 would also seem to sustain the rule. Numerous authorities on Acts can be quoted as saying that the Holy Spirit empowerment was conferred on Saul at his baptism, as described in Acts 9:17-19, rather than by the hands of Ananias. Equally numerous authorities can be cited saying the opposite—that the Spirit empowerment was clearly conferred by the hands of Ananias, not at his baptism. Additional scholars will offer an opinion, but can be quoted as saying that the text does not clearly state either. A few will affirm that the conferral seems to be by the hands of Ananias, but that various other considerations outside the immediate context show that it was at Saul's baptism.

Commentators are about equally divided over this question (for the best statement of the case for baptism see Ferguson, 1986, 1.59). However, those writers who prefer the occasion of Saul's baptism frequently do so hesitantly and sometimes defensively. In their reasoning, they usually ignore the immediate context and refer back to Acts 2:38, which they think makes normative a reception of the Spirit at baptism. This is somewhat circular reasoning. It also misreads Acts 2:38 (for which, see pp. 59ff).

The following arguments are sufficient to sustain that Saul received the Holy Spirit empowerment before his baptism, and by the hands of Ananias.

(1) Acts 2:38-39 does not establish a normative pattern for the giving of the Holy Spirit given at baptism. See pp. 59ff).

(2) In Acts there is actually no passage which affirms that the Holy Spirit empowerment is conferred through baptism. In Acts the extraordinary gifts of the Spirit are never depicted as being conferred by baptism. Nor in Acts does the Holy Spirit indwell, seal, guarantee, effect adoption, thwart the flesh, "regenerate," serve as a principle of resurrection life, or sanctify. At the very least, such vocabulary is absent. It should be evident that the ideas are also absent. Therefore in Acts the Spirit is not and does not need to be directly associated with baptism. In Acts baptism and the laying on of hands are distinct, both functionally and chronologically.

⁵ Acts 15:12; cf. 11:19ff; 13:1ff; 9:15.

(3) Acts 9:12, 17 associate the hands of Ananias with the healing, the healing with the Holy Spirit conferral, and the hands of Ananias with both of them. There is an emphasis in the passage (Acts 9:10, 12, 15, 17) on Ananias himself in regard to healing and Holy Spirit conferral. In fact, it is only a presumption that Ananias administered Saul's baptism. As a rule in the NT the administrator of baptism is a matter of indifference. But not just anyone has the power to heal and to administer hands in conferral of the Spirit.

(4) After Luke's emphasis on the need for the empowerment of the apostolic witness (Luke 24:24:48-49; Acts 1:8; 2:1ff), it would be astounding if the Holy Spirit empowerment of Paul were completely ignored. Paul's role as an apostle and an authoritative witness (cf. 9:15) was dependent on empowerment. As noted, empowerment in Acts is never conferred by baptism, but rather either directly from heaven, or by hands (8:17ff; 19:1ff). In this passage, hands are mentioned.

(5) To view the reception of the Spirit here as the ordinary indwelling of the Spirit, as some do, is to continue to ignore the context of Acts as a whole with its overshadowing focus on the extraordinary power of the Spirit (see also the section on "Filled with the Spirit," p. 23).

The most noteworthy counter-argument to the above, and the primary reason that any "rule" about "apostolic hands" is rejected is that Ananias is not thought of as an apostle. Thus he could not have conferred the Spirit on Saul. But is it true that Ananias of Damascus was merely a disciple? He was not one of the Twelve. But others in the NT besides the Twelve were apostles of Christ (see Chapter Five). If the premise set forth here is correct, Ananias exercised the role of an apostle. That is, he conferred by his hands the empowerment of the Spirit. Ananias could easily have been one of the 500 who had witnessed the risen Christ. Did he not have at least one certain vision of Christ (Acts 9:10)? Since he had such a vision, does not this imply that he could have experienced previous visions of Christ? Was he not sent by the Lord? Did not Ananias, in the healing of Paul's blindness, manifest the power required to show apostleship (2 Corinthians 12:12)? Did not Ananias testify to Saul concerning the risen Christ (Acts 9:17)? Was not Ananias commissioned by the Lord (Acts 9:10ff)?

Ananias was not one of the Twelve. Neither was Paul. But Paul, whether he was or was not so titled in Acts, was an apostle of Christ. In Acts he has the role of an apostle. His activities in the last half of the book are comparable to the activities of the Twelve in the first half. His commissioning as an apostle is stated once and repeated twice more for emphasis. He sees the risen Christ. He is a witness. He performs signs. If we assume that Luke regards Paul as an apostle, but mostly or entirely without the title, it is easily conceivable that others such as Ananias of Damascus were apostolic—but also without the title (see Chapter Five).

Therefore, according to the most natural reading of the text, Ananias comes to "lay his hands on" Paul that he might receive his sight (9:12). When Ananias is fulfilling his mission he relates that he has also been sent that Saul might be filled with the Holy Spirit (9:17). The Spirit conferral on Saul is described as a "filling," which has already been shown to be a reference to empowerment (see pp. 23ff). The real association is (1) the hands of Ananias with (2) the healing and (3) filling with the Spirit. Following that process, Saul is baptized. If this reconstruction is correct, we have three normative circumstances under which the rule-- "the Holy Spirit in his office of empowerment was conferred by apostolic hands," as stated in Acts 8, is sustained and exemplified. For more comment on Ananias as an apostle see the following chapter, "Thirteen Apostles?"

Romans 1:11. It is likely that this view of the conferral of the special empowerments is alluded to in Romans 1:11. There Paul tells his readers, "For I long to see you, that I may impart unto you some spiritual gift, to the end ye may be established." While most authorities do not seem to think that Paul has in mind the conferral of extraordinary gifts, yet some do (Bengel, p. 17; Michaelis, as cited in Meyer, p. 44). However many exegetical treatments of the passage lead at least to the very brink of just such an interpretation. The terminology of the verse clearly points to 1 Corinthians 12-14⁶ and Romans 12:6-8—passages which speak of the special gifts. It should be noted that the relationship between Romans 1:11 and 1:12 is considered complex, and not necessarily simply exepexegetic (explanatory), as is frequently suggested by the translations.

2 Timothy 1:6. It is entirely reasonable that 2 Timothy 1:6 refers to the impartation of special gifts by the hands of Paul. This would mean that 1 Timothy 1:18; 4:14 refer to Timothy's ordination to ministry in Ephesus, an event separate from Paul's conferral of the Spirit on Timothy.

⁶ See 1 Corinthians 12:1, 4, 9, 28, 30, 31; 14:1, 37; compare 1 Corinthians 1:7.

Hands or prayer? In the conferral of the Spirit, was prayer the essential element, and the hands dispensable? Prayer is certainly mentioned. No doubt it was always included. But the only element of the conferral that is specifically and consistently mentioned is apostolic hands. The OT background is the key (Num 11:10-30; Deuteronomy 34:9).

Summary. In the three passages in Acts which are the most transparent, the only common denominator, in the initial reception of the Spirit, is the laying on of (apostolic) hands. We also have a likely reference to it in Romans 1:11; and a possible reference in 2 Timothy 1:6. But this remains insufficient for many interpreters.

CHAPTER 5—THIRTEEN APOSTLES?

For such men are false apostles... (2 Corinthians 11:13)

Were there other apostles of Christ than the Twelve and Paul? Of course, there are others termed “apostles” in the New Testament besides Paul and the Twelve. Jesus is called an apostle (Hebrews 3:1). There are certainly apostles (messengers) of churches (2 Corinthians 8:23; Philippians 2:25). However, did Christ send out specially-commissioned apostles in addition to the Twelve and Paul, similar to Paul?

Paul did not have all the qualifications of the Twelve and he was not one of the Twelve (he had not accompanied Jesus during his ministry, Acts 1:21-22). Nonetheless he was a fully authorized apostle of Jesus. He came to be called “the” apostle. His apostleship breaks the pattern for the “Twelve” who were unique. If there were 13 could there be 14 or more?

What were the qualifications for apostleship like Paul’s? One must be called by God (Romans 1:1; 1 Corinthians 1:1); have seen the risen Christ (1 Corinthians 9:1; 15:8; Galatians 1:15-16); and performed signs, wonders, and mighty works (2 Corinthians 12:12). Such qualifications could have been met by any number of other early disciples of Jesus (1 Corinthians 15:5ff).

The evidence for additional apostles like Paul is substantial.

Romans 16:7. *Greet Andronicus and Junias, my kinsmen and my fellow prisoners; they are notable among the apostles, and they were in Christ before me.*

Andronicus and Junias are noteworthy in their service as apostles. Paul speaks of “the apostles” as though it they were a defined body of people.

1 Corinthians 4:6-9. *I have applied all this to myself and Apollos for your benefit, brethren, that you may learn by us not to go beyond what is written, that none of you may be puffed up in favor of one against another. ... For I think that God has exhibited us apostles as last of all, like men sentenced to death; because we have become a spectacle to the world, to angels and to men.*

It is generally agreed that Apollos is not given the title of apostle here.

1 Corinthians 9:1-6. *Am I not free? Am I not an apostle? Have I not seen Jesus our Lord? Are not you my workmanship in the Lord? ... Or is it only Barnabas and I who have no right to refrain from working for a living?*

It is generally agreed that Barnabas is described here as a fellow apostle with Paul.

1 Corinthians 15:5-9. *... he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. Then he appeared to more than five hundred brethren at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have fallen asleep. Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles. Last of all, as to one untimely born, he appeared also to me. For I am the least of the apostles, unfit to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God.*

James certainly seems to be listed as an apostle here. “All the apostles” seems to be a reference to a wider circle of apostles similar to Paul and the Twelve. It may well be that many of the 500 witnesses became apostles.

Galatians 1:19. *But I saw none of the other apostles except James the Lord’s brother.*

The most agreed-upon and natural understanding of this passage is that James is spoken of here as an apostle.

Acts 14:4, 14. *But the people of the city were divided; some sided with the Jews, and some with the apostles. ... But when the apostles Barnabas and Paul heard of it, they tore their garments and rushed out among the multitude....*

Luke usually reserves the title *apostle* for the Twelve. Why would he use a word upon which he places importance to mean simply missionary? Paul and Barnabas are not specified as the emissaries of Antioch, but more significantly, of the Holy Spirit (Acts 13:1-4). It seems likely that Luke does not mean to directly associate Paul and Barnabas with the Twelve, but is reflecting a usage for a wider group of apostles, including Barnabas. Acts 14:4, 14 could easily be references to Paul and Barnabas experiencing a renewal of their special apostleship, freshly sent out by the Spirit of Christ (Acts 13:1ff). It would therefore be consistent with the concept of wider group of authorized apostles.

Galatians 2:9. *When they perceived the grace that was given to me, James and Cephas and John, who were reputed to be pillars, gave to me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship, that we should go to the Gentiles and they to the circumcised.*

Barnabas is again associated with Paul in apostleship.

1 Thessalonians 2:6. Some hold that Paul refers to Silas as an apostle in 1 Thessalonians 2:6.

2 Corinthians 11:12-13. *And what I do I will continue to do, in order to undermine the claim of those who would like to claim that in their boasted mission they work on the same terms as we do. For such men are false apostles, deceitful workmen, disguising themselves as apostles of Christ. See also 2 Corinthians 12:11-12, I have been a fool! You forced me to it, for I ought to have been commended by you. For I was not at all inferior to these superlative apostles, even though I am nothing. The signs of a true apostle were performed among you in all patience, with signs and wonders and mighty works. Compare also Revelation 2:2, “I know your works, your toil and your patient endurance, and how you cannot bear evil men but have tested those who call themselves apostles but are not, and found them to be false.”*

The existence of men falsely claiming apostleship is strong evidence for an extended group of true special apostles of Christ. If it were known that only Paul and the Twelve were in that category, then it would have been easy to identify imposters; and it could have also been done without reference to “the signs of a true apostle...with signs and wonders and mighty works.”

Stephen and Ananias of Damascus. In Acts, without the title, two persons, Stephen and Ananias of Damascus, display several of the qualifications of apostleship. They saw the risen Christ. They gave testimony. They performed signs and wonders. Of Ananias it is specifically said that he was “sent” by Christ on at least one occasion. Ananias performs the apostolic conferral of the empowerment of the Holy Spirit (Acts 8:14ff) upon Saul.

Summary. The above comments sustain the case for a wider designated apostolate of Christ. Therefore, it is not surprising to see Ananias of Damascus lay hands on Saul, conferring on him the Spirit. Ananias performed an apostolic function, and we conclude that he was apostolic, likely one of the 500 witnesses mentioned in 1 Corinthians 15:6. The rule of apostolic hands, as specifically expressed in Acts 8:18-19, would then be consistent with regard to the Samaritans (Peter and John), with Paul himself (Ananias), and the Ephesian 12 (Paul). The one exception, and it is explicitly presented as such, is the house of Cornelius who received the Holy Spirit directly--but even here not without the presence of the Apostle Peter.

CHAPTER 6—THE “BAPTISM OF THE HOLY SPIRIT”

‘And in the last days it shall be, God declares, that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams; yea, and on my menservants and my maidservants in those days I will pour out my Spirit; and they shall prophesy. And I will show wonders in the heaven above and signs on the earth beneath ... and it shall be that whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved (from Joel chapter 2, as cited in Acts 2:17-19).

The prophet Joel looked forward to a time when there would be a sweeping flood of God’s Spirit poured out for all to witness. Empowering gifts would be received, from the least to the greatest, by sons and daughters, old men and young men, servants and handmaids.

In context, “I will pour out my Spirit” means, “I will bestow my Spirit (the Holy Spirit of God) in a particular manner (widespread) to fulfill a particular role (empowerment).” It will signify a particular event—the inauguration of salvation.

“**Pour out.**” The phrase “pour out” was especially used in the prophets to describe widespread and overwhelming events that affect many people, whether of wrath,⁷ or of spirit.⁸

Poured out / baptized in. How does the “pouring out of the Spirit” become, in NT terminology, a “baptism” in the Holy Spirit? Joel’s language communicated a widespread distribution of the Spirit, an overwhelming of the Spirit, a generalized immersion in the Spirit—thus a baptism in the Spirit. Of course, a general immersion in the Spirit presupposes many individual receptions of the Spirit.

Pour out equal to sprinkling? It should be noted that the wording the *pouring out* of the Spirit does not support the idea that baptism is anything less than an immersion. Every year, there are reports in the news of heavy rains that have fallen in various parts of the world. As a result, whole regions flood and many people are literally inundated and perish. Similarly, and figuratively speaking, sufficient of the Spirit was poured out on Pentecost that the apostles were overwhelmed (baptized) in it. The sound had filled all the house (Acts 2:2)—the apostles were clothed with power (Luke 24:49). The pouring out of the Spirit cannot be disconnected from the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

Throughout the OT the extraordinary gifts of the Holy Spirit, the prophetic gifts, were only bestowed upon selected ones. Normally the leaders and the prophets alone were blessed in this way to any significant degree (people like Moses, Joshua, Elijah, and so forth). Some few others received an empowerment of the Spirit for special purposes. But the event foreseen by Joel was not to be a “sprinkling” of the Spirit, limited to the prominent few, but a widespread inundation. Both men and women, young and old, of all and various social strata would be blessed.

Empowerment vs forgiveness. These extraordinary receptions of the Spirit were not meant to indicate, nor to secure, an individual recipient’s moral sanctification, regeneration, or salvation. Those kinds of blessings are associated with the indwelling gift of the Spirit received at one’s (water) baptism into Christ, when accompanied by an expressed faith and by repentance. When a Christian is baptized (immersed in water) that person is said to be washed, sanctified, justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and “by the Spirit of our God” (1 Corinthians 6:11). That is a different role for the Spirit than empowerment. Joel’s promised impartations of the Spirit were rather to be prophetic empowerments for the execution of God’s will and designs. There is no indication that the coming of the “prophetic” empowering Spirit upon any of the figures of the OT or the NT served to “sanctify,” or indicate “sanctification” (see again, p. 15).

Empowerment = salvation? The prophecy of Joel pertained to a time when there would be a generalized distribution of Holy Spirit power. This engulfing flood of empowerment, however, was not in itself to be the salvation. Rather it was to signal the inauguration of the age of salvation. It was to indicate the initialization, to confirm, and to smooth the progress of the early spread of the gospel. There was empowerment—then, specified separately: “calling on the name of the Lord” and “salvation” (Acts 2:17-21).

⁷ Psalms 69:24; 79:6; Jeremiah 6:11; 10:25; 14:16; Ezekiel 7:8; 14:19; 20:8, 13, 21; 21:31; Zeph 3:8; Revelation 16:1.

⁸ Ezekiel 39:29; 12:10.

New spirit in the prophets. A number of passages from the prophets speak of a pouring out of a new spirit (Spirit) upon God's people.⁹ Most of these passages should be understood generally as a spirit of repentance being given by God through the work of his inspired prophets.¹⁰ Isaiah 44:3 likely refers neither to miraculous sanctification nor to prophetic empowerment, but to physical blessings, a renewal of natural life. Joel 2:28-32 is unique among all such passages in its combined elements of: (1) an impartation of God's Spirit, (2) a blessing to the many, and (3) empowerment with extraordinary prophetic gifts.

The indwelling Spirit and salvation. It is certainly true that “. . . if any man hath not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his” (Romans 8:9). No doubt at the moment of baptism (immersion in water) all the early Christians were considered to have been “washed . . . sanctified . . . justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of . . . God” (1 Corinthians 6:11). But this is not the function that the Spirit fulfilled in times prior to the Christian age, nor was it the only role of the Spirit during the first decades of the church. In pre-Christian times, the presence of the Spirit in selected people characteristically, if not exclusively, brought empowerment. But in addition, and distinctively, the Spirit after the beginning at Pentecost came upon the Lord's people to indwell them. The impression of this truth upon them was to produce in them the fruit of the Spirit. The indwelling of the Spirit is the doctrine that is characteristic in Paul's letters. Paul knows very well about the special gifts, but his unique contribution to Christian doctrine is that of the personal indwelling of the Spirit in Christians.

Acts. The special focus in Acts, as well as in the OT, and in the gospels, is prophetic empowerment (a prophet being one who not only predicted the future, but was also an inspired spokesman for the will of God, and who often had the power to perform miracles). Therefore, one should not try to read the doctrine of the Holy Spirit in Acts through the lens of the total doctrine of the Holy Spirit as found in Paul (who includes both indwelling as well as empowerment).

Implications. Consequently, it is not surprising that in Acts the empowering Holy Spirit came upon some prior to their baptism into Christ (immersion in water) and the accompanying forgiveness of their sins (Cornelius, Saul, and the Twelve), and upon some following baptism and forgiveness (the Samaritan converts and the twelve Ephesian disciples). In every case of the reception of the empowering Holy Spirit in Acts there is a disconnect from baptism (immersion in water, while calling on the name of Jesus) and forgiveness, because in Acts the Holy Spirit is not referenced in regard to the indwelling office of sanctification or “regeneration.”

Rather in Acts the Holy Spirit is depicted as coming upon the early Christians in his office of inspiring, in one measure or another, extraordinary prophetic gifts. For this reason in Acts there is no possibility of confusing baptism in the Holy Spirit with the (water) baptism of the great commission (in Acts 2:38 the giving of the Spirit in the office of extraordinary spiritual gifts is future, to come after baptism; in 5:32 the reference is backward to Pentecost and its special gifts. See pp. 64, 17).

Summary. In the OT and even in NT times prior to Pentecost only particular ones were chosen to be empowered for the utterance of prophecy and for performing signs and wonders. The generalized, universal, sweeping outpouring as foreseen by Joel had not yet occurred. Through Joel, God promised that such an experience at a particular season in time would occur among his people. As interpreted by the apostle Peter, via Luke's account, this special season of extensive outpouring of Holy Spirit gifts, this widespread flood and immersion in the Spirit, began its fulfillment on the day of Pentecost following the resurrection of Christ. It was significant because it marked the inauguration of the age of salvation—the beginning of the church.

Peter quotes from Joel, “And in the last days it shall be, God declares, that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh . . . And it shall be that whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved” (Acts 2:17-21). One should note from the passage that salvation was to be bestowed upon individuals, not because they received an extraordinary gift, but because they, “call[ed] on the name of the Lord.” The special gifts and powers were signs, flags as it were, that the time had arrived in which persons might “call on the name of the Lord Jesus and be saved.” That is, that they might render an obedient faith to Jesus as Christ and receive the forgiveness of their sins. Inaugurations, of course, do not last interminably. They merely signal the beginning. The special gifts were only intended for the inauguration.

⁹ Is 32:15; Eze 36:26-27; 37:9-14; 39:29; Zec 12:10.

¹⁰ Isaiah 11:2; 29:11-12; 29:17-18; Haggai 2:5; Ezekiel 37:4; Zechariah 7:12; Nehemiah 9:30; etc.

Q & A

Q: Was Holy Spirit baptism a single particular measure of Holy Spirit power given to special recipients as noted in the book of Acts? **A:** No. It was an event which took place over a period of several decades in the first century, during which there was a widespread distribution, a pouring out, a flood, of different measures of prophetic Holy Spirit power, as prophesied in Joel 2.

Q: Do people today receive Holy Spirit baptism? **A:** No. The event was delimited in time, beginning on the day of Pentecost, and continuing until it ended several decades later with the fading of the apostolic age.

Q: Were only the apostles and the house of Cornelius baptized in the Spirit? **A:** No. That would not have been the flood of special empowerments foreseen by Joel. That would have been similar to the limited and selective distributions common to the OT, and pre-Christian period.

Q: Who was baptized in the Holy Spirit? **A:** Those people who received greater or lesser measures of the extraordinary powers of the Spirit during the initial decades of the first century were the participants in the Holy Spirit baptism. When it was promised that “you will be baptized in the Spirit,” what was envisioned was a great flood of God’s Spirit poured out on the inaugural generation of the church. The impartation was given to the many who were eligible. It might be clearer if the question were phrased: “Who participated in [the event of] the baptism of the Holy Spirit?” The answer would be: “All who responded to the message of the gospel and who had the Holy Spirit empowerment bestowed upon them by an apostle.”

Q: Didn’t apostles receive a special and unique measure of power? **A:** Yes. Of all those who received the extraordinary gift of the Spirit, only apostles had the prerogative of conferring on others the Spirit in his empowering role.

Q: How was the Holy Spirit conferred on people so that they might become participants in the Holy Spirit baptism? **A:** Initially the Spirit came directly from heaven upon the Twelve. They were empowered to confer the Spirit upon others. When these others were apostolic men, they too could impart the Spirit (Ananias of Damascus, Paul). The non-apostolic disciples were blessed by the Spirit with prophetic gifts of various kinds and in various measures. As the apostles traveled about in the ancient Mediterranean world, they would lay their hands on all who were eligible. In this way the Spirit empowerment became truly a flood, an outpouring, or a “baptism” of the Spirit experienced by the inaugural generation.

Q: Didn’t the house of Cornelius receive the Spirit without apostolic hands? **A:** Yes. The Lord usurped the office of conferral by apostolic hands in the case of the first Gentile converts so that it might be explicit, and direct from him, that he wanted the gospel to be available equally to Gentiles.

Q: I thought that people could pray for the special gifts of the Spirit? **A:** After one had initially received the apostolic conferral of the Spirit, one surely was free to pray for other special manifestations from the Spirit (1 Corinthians 12:31; 14:1, 13).

Q: Didn’t Peter in Acts 2:38-39 promise the Spirit to all who repented and were baptized in the name of Jesus? **A:** See chapter 14, pp. 59ff.

Q: Were not the Twelve already baptized (in water) when they receive the Holy Spirit on Pentecost? **A:** They had surely undergone a (water) baptism during the ministries of Jesus and John the Baptist. However, Jesus had only completed his saving work, his death, burial, and resurrection a few weeks earlier. He then instituted a new (water) baptism. Following the resurrection he gave the great commission: go, preach the gospel, and upon repentance and confession that he was indeed the Christ (Luke 24:47), to baptize all persons into the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (Matthew 28:19). Gospel salvation, the forgiveness of sins would be the result (Luke 24:47; Mark 16:15-16). The actual inauguration of this work awaited the beginning, the day of Pentecost that followed Jesus’ resurrection (Acts 11:15; Luke 24:47). Therefore, the apostles themselves could not, until Pentecost, have received this (water) baptism—a baptism in the name of Jesus, based on his completed suffering on the cross and glorification. This baptism is accompanied by the forgiveness of sins. The assembly of people on Pentecost would surely have included many baptized with John’s baptism. Yet they were commanded, “be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ.”

It has been argued that Peter was addressing only those who had a hand in the crucifixion of Jesus. This is hardly correct. Yet even so, do not all sins contribute to the crucifixion of Christ? Peter’s sin of denying the Lord in his hour of crisis surely contributed to the crucifixion and the suffering of the Lord. Likewise, did not all the disciples

hide themselves and show lack of faith before, during, and after the crucifixion? Did they not all have sins in connection with the death of Christ that needed forgiveness? All people sin. Baptism in Jesus washes from all sins, not just the one sin of crucifying Christ (Acts 2:38, note the plural, sins).

It is held by some that the apostles were already “regenerate” prior to Pentecost. Luke 10:20 is cited in support. Dunn refutes this by saying, “Luke 10:20 has to be understood in terms of the blessings of the old covenant. To have one’s name written in the book of life or in heaven was as possible in the old dispensation as in the new” (1970, p. 53).

Also cited in support of the pre-Pentecostal “salvation” of the apostles is Jesus’ declaration to them, “You are clean” (John 13:3; 15:3). But this means, in its context, that the disciples were pure in heart, in love, in intention.

An additional passage cited in support of the pre-Pentecostal salvation of the apostles is John 20:22, in which Jesus breathes upon the disciples and says, “Receive the Holy Spirit.” This must be interpreted, not literally, but as prophetic, proleptic (so certain to come to pass in the future that it is spoken of as already accomplished) symbolism (similarly, John 13:3ff) for the following reasons: (1) Jesus had said that the Spirit would not be “sent” until he had ascended (16:7). At the time of 20:22 he had not ascended (20:17). (2) The Spirit was to be sent “from the Father” (15:26). This does not comport with the scene in 20:22 in which the Spirit appears to come directly from Christ on earth. (3) Less weighty, but perhaps significant, Thomas was absent on this occasion. If this occasion were as momentous and realistic a moment as Pentecost, why was he not present for the event? One may contrast the care with which it was ensured that all the Twelve were present for the actual event of Pentecost.

Why would the apostles have spurned the baptism they themselves commanded? Remember that the Jews were familiar with many and repeated religious immersions for various reasons. It is not specified that the apostles also were baptized on the day of Pentecost, but Luke may have regarded it as unnecessary to mention, since it is so reasonable that they too would embrace this baptism. It seems far more consistent to propose that the apostles welcomed this immersion in the name of their own risen and glorified Lord than to suggest that it was superfluous.

If the apostles were immersed along with the 3,000, this brings their reception of the Spirit into accord with the account of Cornelius (Spirit reception, then baptism), and with Saul (Spirit-reception by the hands of Ananias, then baptism). At any rate, if the apostles were baptized in the name of Jesus based on his accomplished work of salvation—his life, death, burial, resurrection, and ascension—they could only have received such baptism subsequent to their reception of the Spirit, not prior to it.

CHAPTER 7—MEASURES OF THE SPIRIT

...the Spirit of the Lord will come mightily upon you (1 Samuel 10:6)

Moses and the seventy elders. Contrary to what is sometimes asserted, it is entirely proper to speak of “measures” of the Spirit. In Numbers 11 God took “some” of the Spirit which he had given to Moses and put it on the seventy elders. Since the text (Numbers 11:17, 25) speaks of taking “some” of the Spirit it is clearly implied that they received a lesser measure than Moses. The text also says, “When the Spirit rested upon them, they prophesied. But they did so no more” (11:25). By this it is again indicated that their gift of the Spirit was limited when compared to that of Moses.

Joshua. In Numbers 27:18-19 Joshua becomes vested with “some” of the authority of Moses, a measure of it. In the same way that Joshua was vested with some of Moses’ authority, so he was possessed of a measure of the Spirit: “And Joshua the son of Nun was full of the Spirit of wisdom, for Moses had laid his hands upon him; so the people of Israel obeyed him, and did as the Lord had commanded Moses” (Deuteronomy 34:9). The text is careful to say however that though Israel followed the Spirit-endowed Joshua, yet there had not at any time, “arisen a prophet . . . in Israel like Moses, whom the Lord knew face to face, none like him for all the signs and the wonders which the Lord sent him to do in the land of Egypt, to Pharaoh and to all his servants and to all his land, and for all the mighty power and all the great and terrible deeds which Moses wrought in the sight of all Israel” (Deuteronomy 34:10-12). So it is implied that Moses had a greater measure of power from the Spirit than Joshua or any other prophet of the Old Testament.

Elisha. In 2 Kings 2:9-15 there is the account of the passing from Elijah to Elisha of a double portion of his spirit. Although translators use a lower case “s” for spirit, it is undoubted that the reference is to the prophetic Spirit of God as it, or he, resided in Elijah to empower prophetic gifts. Elisha received a “double portion,” implying again that greater or lesser measures of the Spirit dwelt in the various prophets (“measure of the Spirit” would be metonymy—using the name of one thing for another—for measure of power from the Spirit).

Saul. In 1 Samuel 10:6 the promise was given to Saul that “the Spirit of the Lord will come mightily upon you, and you shall prophesy with them and be turned into another man.” In saying “mightily” the conception is that the Spirit sometimes came less powerfully and sometimes more upon recipients. It might again be noted that the text does not say that Saul received the prophetic gift of the Spirit, but that he received the Spirit himself for the purpose of being endowed with the gift of prophecy.

Construction and warfare. For the preparation of the tabernacle the Lord bestowed the Spirit upon certain ones such as Bezalel (Exodus 31:1-4). It should be noted that Bezalel did not receive the Spirit so that he might have unlimited powers. The gifts were limited and measured and specific. In the Old Testament the Spirit came upon some to bestow gifts for conducting war (Judges 3:10) and on some to bestow physical strength (Judges 14:6, 19; 15:14).

Rabbi Acha. The ancient rabbis also noted the existence of measures of the Spirit in the OT prophets. Rabbi Acha said, “The Holy Spirit, who rests on the prophets, rests (on them) only by weight . . . (by measure).”

Jesus. In the NT John specifies that Jesus had the Spirit without limit (John 3:32-35). It is true that several translators take a text and an interpretation which leaves ambiguous who gives the Spirit to whom, rendering the passage: “for he giveth not the Spirit by measure” (ASV, NKJV; NASB, NIV-1985 ed., RSV). The passage is then said to affirm that Jesus (not God) gives the Spirit, and that as a general rule the Spirit is never given in a measure, but always in fullness to believers.

However, the KJV and others render as follows: “For he whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God: for God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto him.” Goodspeed (Gdspd) translates: “For he whom God has sent speaks God’s words, for God gives him his Spirit without measure.” (A similar rendering is followed also by NLT, TEV, Williams, Phillips, NIV-1973 ed., Beck, Moffatt, JB, the JNT, CEV, Amp, and Barclay’s translation; compare also Deissner, TDNT, 4.634).

In the context of John 3 the argument is being made that Jesus can bear witness to God in truth. Jesus has seen and heard, having been with the Father (John 1:18). Further, he can speak the exact words of God because God gave the Spirit to him. John 1:32 indicates that John the Baptist “saw the Spirit descend as a dove from heaven, and it remained on him.” This was no temporary or limited office. Jesus possessed all the fullness: “And from his fullness

have we all received, grace upon grace” (John 1:16). Verse 3:35 continues the concept: “the Father loves the Son, and has given all things into his hand.” The Son receives from the Father (see also 3:27). The words of Jesus are being validated. His words come from God through the Spirit. Also it seems reasonable, given their proximity, to correlate the word *give* in verse 34 to the word *give* in verse 35. In both cases God is giving to the Son. Therefore, regardless of the variant textual readings, and the ellipsis to be supplied (“to him,” that is, to Jesus), the evidence is that the passage affirms that God gave the Spirit without measure to the Son.

Empowered Christians. With regard to the early Christians who were empowered the concept is that they received the Spirit by measure. Hebrews 2:4 does not indicate that the Spirit came on the early Christians in fullness of power, but that the role he played in them was limited and varied.

Acts 2:18. An expression of measure occurs in Acts 2:18. Peter quotes Joel 2, “...on my menservants and my maidservants in those days I will pour out of my Spirit; and they shall prophesy” (Acts 2:18). The phrase “out of” implies that that the Spirit was coming upon recipients not in its entirety, but in measure.

Samaria. As Moses had laid his hands on Joshua (Deuteronomy 34:9; and presumably in this way had also conferred a measure of the Spirit to the seventy elders), so at Samaria Peter and John bestow (with prayer as well as hands) the Spirit in a measure upon the Samaritan converts (Acts 8:14-17). Although Simon seems to have been a recipient of the same Holy Spirit empowerment as the other Samaritan believers, he perceived that the apostles had a greater measure, the power to confer the Spirit, and he wanted it, “Now when Simon saw that the Spirit was given through the laying on of the apostles’ hands, he offered them money, saying, ‘Give me also this power [taking “this” (houtos) as emphatic], that any one on whom I lay my hands may receive the Holy Spirit” (Acts 8:18-19).

The Ephesians. The Holy Spirit had also come upon Paul for this same office, and he too could confer the Holy Spirit so that the Ephesians could be empowered in a measure (Acts 19:1-7).

CHAPTER 8—PAUL AND THE HOLY SPIRIT

“...For we are the temple of the living God...” (2 Corinthians 6:16)

Paul knows and writes about the empowerments of the Holy Spirit baptism. But his distinctive doctrinal contribution is that of the “indwelling Spirit” in the bodies of Christians.

Paul’s background is the OT material concerning the indwelling of God in the Holy of Holies. Paul adds two contributions deriving from the new situation under the gospel: fellowship and life. He frequently alludes to the impact the indwelling should have on those who understand that they are indwelt.

The OT Background

The Holy of Holies. The Jewish conception was that Jews lived in the midst of holiness, and that there were degrees of holiness (Edersheim, *Temple* 62-63; Jeremias, *Jerusalem* 79; Mishnah, “Kelim” 1:6-9). The supreme center and source of holiness was found within the Holy of Holies. The Spirit of God dwelt in the innermost chamber of the temple (*he that sweareth by the temple, sweareth by it, and by him that dwelleth therein.* Matthew 23:21).

The temple was, after all, God’s house, his habitation. Only the high priest, and he but once a year could enter the Most Holy Place. From this center God’s holiness radiated outward, as it were, in lessening degrees.

The Holy Place. In proximity, and sharing much of the holiness of the Most Holy Place was the Holy Place. Only the priests could enter it. Surrounding those two inner chambers was the temple proper, also highly imbued with God’s holiness—only God’s holy people could enter it. The larger temple enclosure was itself considered holy—although Gentiles were permitted to enter. The temple was situated in the Holy City of God, the city of Jerusalem. Of course, holy Jerusalem sat gloriously in the Holy Land. As Jewish pilgrims would return to the Holy Land from foreign journeys, they would shake from their feet the dust of the unholy pagan places, so as not to bring in contamination. As they journeyed toward and ascended nearer to Jerusalem and the temple, they would presumably be enthralled greatly by the increasing degrees of holiness which they believed they were encountering. The presence of God with his people, his dwelling with them spiritually was, therefore, highly significant to them.

Mode of dwelling. At the time of their original deliverance from Egypt, the children of Israel were in process of becoming fully God’s people. But the final element of that institution was the presence of God coming to be with them, to be there in his tent/temple, within the Holy of Holies. We may ask what this meant. However, perhaps the first question should be: How (in what mode) did God dwell in his Most Holy Place?

Was God’s indwelling in the temple miraculous? Sometimes a bright glory was manifested there, or a luminous cloud. However, these were not normative, because even when such manifestations were absent, the people of God were confident that God dwelt there. Sometimes it is said that God’s “name” dwelt in the temple. In other passages the Jewish tradition identified God as dwelling there in “Spirit.” Sometimes the dwelling seems to have been regarded as an angelic presence. The short answer is that it simply transcends the human state to fully understand or have language available to express the mode of God’s presence. The Scriptures must describe divine matters within the limitations of human knowledge and language.

What can be said is what the normative mode of his indwelling was not—it was not miraculous. When the Roman general Pompey in 63 BC barged into the Holy of Holies it is said that he was disappointed to find a mere bare empty room. Did this event detract from the exalted regard in which God’s people held that holy place? Not at all. God’s holiness, his Spirit was there (at least until the moment of some such desecration as Pompey caused)—whether there were external manifestations or not (Matthew 23:21).

The point is that God did dwell in the inner chamber in some way, and He and his people regarded it as extremely profound and meaningful. Its significance (not in the sense of a “mere” symbol) is as follows:

(1) Sanctification. God’s presence in his house made that house holy. ● “For now I have chosen and consecrated this house that my name may be there for ever; my eyes and my heart will be there for all time” (2 Chronicles 7:16). ● “...come to his sanctuary, which he has sanctified for ever, and serve the Lord your God...” (2 Chronicles 30:8). ● “...they polluted the house of the Lord which he had hallowed in Jerusalem (2 Chronicles 36:14). ● “... [the tabernacle] shall be sanctified by my glory” (Exodus 29:43). ● The Lord said to Moses, “Command the people of Israel that they put out of the camp ...every one that is unclean ... that they may not defile their camp, in the midst of which I dwell” (Numbers 5:1-3). ● It was of course held by the Jews that the city of Jerusalem shared in this

sanctification (You, O King, when you had created the boundless and immeasurable earth, chose this city and sanctified this place for your name... 3 Maccabees 2:9).

Jesus himself alludes to the holy sometimes imparting holiness to that with which it comes in contact: ● "...For which is greater, the gold or the temple that has made the gold sacred?" (Matthew 23:17). ● "...For which is greater, the gift or the altar that makes the gift sacred? (Matthew 23:19). Not only were the temple and the city sanctified by the presence of God, but Jews also believed that the land was sanctified. Thus ● 2 Esdras 9:8 speaks of: "my salvation in my land and within my borders, which I have sanctified for myself from the beginning." As God's house, God's city, and God's land was holy, set apart by the presence of the Lord, so his people participated in that holiness. The people had been sanctified for God and his blessing. The Lord said to Moses,

- "... My presence will go with you, and I will give you rest." And he said to him, "If thy presence will not go with me, do not carry us up from here. ...Is it not in thy going with us, so that we are distinct, I and thy people, from all other people that are upon the face of the earth?..." (Exodus 33:7-21).

God said,

- "...I will bless them and multiply them, and will set my sanctuary in the midst of them for evermore. My dwelling place shall be with them.... Then the nations will know that I the Lord sanctify Israel, when my sanctuary is in the midst of them for evermore" (Ezekiel 37:26-28).
- For the Jewish background also compare 3 Maccabees 2:14-17.

(2) Purification. The people were aware that prior to God's taking up habitation in his house, they would have to purify it, and be pure themselves. They would have to be righteous and keep righteous.

- "Concerning this house which you are building, if you will walk in my statutes and obey my ordinances and keep all my commandments and walk in them, then I will establish my word with you, which I spoke to David your father. And I will dwell among the children of Israel, and will not forsake my people Israel." (1 Kings 6:12-13).
- "Depart, depart, go out thence, touch no unclean thing; go out from the midst of her, purify yourselves, you who bear the vessels of the Lord" (Isaiah 52:11). ● "O Lord, who shall sojourn in thy tent? Who shall dwell on thy holy hill? He who walks blamelessly, and does what is right, and speaks truth from his heart" (Psalm 15:1-2). ● "Surely ...the upright shall dwell in thy presence" (Psalm 140:13). ● "No man who practices deceit shall dwell in my house; no man who utters lies shall continue in my presence (Psalm 101:7). ● "Cast me not away from thy presence, and take not thy holy Spirit from me" (Psalm 51:11). ● "Now let them put away their idolatry ... and I will dwell in their midst for ever" (Ezekiel 43:9). ● "You shall not defile the land in which you live, in the midst of which I dwell; for I the Lord dwell in the midst of the people of Israel" (Numbers 35:34). See also Zech 8:3.

(3) Possession. The spiritual presence of God in his temple in OT days indicated that they were truly God's people, his possession: ● "And I will dwell among the people of Israel, and will be their God" (Exodus 29:45). ● "And I will dwell among the children of Israel, and will not forsake my people Israel" (1 Kings 6:13). ● "...My dwelling place shall be with them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people" (Ezekiel 37:26-28). ● "I will bring them to dwell in the midst of Jerusalem; and they shall be my people and I will be their God..." (Zechariah 8:8). ● "And I will walk among you, and will be your God, and you shall be my people" (Leviticus 26:12). ● "...for lo, I come and I will dwell in the midst of you, says the Lord. And many nations shall join themselves to the Lord in that day, and shall be my people; and I will dwell in the midst of you... (Zechariah 2:10-12).

(4) Prayer. The nearness of the Spirit of God, being present as he was in the temple, was an encouragement to pray, and an assurance of answered prayer.

- "But will God indeed dwell on the earth? Behold, heaven and the highest heaven cannot contain thee; how much less this house which I have built! Yet have regard to the prayer of thy servant and to his supplication, O Lord my God, hearkening to the cry and to the prayer which thy servant prays before thee this day; that thy eyes may be open night and day toward this house, the place of which thou hast said, 'My name shall be there,' that thou mayest hearken to the prayer which thy servant offers toward this place. And hearken thou to the supplication of thy servant and of thy people Israel, when they pray toward this place; yea, hear thou in heaven thy dwelling place; and when thou hearest, forgive." (1 Kings 8:27-30)

The Jews spoke of praying in God's presence: ● "Turn to the Lord and forsake your sins; pray in his presence and lessen your offenses" (Sirach 17:25). ● "The prayer of both was heard in the presence of the glory of the great God"

(Tobit 3:16). • “Seek the Lord and his strength, seek his presence continually!” (1 Chronicles 16:11). The people of God were confident that, • “... If evil comes upon us, the sword, judgment, or pestilence, or famine, we will stand before this house, and before thee, for thy name is in this house, and cry to thee in our affliction, and thou wilt hear and save” (2 Chronicles 20:8-9).

Visitors to Jerusalem will be struck by the devotion of prayer manifested by modern Jews who pray at the Western Wall of the Temple. The devotion is not due to the fact that the Western wall is an actual remnant of the Herodian Temple, as impressive as that is. Another factor is at work. The Temple Mount is now under the control of authorities who do not allow Jews access to it. The Western wall therefore is the nearest that the devout can come to the one-time location of Holy Place of the Temple, the place of God’s spiritual dwelling. Therefore the prayers are offered there. Excavations beside the Western Wall are opening up closer positioning, and one can see that many prayers are now being offered there in those tunnels.

(5) Protection. Because he made his dwelling in their midst, and his willingness to answer prayer, God would protect his people and provide for them: • “And I will dwell among the children of Israel, and will not forsake my people Israel” (1 Kings 6:13). • “Let me dwell in thy tent for ever! Oh to be safe under the shelter of thy wings!” (Psalm 61:4). • “Is not the Lord your God with you? And has he not given you peace on every side? For he has delivered the inhabitants of the land into my hand...” (1 Chronicles 22:18). • “...The Lord, the God of Israel, has given peace to his people; and he dwells in Jerusalem for ever” (1 Chronicles 23:25). • “...My Spirit abides among you; fear not” (Haggai 2:5). • “Seek the Lord and his strength, seek his presence continually!” (Psalm 105:4). • “And whenever the ark set out, Moses said, ‘Arise, O Lord, and let thy enemies be scattered; and let them that hate thee flee before thee’” (Numbers 10:35). • “For I will defend this city to save it, for my own sake and for the sake of my servant David” (2 Kings 19:34). • “For the Lord has chosen Zion; he has desired it for his habitation: ‘This is my resting place for ever; here I will dwell, for I have desired it. I will abundantly bless her provisions; I will satisfy her poor with bread’” (Psalm 132:13-15). • “Like birds hovering, so the Lord of hosts will protect Jerusalem; he will protect and deliver it, he will spare and rescue it.” (Isaiah 31:5). • “...the angel of his presence saved them; in his love and in his pity he redeemed them ...” (Isaiah 63:9-10). • “Do not trust in these deceptive words: ‘This is the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord’” (Jeremiah 7:4). This means that many Jews felt (unjustifiably) safe simply because the temple of the Lord was in their midst.

(6) Love. In the OT it is clear that the presence of God was a manifestation of God’s love. • “... the angel of his presence saved them; in his love and in his pity he redeemed them...” (Isaiah 63:9-10). • “...The Lord, your God, is in your midst ... he will renew you in his love; he will exult over you with loud singing” (Zephaniah 3:16-17). • “I bow down toward thy holy temple and give thanks to thy name for thy steadfast love and thy faithfulness...” (Psalm 138:2).

(7) Joy. For all of these reasons, the dwelling of God’s name in the temple was a cause of great rejoicing: • “...here I will dwell...and her saints will shout for joy” (Psalm 132:14-16). • “... in thy presence there is fulness of joy...” (Psalm 16:11). • “... thou dost make him glad with the joy of thy presence” (Psalm 21:6). • “... let them bring me to thy holy hill and to thy dwelling! Then I will go to the altar of God, to God my exceeding joy...” (Psalm 43:3-4). • “... My soul longs, yea, faints for the courts of the Lord; my heart and flesh sing for joy to the living God” (Psalm 84:1-2). • “Sing and rejoice, O daughter of Zion; for lo, I come and I will dwell in the midst of you... Thou dost show me the path of life; in thy presence there is fulness of joy, in thy right hand are pleasures for evermore” (Zechariah 2:10-12). • “Shout, and sing for joy, O inhabitant of Zion, for great in your midst is the Holy One of Israel” (Isaiah 12:6). • “... I went with the throng, and led them in procession to the house of God, with glad shouts and songs of thanksgiving, a multitude keeping festival” (Psalm 42:4; cf. Deuteronomy 12:5-7).

Rabbinic Background

Jewish rabbis expressed similar sentiments about the Shechinah (or *Shekinah*). This was the presence or glory of God, thought of as dwelling especially in the temple. The tabernacle was the *mishkan*, literally the abiding place. The word *Shechinah* (cognate to *mishkan*) meant *presence* (Montefiore and Lowe, RA 226). In Rabbinic thought the Holy Spirit and the Shechinah (dwelling or presence of God) were sometimes viewed as equivalent. (Cohen, *Everyman’s Talmud*, p. 45). Thus Paul speaks of the dwelling of God in the body of the Christian as the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. Again the presence of God was a sign of sanctification, “...because there were slanderers among you, I have withdrawn my Shechinah from your midst, but in the time to come, when I root out the evil inclination from you I shall cause my Shechinah to return to you” (*Rabbinic Anthology*, p. 405). They believed there had to be purity or righteousness if the presence of God were to continue dwelling with them: “The wicked cause the Shechinah to ascend from the earth, while the righteous cause it to dwell on the earth” (RA 84; see also 335-36; 387;

514-15; 557). Thus righteousness was needed (1) so that God's presence would come to dwell, (2) because he did dwell, and (3) to keep him dwelling. See also *Everyman's Talmud* (100, 127; 153; 216). The theme of ownership also recurs: "He sought that the Shechinah should not rest upon the other peoples of the world, and he granted it; as it is said, 'So that we are distinguished, I and thy people'" (ET 63). Protection: "So long as I was in its midst [the temple], the nations could not touch it" (RA 67; See also RA 435). Prayer: "In his prayer a man should think that the Shechinah is before him" (RA 345; ET 83).

Therefore, in both the OT and in the Rabbinic tradition, the same themes are associated with the presence of God with his people in his temple. Some Jews held that the Shechinah did not dwell in the second temple. However, Christ clearly thought that God was dwelling in the temple in his time (Matt 23:21).

Paul

The language of the indwelling presence of God in his temple, his holy place is found again in the words of the apostle Paul.

● "...the Spirit of God dwells in you. Any one who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him. ... If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will give life to your mortal bodies also through his Spirit which dwells in you" (Romans 8:9-11). ● "Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, which you have from God? ..." (1 Corinthians 6:19). ● "...For we are the temple of the living God..." (2 Corinthians 6:16). ● "... in whom you also are built into it for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit..." (Ephesians 2:19-22).

The same themes that predominated in the OT and Rabbinic background relative to the indwelling Spirit are found in Paul.

(1) Sanctification and (2) purification. The presence of the Spirit is sanctifying (Romans 15:16; 1 Corinthians 3:16-17; 6:11; Ephesians 2:21-22). Before the inner chamber can become the dwelling place of God's Spirit, it must be purified. The sinful person must be cleansed before God's Spirit will dwell in his heart. This is not to say that God's Spirit cannot visit an unsanctified person in the role of empowering him. The role of empowerment is different from that of indwelling.

The written word of the Spirit begins the process of sanctification for one who is receptive to that word. Anticipation of the coming indwelling Spirit moves a person to begin a purification of life in repentance. At baptism, the Spirit is an agent in engendering new life. After baptism, the Spirit fully makes his home in the heart of the new Christian, bringing the profound sanctification of the presence of the Spirit. During his life thereafter, the Christian continues to purify himself, so that he may continue to be a dwelling place fit for the Spirit.

The ongoing presence begins in baptism. The Christian has become a holy place. He has been washed, sanctified, justified in expectation of, and by, the Spirit of God (1 Corinthians 6:11; 12:13). Therefore, Paul speaks of being "a minister of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles in the priestly service of the gospel of God, so that the offering of the Gentiles may be acceptable, sanctified by the Holy Spirit" (Romans 15:16). Paul is sure that the indwelling of the Holy Spirit means that Christians are holy, and that they should therefore continue to live holy and righteous lives—the temple, made holy by God's presence, must be maintained in holiness and righteousness.

(3) Possession. As the dwelling of God in his temple was the sign that Israel was God's possession, God's people, so the indwelling of the Spirit means that one belongs to Christ. ● "... if in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you. Any one who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him" (Romans 8:9). ● "And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, in whom you were sealed for the day of redemption." (Ephesians 4:30—sealing is of course the mark of ownership). ● "he has put his seal upon us and given us his Spirit in our hearts as a guarantee." (2 Corinthians 1:22, RSV) ● "In him you also...were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, which is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory." (Ephesians 1:13-14). ● "Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, which you have from God? You are not your own; you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body." (1 Corinthians 6:19-20). ● "And because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, 'Abba! Father!'" (Galatians 4:6) ● "...So then you are no longer strangers and sojourners, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone, in whom the whole structure is joined together and grows into a holy temple in the Lord; in whom you also are built into it for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit." (Ephesians 2:18-22). ● The same truth will be fulfilled in heaven: "...Behold, the dwelling of God is with men. He will dwell with them, and they shall be his people..." (Revelation 21:1-4).

(4) Prayer. The nearness of God's temple and his presence among his people of old encouraged them in prayer and reassured them of answered prayer and help. Now Christians are one Spirit with the Lord (1 Corinthians 6:17). Because of the promised indwelling Spirit the Christian has faith that he possesses a special communication with God. ● "Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with sighs too deep for words. And he who searches the hearts of men knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God." (Romans 8:26-27). ● And compare the NEB: "...and in everything, as we know, he [the Spirit] co-operates for good with those who love God. (Romans 8:28). ● "Pray at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication. To that end keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints," (Ephesians 6:18; cf. Jude 20).

(5) Protection. The presence of the Spirit assures Christians of God's providence and help (see above on prayer).

- "...that according to the riches of his glory he may grant you to be strengthened with might through his Spirit in the inner man, and that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may have power to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fulness of God. Now to him who by the power at work within us is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations, for ever and ever. Amen." (Ephesians 3:16-21).

- "Pray at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication. To that end keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints," (Ephesians 6:18)

- "Yes, and I shall rejoice. For I know that through your prayers and the help of the Spirit of Jesus Christ this will turn out for my deliverance" (Philippians 1:19).

(6) Love. Even as old Israel believed that God's love had been abundantly shown to them by his presence with them in the temple, so Paul holds the same truth: ● "... the love of God hath been shed abroad in our hearts through the Holy Spirit which was given unto us" (Romans 5:5). And note also, ● "... that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love..." (Ephesians 3:17).

(7) Joy. The people of God rejoice in the blessing of God's indwelling, just as did his people of old: ● "For the kingdom of God is not food and drink but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit" (Romans 14:17). See also, ● "And you became imitators of us and of the Lord, for you received the word in much affliction, with joy inspired by the Holy Spirit" (1 Thessalonians 1:6).

(8) Fellowship. An additional theme, not especially noteworthy in the OT, is fellowship. Since the identical Spirit of God dwells individually in the heart of each Christian, then the Spirit of God dwells collectively in the saints. Therefore, the love which is due to God is due to each fellow Christian. ● "I appeal to you, brethren, by our Lord Jesus Christ and by the love of the Spirit, to strive together with me in your prayers to God on my behalf" (Romans 15:30). ● "For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and all were made to drink of one Spirit." (1 Corinthians 12:13). ● "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all." (2 Corinthians 13:14). ● "for through him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father." (Ephesians 2:18). ● "eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." (Ephesians 4:3). ● " So if there is any encouragement in Christ, any incentive of love, any participation in the Spirit, any affection and sympathy," (Philippians 2:1). ● "and has made known to us your love in the Spirit." (Colossians 1:8).

How could others besides Messiah come to have his same resurrection and life? The answer—they must have a relationship with Him. They must get into him, and he into them. Paul taught that alien sinners could be saved in Christ through faith, repentance, and baptism. In faith-baptism they could imitate Christ's death, burial, and resurrection; and thus join Christ, be united to him spiritually, and thus have an earnest, in this life, of the full resurrection to come (Romans 6:3-11; Colossians 2:11-13). This was not a promise of extraordinary empowerment—any more so than there was a promise to the people of Israel as a whole that they could enjoy special empowerments due to God's dwelling among them. It was an assurance drawn from faith in, and obedience to, Jesus, and what he accomplished in his life, death, burial, and resurrection.

(9) Resurrection Life. To the OT background (the Spirit of God who dwells in the temple and sanctifies) must also be added the theme of the Spirit as the earnest, the first fruits, of resurrection to new life. Paul taught that Jesus had arisen from the dead by the power of the Holy Spirit of God. He was "designated Son of God in power according to the Spirit of holiness by his resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord" (Romans 1:4). The Spirit of God has

always been the Spirit of life and breath. See also, “And God raised the Lord and will also raise us up by his power” (1 Corinthians 6:14; cf. 2 Corinthians 13:4; Ephesians 1:19-23).

So Paul stated that: “...if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwelleth in you, he that raised up Christ Jesus from the dead shall give life also to your mortal bodies through his Spirit that dwelleth in you” (Romans 8:11). The power of the Spirit of God is at work in baptism, therefore Paul says, “by the Spirit we were all baptized” (1 Corinthians 12:13). At baptism one turns from sin to Christ. One is immersed into the death of Christ, as Christ was buried in the tomb. The power of God’s Spirit entered the body of Christ in the tomb and enlivened it to resurrection, to new life. Through faith, the deposit (the down payment) of the Spirit of God enters the body of the baptizand (the one being baptized), in the water, and one is raised from that water with the first installment of the new life. One thus has a promise of the full measure to come later. At the end, one will obtain eternal resurrection from physical death (Romans 6:3-11; Colossians 1:11-12).

It should be noted that by the “life” of the Spirit within, Paul does not mean “regeneration” in the sense of some mysterious spiritual transformation to righteousness. He is referring to resurrection life—being physically dead, then coming to life.

In reflection upon this theme, resurrection-life by the Spirit, Paul declares that, ● “... The last Adam became a life-giving spirit.” (1 Corinthians 15:45). He also stated: ● “If we live by the Spirit, by the Spirit let us also walk” (Galatians 5:25). Again he said, ● “... he that soweth unto the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap eternal life” (Galatians 6:8). See also the following: ● “...ourselves also, who have the first-fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for our adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body. For in hope were we saved...” (Romans 8:23-25). ● “...that ye may abound in hope, in the power of the Holy Spirit” (Romans 15:13). Paul indicates that it was God who, ● “...gave us the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts” (2 Corinthians 1:22). The earnest was the first installment of life to come, so, ● “...that what is mortal may be swallowed up of life. Now he that wrought us for this very thing is God, who gave unto us the earnest of the Spirit” (2 Corinthians 5:4-5). ● “...the Holy Spirit of promise ... an earnest of our inheritance...” (Ephesians 1:13-14). See also Romans 8:2; 2 Corinthians 3:6; Galatians 3:14; and 5:5.

In summary, as shown by the table below, one can see the commonalities between the background materials and Paul’s doctrine:

Table 1

Significance of the Indwelling Presence of God

Old Testament	Rabbis	Paul
Sanctification	Sanctification	Sanctification, Purification
Possession	Possession	Possession
Prayer	Prayer	Prayer
Protection	Protection	Protection
Love		Love
Joy		Joy
		Fellowship
		Life

The Effect of Indwelling On the One Indwelt

The momentous fact of God’s indwelling by the Spirit, when it is understood and believed by the one indwelt, becomes a passionate motivation for the conduct of his life in a certain ways. ● Thus the Christian serves: “...we serve not under the old written code but in the new life of the Spirit.” (Romans 7:6). ● The Christian walks: “in order that the just requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.” (Romans 8:4). ● The Christian lives a certain way and sets his mind on certain things: “...those who

live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit.” (Romans 8:5). ● The Christian puts to death: “for if you live according to the flesh you will die, but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body you will live.” (Romans 8:13). ● The Christian cries Abba: “For ye received not the spirit of bondage again unto fear; but ye received the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.” (Romans 8:15). ● He hopes: “May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope.” (Romans 15:13). ● He preserves unity: “Do you not know that you are God’s temple and that God’s Spirit dwells in you? If any one destroys God’s temple, God will destroy him. For God’s temple is holy, and that temple you are.” (1 Corinthians 3:16-17). ● He manifests righteousness: “You yourselves are our letter of recommendation, written on your hearts, to be known and read by all men; and you show that you are a letter from Christ delivered by us, written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of human hearts ... who has made us competent to be ministers of a new covenant, not in a written code but in the Spirit; for the written code kills, but the Spirit gives life.” (2 Corinthians 3:2-6). ● The Christian changes: “And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being changed into his likeness from one degree of glory to another; for this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit.” (2 Corinthians 3:18). ● The Christian cleanses:

“What agreement has the temple of God with idols? For we are the temple of the living God; as God said, “I will live in them and move among them, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Therefore come out from them, and be separate from them, says the Lord, and touch nothing unclean; then I will welcome you, and I will be a father to you, and you shall be my sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty.” Since we have these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from every defilement of body and spirit, and make holiness perfect in the fear of God.” (2 Corinthians 6:16-7:1).

● The Christian waits: “For through the Spirit, by faith, we wait for the hope of righteousness.” (Galatians 5:5). ● He refuses the gratifications of carnality (Galatians 5:16-21). ● He walks: “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such there is no law.... If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit.” (Galatians 5:22-23, 25). ● He sows: “For he who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption; but he who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life.” (Galatians 6:8). ● He maintains: “eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.” (Ephesians 4:3). ● He puts away so that he may not grieve the Holy Spirit:

● Therefore, putting away falsehood, let every one speak the truth with his neighbor, for we are members one of another. Be angry but do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, and give no opportunity to the devil. Let the thief no longer steal, but rather let him labor, doing honest work with his hands, so that he may be able to give to those in need. Let no evil talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for edifying, as fits the occasion, that it may impart grace to those who hear. And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, in whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, with all malice, and be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you. (Ephesians 4:25-33).

● The Christian prays: “Pray at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication. To that end keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints.” (Ephesians 6:18). ● He promotes harmony: “So if there is any encouragement in Christ, any incentive of love, any participation in the Spirit, any affection and sympathy, complete my joy by being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind.” (Philippians 2:1-2). ● He worships: “For we are the true circumcision, who worship God in spirit, and glory in Christ Jesus, and put no confidence in the flesh.” (Philippians 3:3). ● He loves: “and has made known to us your love in the Spirit.” (Colossians 1:8). ● He rejoices: “And you became imitators of us and of the Lord, for you received the word in much affliction, with joy inspired by the Holy Spirit” (1 Thessalonians 1:6). ● And he abstains:

● “For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you abstain from unchastity; that each one of you know how to take a wife for himself in holiness and honor, not in the passion of lust like heathen who do not know God; that no man transgress, and wrong his brother in this matter, because the Lord is an avenger in all these things, as we solemnly forewarned you. For God has not called us for uncleanness, but in holiness. Therefore whoever disregards this, disregards not man but God, who gives his Holy Spirit to you.” (1 Thessalonians 4:3-8). These actions are taken by the Christian in view of the glorious fact of the indwelling of the Spirit of God within him and his fellow Christians.

As the children of Israel followed the leading of the fiery cloud of God’s presence on their way through the wilderness, so the Christian is confident that God’s indwelling Spirit will providentially guide, guard, and protect him (Romans 8:14). The Christian is being changed, he is purifying himself, because he knows that within him

dwells the Spirit of glory. The inner holiness makes him desire to be as holy outside, as he is holy inside (2 Corinthians 3:18). Incidentally, none of this is present in Acts.

Summary. Some will point out that it is the Spirit who is said to effect some of the activities above. For example, the Spirit is said to do the “changing” (2 Corinthians 3:18, cf. Romans 8:14), not the one indwelt by the Spirit. But we suggest that Paul expresses it in this way because the presence of the Spirit is the dynamic or the motivation. A person might say, “My wife’s love made me a better man.” He does not imply that she mysteriously or miraculously transformed him, but that she was the dynamic of it.

What the Indwelling Spirit is Not

Manifestation? As mentioned above, the spiritual presence of God within the most holy place of the temple was not tied to “manifestations.” There is no need to be disappointed, as was the Roman general, Pompey, with what appeared to be an “empty room.” Based on God’s word, the Christian accepts by faith the presence of the indwelling Spirit in his heart—not by touch, smell, taste, sight, sound, or ESP. This indwelling is a glorious divine fact that, because the one indwelt believes in it, profoundly influences his life. So the indwelling of the Spirit is neither miraculous empowerment nor mysterious impulse.

Communication? Does the indwelling Spirit communicate to his human host either miraculously, or in some unknown manner the knowledge of the gospel? According to Christ, it is the function of the word of God to impart the knowledge of that which converts and that which edifies (Matthew 28:19-20 and parallels; see also the many examples of conversion and edification in the book of Acts). Whatever help or assistance God (or God through his Spirit) makes available to the one indwelt by the Spirit, it would surely make superfluous the proclamation and teaching of the word, if he, in his aid of the Christian, supplanted those functions. It is not to be denied that some kind of spiritual benefit is given. It must be, however, less objective, less definitive, and thus dissimilar to the overtly revelatory knowledge contained in Scripture.

All sufficient? Is the word of God all-sufficient for all the blessings enjoyed by the Christian? The Constitution of the US is all-sufficient for producing the governmental institutions enjoyed by its citizens. However, if someone’s house is on fire he does not whip out a copy of the Constitution. He instead calls the fire department which was instituted by his city, which has its charter from the state, which derives its authority from the US Constitution.

We might partially illustrate by supposing a man to be lost many miles into a wilderness. He is starving to death. He finally stumbles across a small shack. It has no provisions in it. It is bare. But as he looks into the empty cupboard he glimpses a page of instructions posted there. It contains a map for the journey out of the wilderness. It also tells how to locate a nearby hidden cache of supplies and provisions. The man obeys the instructions. He locates the supplies he needs. He is nourished. Using the map he finds his way out of the wilderness and is rescued.

Later when asked how he managed to survive he says that a single page of instructions had been all-sufficient. His answer is legitimate, but hearers understand that what he means is that the document not only provided direct assistance, but it also gave him access to all of those subordinate resources which enabled his escape. Instructions and provisions contributed in uniquely important ways; neither were superfluous. The word of God is all-sufficient in conversion and sanctification both because of its divine instruction and because it enables one to further access additional divine resources—such as the sanctifying presence of God and the life-giving indwelling Spirit.

The Holy Spirit Baptism in Paul

Finally, does Paul make any allusion to the widespread empowerments which characterized the inauguration of the age of salvation? Yes, he knew about and himself experienced, the “visitations” of the Spirit for the purpose of special empowerment (we use the word *visitation* to distinguish from *indwelling*). However, Paul never confused the indwelling with the empowerment. See pp. 14ff. for the distinction Paul makes between the two offices. For Titus 3:5-6 see p. 54.

The promise of the Spirit in Paul. It is always tempting to see in Galatians 3:14 (“the promise of the Spirit”) and Ephesians 1:13-14, (“the promised Holy Spirit”) a reference to Joel 2 and the Holy Spirit baptism. However, this is doubtful. In Paul, “promise” is virtually always a reference to the promise given to Abraham. In Galatians 4:28-29 Christians are called the children of *promise*, born, not according to the flesh, as Ishmael, but according to the Spirit, as Isaac. The process of becoming children of God and heirs according to the Abrahamic promise involves the Spirit. We suggest that Paul’s expression associating Spirit and promise do so without reference to Joel 2, but rather to the Abrahamic promise.

CHAPTER 9 — THE HOLY SPIRIT IN THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

Jesus and his revelation are virtually interchangeable, for he is incarnate revelation
Raymond E. Brown, The Gospel According to John, 2:662.

The gospel of John is unique in its use of “double entendre.” John’s use of simple words and phrases no doubt sometimes lulls interpreters into thinking that his meaning is transparent when that may not be the case. These matters are well recognized. They may not always be taken into account when examining the famous Holy Spirit passage, John 3:3-8. In the following exposition the simplest approach to explanation may be to begin with a glossary of relevant words and phrases, and then proceed with the exegesis.

John 3:3-8

(See also the discussion, p. 55).

Again or from above (anōthen). In the Greek language the word *anōthen* has two distinct meanings, *again* or *from above*. John takes both meanings into account when he records Jesus’ conversation with Nicodemus. The typical usage of the word as it is found in the gospel of John is *from above* (see John 3:27v1, 31; 19:11).

Born. A major theme in John is what might be phrased: “Source: from above, from heaven, from God.”¹¹ One should also examine John’s terminology of being “sent” from God, or being “of” God; etc. The context of John 3 deals repeatedly with the question of the (self-chosen) origin of one’s spiritual nature.¹²

Flesh. What is it that contrasts with *born* of God or *born* from above? It is being born of Satan, the flesh, the world, the “below”;¹³ It is important to understand this contrast if one is to understand John 3:3-8.

Spirit, wind. Of course *pneuma* refers to the Spirit of God. But the text uses its alternative meaning *wind* in a parabolic fashion to illustrate the lesson being taught. In John *pneuma* and revelatory word and truth are constantly associated.¹⁴

Blow (pneō). This word refers to the *blowing* of the wind, but also to breathing out to impart or to instill something in someone.

Will or listeth. *Thelē* means *will, purpose, or resolve*.

Sound, voice (phōnē). In the Gospel of *John*, with the exception of John 3:8, *phōnē* always means *voice*. And it almost always refers to the voice or message of Jesus.

Whence and whither. The theme of “*whence and whither (from heaven, to heaven)*” is very significant in reference to the divine origin and *destination* of Jesus. “...I know whence I have come and whither I am going, but you do not know whence I come or whither I am going. (John 8:14). See also: “...where do you get that living water? (John 4:11). Then what if you were to see the Son of man ascending where he was before? (John 6:62). Yet we know where this man comes from; and when the Christ appears, no one will know where he comes from.” So Jesus proclaimed, as he taught in the temple, “You know me, and you know where I come from? ...” (John 7:27-28). “...where I am you cannot come.” (John 7:34, etc.). We know that God has spoken to Moses, but as for this man, we do not know where he comes from.” The man answered, “Why, this is a marvel! You do not know where he comes from, and yet he opened my eyes. (John 9:29-30). “...where I am, there shall my servant be also...” (John 12:26). “... ‘Lord, where are you going?’ Jesus answered, ‘Where I am going you cannot follow me now; but you shall follow afterward.’” (John 13:36). “...where I am you may be also. And you know the way where I am going.’ Thomas said to

¹¹ For this, see John 1:6, 13, 14, 32; 3:2, 13, 27, 31-32; 4:32; 5:44; 6:32-33, 38, 50-51, 58, 62; 7:17, 27-29; 8:14, 23, 42; 9:29-30, 33; 13:3; 15:15, 26; 16:27-29; 17:5, 8, 14, 16; 18:36-37; 19:9-11.

¹² John 3:2, 5, 6, 11, 12, 13, 17, 19, 31, 32, 34; cf. 1:12-13.

¹³ See 1:12-13; 3:6, 31; 8:23, 24, 38, 41, 42, 44, 47; 15:19; 17:14; 18:36; cf. 1 John 2:16; 3:8, 10, 12; 4:5-6; 5:19 (cf. **TDNT** 6:438).

¹⁴ John 3:34; 6:63-68; 14:17, 26; 15:26; 16:13; 1 John 5:7-9; Revelation 1:10; 2:7, etc.; 4:2; 14:13; 17:13; 19:10; 21:10; 22:6, 17.

him, ‘Lord, we do not know where you are going.’” (John 14:3-6). “But now I am going to him who sent me; yet none of you asks me, ‘Where are you going?’” (John 16:5). “...he entered the praetorium again and said to Jesus, ‘Where are you from?’ But Jesus gave no answer.” (John 19:9). This theme is also prominent in the Epistles of John.

Water. It is sometimes said that being born of water has reference to physical birth instead of baptism. This is hardly correct: (1) *Water* is never *used* with reference to physical birth in Scripture or in background literature. (2) If there is a reference to physical birth, the passage could be taken to imply that children who die in the womb cannot be saved. (3) On any account it would be a meaningless truism, a redundancy, to declare to existing persons that they must be born physically. *Water* is almost certainly a reference to baptism for the following reasons: (1) Just a few passages earlier, water is used with reference to baptism and also in conjunction with the mention of Spirit (John 1:29-34) as it is here. (2) Baptism appears in the context following (3:22-23). (3) The gospel requires baptism for salvation—Acts 2:38, 1 Peter 3:21, Acts 22:16, Romans 6:3-4, Galatians 3:27, etc.; and the word *baptizō* often technically means “immerse in water.” (4) The requirement of being born of water has several significant parallels in the NT as follows: Ephesians 5:25-26; 1 Peter 1:23 (with 1:3 and 3:21). Titus 3:5; Acts 22:16; Hebrews 10:22. (5) These facts explain why the writings of the church fathers unanimously find baptism in John 3:5; and (6) why the overwhelming majority of modern commentators on the gospel of John find in the word *water* a reference to baptism. In fact, the only reason for expositors not to see a reference to (water) baptism here seems to be the inexplicable modern prejudice against it.

- *Now there was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews: the same came unto him by night, and said to him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God; for no one can do these signs that thou doest, except God be with him.* (John 3:1-2). Nicodemus expressed some confidence in Jesus, but his faith is not to be understood as fully developed, as shown by John 3:9-10. Also John 3:11-12 shows that Jesus is speaking over the shoulder of Nicodemus to a wider audience who are yet unbelieving.

- *Jesus answered him, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.”* (John 3:3). Strictly speaking it is not possible to translate word-for-word the original language of this sentence into English. *Anōthen* carries two distinct meanings, *again* and *from above*, and there is no such single word in English. John depicts Nicodemus will misunderstand Jesus to mean *born again*, whereas Jesus intends the meaning *born from above*. If one translates Jesus as saying “from above,” one cannot understand the response of Nicodemus. If one translates “again” one misses the intention of Jesus’ statement. Translators are found on both sides of the rendering, and a few try to combine the meanings into one English phrase (see Moffatt and JNT).

- *Nicodemus said to him, “How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother’s womb and be born?”* (John 3:4). Again, the word *anōthen* is ambiguous. Nicodemus misapplies the word. He focuses on “born,” and then takes *anōthen* in its secondary meaning of “anew.”

- Jesus clarifies what is meant, “*Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.*” (John 3:5). In mentioning water, Jesus is not speaking of physical rebirth, but of birth from above, through water (baptism) and the Spirit of God (see John 1:12-13). What does “born of the Spirit” mean? As verse 8 will show, it means that one finds his spiritual origin in God through hearing the voice of the Son of God. The Spirit brings the word, and the divine gospel message is instrumental in bringing about birth from above. The word thus brings life. The word regenerates or gives birth from God.¹⁵

- The entire passage has a dual application. The first is for Nicodemus. Both Jesus and John the Baptist had been preaching the need for water baptism (John 1:31). Therefore, Jesus is saying to Nicodemus that such a baptism was from heaven, and he needed to obey it—thus be born of water. But he also needed to listen to his (Jesus’) words and teachings so that he might be truly born from above, from God. However, as John recorded this passage decades later, he intended for Christians to read it as follows: “Baptism (as ordained for the new age of salvation) is from heaven. It is to be a baptism based on a response to Jesus’ words and teachings, given by the Spirit in order truly to be born from above, from God.” So we paraphrase: “Except one is born of God through baptism based on the word of the gospel, one cannot enter the kingdom of God.”

¹⁵ John 4:41; 5:24; 8:30; 8:51; 14:23; 15:3; 17:20.

● *That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.* (John 3:6). The usual interpretation is that “born of flesh” means born physically. Rather, it has reference to being “born” of carnality or worldliness or Satan (see the glossary above). Of him who chooses and imitates sin, it may be said that he is born of the flesh, “born of the earth,” born from “below,” is of “Satan,” or is “of the world.” (see *TDNT* 6:438). That which is born of the Spirit is spirit, means that he who receives birth from the word of the Spirit of God has, in that sense, the Spirit of life.

● *Do not marvel that I said to you, ‘You must be born anew.’* (John 3:7). *Born anew (anōthen)* means born from above, that is, of God, of the Spirit of God.

● *The wind blows where it wills, and you hear the sound of it, but you do not know whence it comes or whither it goes; so it is with every one who is born of the Spirit.* (John 3:8). Many theories about the mysterious nature of the work of the Spirit are based on these words. But Jesus is seeking to illuminate, not further confuse or conceal, how one may be born of the Spirit. This is a kind of brief parable. As noted above, four words in this verse have dual meanings. It should be recalled that John likes to use this kind of language.

Retranslating the sentence one obtains something like, “the Spirit imparts where it purposes, and you [Nicodemus] hear its voice (although you do not know whence that voice comes or whither it goes) so is everyone who is born of the Spirit.” Paraphrasing: “Nicodemus, the Spirit of God, where he purposes, he imparts, and his voice you are hearing in my word (although you do not recognize that I came from God and I am going to God). By this means, will anyone be born of the Spirit, that is, by hearing my word, that word imparted to me by the Spirit of God.”

This corresponds quite well with John 3:34, *For he whom God has sent utters the words of God, for it is not by measure that he gives the Spirit to him.* As noted above, “whence and whither,” an important theme in John, is in reference to Jesus coming from God and returning to God. What has been shown is that the Spirit empowers the utterance of prophetic words, and, above all, he does so in the word of Christ. By means of that prophetic word, people can have the truth and be led to a saving relationship with God.

John 3:34.

For he whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God: for God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto him. Jesus possesses the limitless Spirit—his words are certainly from God. See also “measures of the Spirit,” p. 35.

John 4:23-24.

But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for such the Father seeks to worship him. God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth. In the Gospel of John there is such a close connection of the Spirit and the word, or the truth, one must seriously consider the possibility that, in the phrase, “Spirit and truth,” the word *and (kai)* is epexegetic (explanatory). If so, Jesus is saying that one “must worship in Spirit, that is, in truth.” When one follows the word of Christ, one worships in truth (John 1:17). Having said that, however, it is more likely that there is no reference to the Holy Spirit in the passage.

John 6:63

“It is the Spirit that gives life, the flesh is of no avail; the words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life.” The close connection of Spirit and word and life, as found in John, is illustrated here. The Spirit brings the word. The word is life-giving. Thus the Spirit gives life. We might imagine someone asking Jesus: “Lord, what is it that gives life?” He answers: “It is the spirit that gives life. Just as a body has physical life by means of the soul or spirit, so the disciple is enlivened to spiritual life by the Spirit. The Spirit has given to me the words of God. If you follow them you will have the spirit of life.”

Again someone asks: “Lord, does the flesh benefit or profit or avail anything?” The Lord replies, “The flesh is of no avail. The fleshly body is nothing without the spirit. The world and the flesh and the Devil benefit no one spiritually and eternally.”

Someone asks, “How then does one come to enjoy this life-giving spirit?” Jesus responds: “The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life. The message I bring provides life. And in that sense, the message I bring supplies the spirit of life.”

John 7:37-39.

This passage has been interpreted in two different ways. Most translators take it to mean that the living water would flow from the believer, as in, “He who believes in me, as the scripture has said, ‘Out of his heart shall flow rivers of living water.’” This would mean that the Holy Spirit flows from the believer.

However, it is also rendered, “...Whoever is thirsty should come to me, and whoever believes in me should drink. As the scripture says, ‘Streams of life-giving water will pour out from his side.’ Jesus said this about the Spirit, which those who believed in him were going to receive. At that time the Spirit had not yet been given, because Jesus had not been raised to glory” (TEV).

According to this rendition, the living water, the Spirit, would flow from Christ. Several translators and significant interpreters favor this rendering.¹⁶

Jesus is the source of the water/Spirit.¹⁷ There is no parallel passage in John for the believer as the source of the Holy Spirit. “They that had believed,” (an aorist participle) refers to the Twelve.

The drift of the context is as follows: “Come to Jesus and drink...believers are to receive the Spirit...the Spirit was not yet given to believers.” And yet in the middle of this, is one supposed to infer that the text begins to speak of the Spirit flowing out of the believer’s heart?

It is much more natural to consider the source of the Spirit to be Jesus, and the conferral as occurring initially on the day of Pentecost. Therefore, the living water of the Spirit is the prophetic Spirit communicated to the Twelve, whose words and message about Christ would then bring life to whomever would believe.

It is true that following Pentecost the word of gospel salvation, the prophetic message which would bring eternal life, did issue from believers of all kinds. The saving message did flow out from them, by the power of the Spirit, to a lost world. This might be thought to support the first interpretation of the passage. However, the other interpretation is to be preferred, for the reasons given.

That the empowering prophetic “Spirit was not yet given,” does not mean it/he had never been given at all to anyone. This would contradict the clear statements of such conferrals throughout prior biblical history. Rather, it simply means the Spirit had not yet been given in the overwhelming way in which it would be on the day of, and following, Pentecost. The widespread bestowal of Joel 2:28ff. had not yet taken place. But limited specific conferrals had certainly been bestowed.

John 14:15-17; 25-26; 15:26-27; 16:7-15.

The Spirit is the Counselor of Truth. He will not leave the Twelve, as happened with the Lord, but would be with them throughout the time of their ministry. He would teach them and bring to their remembrance the word, the truth. He would empower their witness. Through them, he would convince the world (by their witness) of sin, righteousness, and judgment. The Spirit was a guide to the truth, a speaker of the word of Christ, and a declarer to the apostles.

RE JN 14:17---The world did not receive the Spirit of truth as it was in Jesus during his ministry (John 1:12-13; 14:17). But the apostles did manifest confidence in Jesus, and the Truth dwelt with them during Christ’s ministry. In fulfillment of Joel 2, the Spirit of Christ/Truth was poured out to *empower* and inspire them in the truth at Pentecost (Acts 1:8; 5:32). However, the Spirit’s *indwelling* came then and comes now upon all who have been saved in Jesus Christ

Summary

The Spirit’s role as John depicts it is not that of miraculous, mystical regeneration. Nor is the specific doctrine of Paul concerning the indwelling of the Holy Spirit found in John. For John 1:32-33 see p. 50. Rather, in John, the divine indwelling consists in the believer imitating from his heart the love and will and nature of Christ (John 15:7; 17:26; 1 John 4:12, 16).

¹⁶ NEB (1st ed., 1961; 2nd ed. 1970); TEV; Moffatt; Jerusalem Bible; NAB; and NET. For commentators see **Abbott**, R. E. **Brown**, **Dodd**, **Hoskyns**, **Jeremias**, N. **Turner**, **Zerwick**; **BDAG** 551, 856; **BAGD** 694; **TDNT** 6:606; 8:326.

¹⁷ Cf. 4:10; 20:22; 14:16; 19:34; 16:7; Ps 78:15-16 with Num 20:8ff; 1 Corinthians 10:4.

What is found is, again, the fundamental conception of the OT prophetic Spirit. God sends the Spirit upon Christ, and he by inspiration imparts the word of truth. Christ in turn imparts the Spirit to the apostles (on Pentecost), and thus inspired they proclaim the word.

CHAPTER 10 — THE HOLY SPIRIT IN THE SYNOPTIC GOSPELS

Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit into Galilee (Luke 4:14)

The role of the Holy Spirit in the Synoptic gospels is entirely that of the empowerment of wonders, prophetic activity, and manifestations. Mary's conception of Jesus was no doubt thought of as supernatural (Matthew 1:18-20; Luke 1:35).

John the Baptist predicted the Holy Spirit baptismal event itself (Matthew 3:11; Mark 1:8; Luke 3:16; John 1:32-34). Since the baptism of the Holy Spirit was intended to be widespread (although limited to the apostolic period of time), there is no need to do exegetical acrobatics trying to deny that John promised his listeners participation in it (Matthew 3:11). Many of them no doubt did participate. Many of John's hearers would also reject the message and appoint themselves to the consequences of a fiery judgment (John 3:11-12). For Luke 3:16, see p. 66. For the comparison and contrast between John's water baptism and Jesus' baptism in the Spirit, see p. 11.

The descent of the Spirit upon Christ at his baptism can hardly be the first moment of inspiration, considering that his conception itself was of the Spirit. The event must be thought of as a manifestation of what was already true (John 1:32).

In Luke the outpouring of the Spirit at Christ's baptism is not only joined closely with the Spirit's leading at the time of the temptation of Christ (Matthew 4:1; Mark 1:12; Luke 4:1), but also with Christ's empowerment and prophetic ministry (cf. Matthew 12:18). Jesus heals demoniacs by the power of the Spirit within him (Matthew 12:28). These expulsions lead to comments by his opponents that he was instead employing the power of Satan. Jesus responds with his warning against blasphemy of the Holy Spirit (Matthew 12:31-32; Mark 3:29; Luke 12:10).

Jesus promises his disciples the power of oracular utterances through the Spirit (Matthew 10:19-20; Mark 13:11; Luke 12:11-12). For the prophetic empowerment indicated in Luke 1:15-17, 41, 67; 2:25-27, see the discussion on "Filled with the Spirit," p. 23.

Jesus' rejoicing in the Holy Spirit (Luke 10:21), would seem to be his rejoicing in the special revelations he enjoyed from the Father by the Spirit (Luke 10:21-22). At the very least his utterance at that moment is one inspired by the Spirit.

In Jesus' teaching on prayer he alludes to the coming flood of the Spirit. He teaches the disciples to pray to the Father for its arrival (Luke 11:13). The disciples were indeed praying just prior to Pentecost and the arrival of the Spirit (Acts 1:14) as was Cornelius (Acts 10:2, 4, 30, 31), and Saul (Acts 9:11). In his instruction of prayer to the "Father" for the giving of the Spirit, one is reminded that the promised Holy Spirit was the promise of the "Father" (Luke 24:49; 1:4). The specifics of these prayers are less important than the mention that they were praying and then received the Spirit.

In the Synoptics there are two passages in which the authorship of Holy Scripture is attributed to the activity of the Spirit in David (Matthew 22:43; Mark 12:36).

Summary: All receptions of the Spirit in the Synoptic gospels are associated with empowerment for prophecy, signs, wonders, inspiration, etc. As in Acts, there is no reference to Paul's doctrine of indwelling.

CHAPTER 11—THE HOLY SPIRIT IN THE REST OF THE NT

The notion of spirit and word may not have been so sharply distinct for Christians with a background in OT (Raymond E. Brown, The Epistles of John, p. 346.)

Hebrews

How shall we escape, if we neglect so great a salvation? which having at the first been spoken through the Lord, was confirmed unto us by them that heard; God also bearing witness with them, both by signs and wonders, and by manifold powers, and by gifts of the Holy Spirit, according to his own will (Hebrews 2:3-4).

The author certainly refers here to the prophetic empowerments of the Holy Spirit common in the apostolic period of the church. This is also the allusion in Hebrews 6:4. In these passages we have evidence of the first-century flood of extraordinary Holy Spirit gifts. The writer of Hebrews also makes reference to the Holy Spirit as the power inspiring the OT prophetic writings (Hebrews 3:7; 9:8; 10:15).

Although most translators place a reference to the Spirit in Hebrews 9:14, this is unlikely (see Lightfoot 171; Moffatt transl). It is not clear from Hebrews 10:29 in what respect an apostate insults the Spirit. If one interprets in harmony with the other usages in Hebrews one will think of the apostate who acts in disregard of prophetic utterances, the preaching of the gospel by inspired men. However, other interpretations are possible, including indwelling as taught by Paul.

James

“Or do you suppose it is in vain that the scripture says, “He yearns jealously over the spirit which he has made to dwell in us”?” (James 4:5). Translators are about equally divided over whether the reference in James 4:5 is to the human spirit or to the Holy Spirit. Nothing definite can be learned from the allusion.

1 Peter

Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to the elect who are sojourners of the Dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, in sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace to you and peace be multiplied (1 Peter 1:1-2).

Grammatical authorities usually hold that the three clauses beginning respectively, “according to,” “in sanctification,” and “unto obedience” are coordinate and to be construed with “the elect.” (Bigg, 91; Huther, 205). If this is correct, there is no necessary chronological sequence or progressive process being described. Although the grammar does not exclude “Spirit” being the human spirit, such an idea has found little support. The Holy Spirit becomes the likely reference if a Trinitarian expression is in view (note the sequence Father-Spirit-Jesus in the passage).

If we assume this is a reference to the Holy Spirit, what is the role described here? It would appear to be quite similar to Paul’s doctrine of the indwelling Spirit. The Holy Spirit, merely because of his presence within, brings about a state of holiness.

The elect, whether Jew or Gentile, are such because God had the gospel in his mind before the world began (foreknowledge); because they came to enjoy a state of holiness due to his indwelling presence; and because of their obedience and forgiveness through the blood of Christ.

Alternatively, it would not be impossible to understand: “elect according to the Father’s foreknowledge, through holiness of disposition, leading to obedience, and thus forgiveness through the blood.” But the first explanation seems more likely. At best, the language is somewhat ambiguous, as indicated by the various treatments it has received.

The OT concept of the Spirit as the power inspiring prophetic utterances and deeds recurs in 1 Peter 1:11-12. The phrase “sent forth from heaven” is reminiscent of the Pentecostal event and its results.

If ye are reproached for the name of Christ, blessed are ye; because the Spirit of glory and the Spirit of God resteth upon you (1 Peter 4:14). The passage seems to teach that a special presence of the Spirit is given to the martyr or to

the one who suffers innocently for Christ. However, it may simply mean that in persecution a Christian may have a greater confidence that he is a sanctuary of the Spirit, and thus that he belongs to Christ (Matthew 5:12; Acts 5:41; cf. Bengel ii:754).

2 Peter

For no prophecy ever came by the will of man: but men spake from God, being moved by the Holy Spirit (2 Peter 1:21). This is the only reference to the Spirit in 2 Peter. The OT concept of the Spirit as the power inspiring prophetic utterances reappears.

1 John

And he that keepeth his commandments abideth in him, and he in him. And hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he gave us. (1 John 3:24). Beloved, believe not every spirit, but prove the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets are gone out into the world. Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God: and every spirit that confesseth not Jesus is not of God: and this is the spirit of the antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it cometh; and now it is in the world already. (1 John 4:1-3. Compare 1 John 4:6, 13; 5:7-8; 2:20, 24, 27).

The extraordinary prophetic Spirit common in the apostolic church was one that proclaimed Christ to have come in the flesh. If one is, at baptism, “anointed” with that word—the word of Jesus’ incarnation—and if one is faithful to that word, then one can be confident of a continuing relationship with God.

It is true that 3:24 and 4:13 give an appearance of the Pauline doctrine of indwelling. However, such an interpretation would not be consistent with the context of the letter as a whole. The Spirit of prophecy which God gave on Pentecost to John, and to many in the early church, is the Spirit of truth. It is this which brings the confidence of a mutual relationship with God. However, it is not impossible that the doctrine of Pauline indwelling might appear in 1 John.

Jude

Jude 19-20 These are they who make separations, sensual, having not the Spirit. But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit. The reference to having or not having the Spirit, seems to be, as in Paul, a reference to the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. In which case, “praying” in the Holy Spirit would mean praying with special awareness of the nearness of the Spirit, since one’s body is a temple of the Holy Spirit. See above on Paul’s doctrine, p. 41.

Revelation

In virtually all of the passages in Revelation it seems clear that the Spirit is referred to in his role of empowering prophetic inspiration and utterance.¹⁸ Thus once again one is made aware of the flood of power bestowed on the early church.

¹⁸ Revelation 1:10; 2:7, 11, 17, 29; 3:6, 13, 22; 4:2; 14:13; 17:3; 19:10; 21:10; 22:6, 17.

CHAPTER 12—TEXTS MISAPPLIED TO HOLY SPIRIT BAPTISM

There are some things in them hard to understand (2 Peter 3:16)

Ephesians 4:4-6

Ephesians 4:4-6 is one of the passages sometimes applied to Holy Spirit baptism: “There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of us all....” This is said to teach that there is one baptism—its outward expression being water immersion, its inward expression being the Holy Spirit. However, the word *baptizō* technically means “immerse in water” (TDNT 1:539. See also most other Greek lexicons). When *baptizō* means *immersion* in some other element, the element will be specified. In the passage cited, since *baptizō* has no specified medium, the reference has to be to the one water immersion. Further it is known that Paul’s normal usage of the word *baptize* is “immerse in water.” In fact, every time Paul uses the word *baptize* (20 times) he means an *immersion in water* (one instance is figurative, but it is figurative of water immersion). This fact enforces a presupposition in favor of the same usage of *baptizō* here.

Hebrews 10:22

Hebrews 10:22 states, “Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.” It is only “eisegesis” that finds any reference to the Holy Spirit in Hebrews 10:22—much less baptism in the Holy Spirit. The sinner’s heart is purified by the blood of Christ at the time of baptism. That is the substance of the passage.

1 Corinthians 12:13

The passage in Paul most frequently misapplied with reference to Holy Spirit baptism is 1 Corinthians 12:13, “For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and all were made to drink of one Spirit.” Translators rightfully, as the discussion below will show, prefer the rendering “by” one Spirit, rather than “in” one Spirit (27 to 11, in one survey of translations). Certain matters about the passage are clear:

(1) It is known that Paul’s normal usage of the word *baptize* is “immerse in water.” As noted above, every time Paul uses the word *baptize* (20 times) he means an *immersion in water*. This fact supports a presupposition in favor of the same usage of *baptizō* here.

(2) Second, it is known that when Paul wants to discuss the unity of the church he often brings up (water) baptism (1 Corinthians 1:13ff; Romans 6:3-4; 1 Corinthians 10:2; Galatians 3:26-27; Ephesians 4:5). That is also his topic in 1 Corinthians 12.

(3) It is also clearly unnatural and awkward to render: “For in the element of Spirit we were all immersed in the element of water.” The Spirit of Truth would surely have found a better way to express himself. Nor is this what the passage states in its literal sense.

(4) It is plain that in the book of Acts (which has by far the most to say about Holy Spirit baptism), water baptism and Holy Spirit baptism are clearly distinguished. In Acts in every case where baptism (water immersion) is mentioned in context with a reception of the Spirit, there is a specified disconnect or gap between them. Sometimes the empowerment of the Spirit is received prior to baptism as in (a) the case of the Twelve (Acts 2:1ff; presumably they could not have been baptized for the remission of sins on the basis of the completed work of Christ until after his resurrection, and thus they were likely baptized on the day of Pentecost along with the 3,000); (b) the case of Paul (the most reasonable explanation of 9:17-18 is that his healing signified his reception of the Spirit, followed later by his baptism); and as in the case of (c) Cornelius (Acts 10). In other instances, the Spirit’s empowerment is received at some varying distance in time subsequent to baptism, as in the example of (d) the Samaritan converts (Acts 8); (e) the twelve Ephesian disciples (Acts 19); and yes, (f) even the converts on Pentecost—note the future tense of 2:38, “you shall receive.” To entwine Spirit-filling and water-immersion in 1 Corinthians 12:13 creates a conflict with the teaching in Acts.

(5) If Paul speaks here of Spirit baptism, where are his parallel passages? Where else does he use the terminology of Holy Spirit baptism? He does not. However, we do have, in 1 Corinthians 6:11, a parallel passage to the Spirit as active or agent, “And such were some of you. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the

name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.” (Some translators again mistakenly render “in” the Spirit.)

(6) Finally, since *baptizō*, when used alone, technically means “immerse in water,” it would seem that to specify baptism in Spirit the apostle would have been careful to avoid misunderstanding by placing the specified element (Spirit) next to the word *baptize*. But in the Greek text *Spirit* and *baptize* are grammatically remote, separated by no less than five words.

If we draw our conclusions from what is known, we will understand that Paul is saying that by the agency of the one Spirit (the Spirit as a true participant or agent in baptism), all the Corinthians were immersed in water. In addition, the Corinthians were given to “drink of one Spirit.” That is, the Corinthians had conferred on them the extraordinary gifts of the Holy Spirit. This is not the usual opinion of commentators on the matter of “drinking of the Spirit,” but it is not un-heard of (see H. L. Goudge, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, London: Methuen, 1926; pp. 112-113). Goudge identifies drinking from the spiritual Rock (1 Corinthians 10:4) as reception of the Spirit, connecting it with John 7:37-39. Paul’s thoughts may have gone to the “pouring out” of the Spirit’s empowerments, and this led him to the phrase “drinking” of the Spirit. In Biblical language, people who drink or who are made to drink are often affected (Isaiah 29:9; Hab 2:15; Psalms 60:3). The usual alternative interpretation of “drink” (the Lord’s Supper) has even less to commend it. A second alternative sees “drinking” of the Spirit as another reference to “water” baptism, not empowerment. If so, where is the reference to the spiritual empowerments which are so prominent in the context? So here in the second part of the passage (“drinking”) there is an allusion to the widespread empowerment experienced in the early church.

A common baptism (in water) by the agency of the Spirit was one mark of the unity of the Corinthian church. A second indicator of their unity was that all of them who had received special empowerments had received those gifts from the same Spirit. The two blessings are enumerated separately, and there is no reason to confuse them. Similarly, the Ephesian disciples of Acts 19 were baptized, and then Paul laid his hands on them so that they might receive empowerments. Thus 1 Corinthians 12:13, does include a reference to the Corinthians’ participation in the empowerments of the Holy Spirit baptism, but it does not overlay water immersion and Spirit baptism, which is the error advocated. In Paul’s writings, he always distinguishes between the indwelling Spirit associated with the sanctified Christian life (Galatians 5:22ff), and the empowerments of the Spirit (not always associated with a sanctified Christian life—see for example, 1 Corinthians 1:7-8; 13:2; 14:1ff).

Ephesians 5:18

Another passage cited by advocates of perpetual and thus contemporary Holy Spirit baptism is Ephesians 5:18, “And do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery; but be filled with the Spirit.” This is an imperative: “be filled.” If the reference is to being filled with the Holy Spirit, it is the only such imperative in the Bible. Of the nineteen passages in Scripture that include “fill” and “Spirit,” none of them is a mandate except this one. This suggests that the reference here is to something else. The RV and ASV both have an alternative rendering in the margin: “be filled in spirit” (that is, in [your human] spirit). The Greek authorities T. K. Abbott (*Ephesians*, pp. 161-162), and Westcott (*Ephesians*, p. 81) agree. There is no allusion in Ephesians 5:18 to Holy Spirit filling or Holy Spirit baptism. [See also the discussion on p. 23].

Titus 3:5-6

Titus 3:5-6 is also cited in support of Holy Spirit baptism as being normative for personal salvation:

He saved us, not because of deeds done by us in righteousness, but in virtue of his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal in the Holy Spirit, which he poured out upon us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior.

As with some other material in the Pastoral Epistles, the discussion here appears to have some singular elements in it (not to imply any doubt about Paul’s fundamental authorship of the Pastorals).

The exegesis of this passage should be governed by the fact that “he poured out upon us richly” seems to be a reference to a corporate historical event: the baptismal outpouring of power that began at Pentecost with the twelve apostles. The historical nature of the present passage also shows itself in the reference to the appearing of God’s love in the person of Jesus (3:4; 2:11; 2 Timothy 1:10; 4:8. See Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 438).

All Christians of all times benefit from the foundation laid in the first century by the Spirit’s empowerments. Baptism (in water) is here described as a gift bestowed on the church. This is parallel to Acts 5:31 where Peter

speaks of God granting “repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins;” also see Acts 11:18, “...to the Gentiles also God has granted repentance unto life.” Thus baptism is depicted here as a historic-corporate gift. Christ saved the church, not only by granting it the renewing influences of the prophetic Spirit poured out beginning at Pentecost, but also by granting it the baptism of rebirth—a baptism made effective by the cross of Jesus (1 Peter 1:3; 3:21).

The historic Pentecostal event had its renewing effect on many through the gospel proclamation of the apostles and the other inspired first-century Christians. The Pentecostal empowerment by the Spirit validated the gospel, and engendered the prophetic preaching of the gospel.

So the reference is not specifically to the process whereby each individual Christian undergoes baptism and receives the Holy Spirit indwelling. It rather speaks to the work of salvation viewed historically and corporately. The order in which the gifts are mentioned here, baptism then Spirit, would appear to be traditional.

John 3:5-6

Finally, some refer to John 3:5-6 as a text speaking of Holy Spirit baptism, “... Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.” (See also the discussion, p. 45).

In its context the passage has to be a reference to birth from God by the word of truth. The “hearing of the wind” (3:8) is a reference to the voice of the Spirit of God, as Jesus proclaimed the (not-always-recognized-as-divine) gospel. Jesus goes on to say that what Nicodemus was hearing was a message and testimony from One (Himself) who had seen heaven (John 3:11-12). He also affirms that his message was empowered by the Spirit (John 3:34). Similarly, John had already stated that the truth was made known by Jesus, who had been originally and was now again in the bosom of the Father (1:18-19).

All who received Christ, who believed in him and therefore his message, were born of God (John 1:12-13). One should understand thusly: “unless one is born of God by immersion into water and by the word given to Christ through the power of God’s Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.” In this way the passage is similar in thought to Titus 3:5-6. For the phrase, “born of the flesh,” that is, to have one’s origin in flesh (Satan, the world), rather than Spirit (God, heaven), see John 1:13; 6:63; 8:38-44; 1 John 2:16.

One should paraphrase and interpret the little parabolic statement in John 3:8 as, “The Spirit, as it wills, imparts (to me, Christ) the voice of the Spirit you (Nicodemus) are hearing [in my teachings]—although you do not recognize whence (from heaven) or whither (back to the Father)—in this way (hearing me and my words) is everyone born of the Spirit.”

Summary. The revealed will of Christ does not support post-apostolic Holy Spirit baptism. The baptism in the Holy Spirit was a time-limited event which took place during the initial decades of the first century church, at the inauguration of the gospel. In Scripture it is invariably connected with the extraordinary empowerments of the Holy Spirit. Today all may benefit from what happened, but Christians do not have the empowerments themselves, nor does the Lord deem that they need them.

CHAPTER 13—THE HOLY SPIRIT BAPTISM IN ACTS 8:14-21

Then [the apostles] laid their hands on them one by one and they received the Holy Spirit (Acts 8:17, Amplified Bible)

Any successful interpretation of the Holy Spirit in Acts must deal effectively with Acts 8:14-24 (see also p. 25). The apostles at Jerusalem felt their presence was required in Samaria:

Now when the apostles that were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John: who, when they were come down, prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Spirit: for as yet it was fallen upon none of them: only they had been baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus (Acts 8:14-16).

Atypical? Turner (1998, p. 338) says that Luke’s comment (8:14-16) on the events in Samaria “implies that this was exceptional (the notice would be redundant if the Spirit were normally given subsequent to baptism).” His point is that the separation of the conferral of the Spirit from baptism was not the rule, but an atypical event. His defense is that Luke’s words to the reader would be redundant if the Spirit were normally bestowed at some time other than at the time of baptism.

Typical. However, there would be no redundancy if it is seen that, prior to this point in his narrative, Luke has not taken time to explain to readers the process of the conferral of the Spirit upon early converts. Of course, experienced Christians would have known how it was accomplished, but Luke’s intended audience was doubtless a broader one. It would be a disservice to his readers if the only place in Acts where Luke gives any extended description of how ordinary Christians received the promised Holy Spirit turned out to be a description only of the exceptional and not the typical. By some theories *every* example of the conferral of the Spirit in Acts is atypical.

Additionally, one should notice Luke’s first remark, “Now when the apostles at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent to them Peter and John.” If the situation were exceptional, one might have expected something additional like, “they had received the word of God, but not the Holy Spirit.” As phrased, it sounds as if, as soon as the apostles heard the simple news of the conversions, they automatically sent a delegation. They did so because they knew no gifts would have been conferred. Luke then explains to his readers, not to the apostles, the reason for the apostolic delegation. Up to the time of the events in Samaria, converts had not been baptized “only,” they had also enjoyed easy access to apostolic hands and the resulting gifts. But in Samaria Luke makes clear that it was only baptism they had received, no apostles having been there. Naturally then, having not received apostolic hands, they had not received the Spiritual empowerments.

A further objection to the thesis that Holy Spirit conferral had been expected at and by baptism in Samaria is that it does not adequately take into account Acts 19:6, where the hands of Paul are required prior to conferral of the Spirit. It also discounts the episode involving Paul and the hands of Ananias (9:17). Further, it fails to reckon with the fact that 8:18 is phrased as if it were a general rule, Simon observing that: “the Spirit was given through the laying on of the apostles’ hands.”

The divine intention. The expression that the Holy Spirit “had not as yet fallen” does indicate that such an event was expected to occur, because it was the divine intention that there should be a widespread outpouring of the special gifts (2:17-18, 38-39). The text itself explains why the Spirit had not yet fallen—the apostles had not yet conferred the Spirit upon them. The conferring of the gifts in Acts was never by baptism (8:15-19; cf. 19:6; 9:17). The gift came without the apostles’ hands, in only two notable cases (2:1-4; 10:44; which should be reduced to one, since the apostles could not have laid hands on themselves). In no passage does Acts mention the conferral of the Spirit through baptism itself. Acts 2:38 is only a promise that those baptized would in the future receive the Holy Spirit. Acts 5:32 is not a reference to baptism (see p. 64). The word *yet*, (Acts 8:16) therefore, does not imply any defect in the conversion itself (*contra* Bruner, 1986, pp. 177f).

Conversion not flawed. The lack of any reception by the Samaritans of the extraordinary gifts does not imply that their response to the gospel and salvation was flawed or incomplete. Absent from Acts is any doctrine relative to personal sanctification by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, new life by the Holy Spirit, sonship by the Spirit, justification by the Spirit, sealing by the Spirit, or personal regeneration or renewal by the Spirit. Acts focuses its attention on the prophetic Holy Spirit, the fulfillment of the Joel 2 prophecy. The special signs and wonders and

power granted to the early Christians, beginning with Pentecost, indicated, validated, and facilitated the initiation of the age of salvation.

Falling. Luke tells us that the Spirit had not yet “fallen” upon these Samaritans. The conception of the Spirit in Acts, whether received immediately (without the hands), or conferred at the time of the laying on of the hands of the apostles, is that the Spirit comes down from heaven, or is poured out from heaven, and falls upon the recipient. He is given the Spirit, he is filled with it, and in this way he receives the Spirit.

Indwelling? The text is not explicit that the Holy Spirit had entirely been excluded from the Samaritans, but only that the Samaritans had not yet had the Holy Spirit fall on them in a visible way (see verse 18).¹⁹

The wording of the passage is consistent with the (Pauline) concept that the Samaritans had received an ordinary indwelling of the Holy Spirit as a result of their conversion and salvation. And it is consistent with the idea that they had not yet received any of the special gifts promised to the early church.

With prayer. The Samaritan converts had been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus, that is, while pronouncing, calling on, professing faith in, the name of Jesus (see 2:21, 38; 10:48; 22:16). In conjunction with apostolic prayer (8:15), the Holy Spirit was conferred later. No doubt something similar happened to the 3,000 baptized on Pentecost (2:38) following their baptism.

Simon’s response to this event is described:

Now when Simon saw that through the laying on of the apostles’ hands the Holy Spirit was given, he offered them money, saying, Give me also this power, that on whomsoever I lay my hands, he may receive the Holy Spirit.

Simon saw. The expression, “Simon saw,” indicates that there was something visible or openly discernible about the events surrounding the Samaritans’ reception of the Holy Spirit. The miraculous gifts of the Spirit were manifestations. Further, Simon did not observe that the miraculous Holy Spirit came on people suddenly, mysteriously, directly, without any apparent cause, or by baptism; rather he saw that the miraculous gifts of the Spirit came on people by apostolic agency. Clearly the apostles had such a role on this occasion. Why should it be thought strange for that to be their customary function?

Simon’s covetousness. There is no reason to think that Simon himself had not received a gift. The special empowerments did not guarantee sinlessness or inerrancy of opinion. The particular apostolic ability to confer miracle-working power would likely have been conceived by Simon as a money-maker. In the phrase, *this power*, we take *this (houtos)* as emphatic. The apostolic power is what Simon wanted.

Peter rebukes Simon, “Thy silver perish with thee, because thou hast thought to obtain the gift of God with money. Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter: for thy heart is not right before God.” The *gift of God* refers to Holy Spirit power, specifically in this case, to the apostolic prerogative to confer miracle working power (2:38; 10:45; 11:17). Peter does not rebuke Simon or correct him for imagining that the apostles had the power to confer the Spirit. The narrative leaves the impression that Simon has correctly judged the agency of the Holy Spirit power.

If one takes the phrase *thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter* as somewhat parenthetic, Peter would mean that Simon sought to obtain the power with money, for his heart was not right before God. The phrase, *thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter*²⁰ would then indicate that Simon had no part in the apostolic ministry, particularly that of the agency of distributing the special gifts. In support of construing the passage in this way, notice that the word *for (gar)* in both 1:20 and 2:34 relates back respectively to 1:17 and 2:31. Parenthetical material interrupts in both cases (1:18-19; 2:32-33), as we suggest that it does here. For a different view see McGarvey (1892, 1.147). Note that Peter

¹⁹ Among the long line of scholars who hold that the Samaritans, having been baptized, already had the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, but needed the special gifts by the agency of the apostles are the following: **Gloag**, 1870, 1.289 (Gloag also cites Chrysostom, Epiphanius, **Grotius**, Lightfoot, **DeWett**, **Baumgarten**, **Olshausen**, and **Wordsworth**). **Calvin**, 1552, pp. 236-237. **Lumby**, 1897, pp. 100-101. **Hort**, 1914, pp. 54-55 [not necessarily by an apostle]. **Hackett**, 1882, p. 110 [seemingly]; **McGarvey**, 1892, 1.142; H. B. **Swete**, 1910, p. 90-92. Also as cited by Knowling, 1900, p. 216: **Wendt**, **Zockler**, **Holtzmann**. Others: **Wikenhauser**, **Oulton**, **Adler**, and **Caird** (cited in **Schweizer**, TDNT 6:414). **Beasley-Murray**, 1962, pp. 119-120; who also cites J. Thomas, and H. **Schlier**).

²⁰ Note the similarity of terminology in 1:17, 25; 6:4; 20:24; 21:19.

did not tell Simon that his heart had never had been right before God. His rebuke was for the sin that Simon committed following his conversion.

Conclusion. In Acts Christ immediately (directly, without apostolic agency) bestowed the special gifts of the Spirit at the two “inaugurations” of the gospel. First, when he initiated the gospel among the Jews (the Twelve) on Pentecost. Second, when he initiated the gospel among Gentiles (the house of Cornelius). Otherwise the gifts were conferred indirectly. The rest of the NT record is consistent with this.

CHAPTER 14—ACTS 2:38-39

*“If the words were used in the Jewish sense this would mean ‘become prophets.’” (Lake and Cadbury, *Beginnings* 4:26, on the phrase, “and ye shall receive the Holy Spirit”)*

Since most readers are no doubt intimately familiar with Acts 2:38-39, and likely have firm ideas about its meaning, I am asking for an extra measure of open-mindedness with regard to its treatment. Yet the case that will be set forth is, I believe, so strong that one will not have to suspend all of one’s pre-conceptions in order to see its force.

One should recall, as shown above, pp. 21ff that the gift of the Holy Spirit likely is the Holy Spirit himself. But the question becomes, “for what role, office, or function will the Holy Spirit be given.” And the answer to that question is “empowerment.”

Let us begin by suggesting a simple procedure by which one can be confident of reading the passage without being misled.

First, one should notice [that in Luke 24:44ff. \(Luke 24 being the preamble to Acts chapters 1 and 2\), forgiveness is conditional upon repentance and the name of Jesus, and that what is promised \(separately\) is empowerment for the giving of testimony.](#)

Second, one ought to [remember that in Acts 1 the power of the Spirit is promised for the purpose of witnessing \(Acts 1:4-8\).](#)

Third, one must keep [in mind that the next reference in Acts to the coming Spirit is in 2:1-13, when, as promised, the apostles receive the Spirit in an extraordinary way and are empowered to witness miraculously to the gospel in foreign languages.](#)

Fourth, one should not forget [Peter’s explanation \(Acts 2:16ff\) that this reception of the Spirit is the beginning of the fulfillment of Joel 2, in which passage it is promised that God would pour out his Spirit and that many would be empowered to prophesy, and that wonders and signs would occur \(Acts 2:14-19\). As has already been shown, the power was conferred to others through the apostles’ hands \(Acts 8; 19; et al\).](#)

Fifth, one should recall that [Peter again specifies that the promised Holy Spirit empowered the signs witnessed by those who were assembled on that occasion \(Acts 2:33\).](#)

Sixth, one ought to [note that it is not said that all who received this office of the Spirit would be saved. Rather it is stated that the reception of the Spirit would bring empowerment, and that this empowerment would signal that time when “whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved” \(Acts 2:21\).](#)

Seventh, one ought to [keep consistently in mind that the reception of the Spirit from Acts 1:1 through 2:38a \(in conjunction with Luke 24:49\) is said to result in empowerment, but it is not said to be instrumental in any individual’s salvation. Thus, personal salvation in this entire section of Scripture is instrumentally related to repentance \(Luke 24:47\), to calling on the name of Jesus \(Acts 2:21\), and to baptism \(Acts 2:38a\)—not to the reception of the Spirit.](#)

Keeping [these seven points in mind enables one to read the words, “... and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit, for the promise is to you” \(2:38b-39\), for what they are—an assurance that the widespread outpouring of the Holy Spirit for empowerment would include many persons in the early decades of the church, and that they would thereby prophesy, perform signs and wonders, and preach by inspiration the word of God. It was in this manner that the gospel of Christ was supernaturally confirmed in the early decades of the church.](#) If one chooses to disregard the seven points (that is, the context of the passage), one will be following a procedure that is quite foreign to the canons of exegesis.

Careful reading of the text. According to the manner in which the text has been commonly interpreted it says, “Repent and be baptized for the remission of your sins and the gift of the Holy Spirit;” or, “Repent and be baptized for the remission of your sins, receiving the Holy Spirit;” or, “Repent and be baptized for the remission of your sins and receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.” Now when one looks carefully at the text, it does not actually make any of these statements. What does it say? It says, “Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of your sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is to ... everyone whom the Lord our God calls to him.” What is the difference? The difference is twofold: (1) strictly speaking, the word *for*

(*eis*) is not grammatically construed with “and you shall receive the Holy Spirit;” and (2) the second clause is in the future tense.

The correct antecedent. The antecedent of the second person in Acts 2:38b-39 is capable of misidentification. It is no doubt usually read: “And Peter said to them, ‘Repent ye [who have crucified Jesus, and have been cut to the heart], and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins; and ye [who have repented, confessed the name, and been baptized] shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For to you [who have repented, confessed the name, and been baptized] is the promise, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call unto him.’” However, it is more logical if the antecedent is understood consistently throughout as follows: “And Peter said to them [who had crucified Jesus and had been cut to the heart], ‘Repent ye [same antecedent], and be baptized every one of you [same antecedent] in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your [same antecedent] sins. And ye [same antecedent—ye who crucified Jesus, and who have been cut to the heart] shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit, for to you [same antecedent] is the promise, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call unto him.’”

Translation, punctuation, versification. In fact, “and you shall ...” should begin a new sentence. One wonders how the interpretation of the text might have been different over the years if the passage had been punctuated, translated, and versified as follows:

37 Now when they heard this they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, “Brethren, what shall we do?”

38 And Peter said to them, “Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins.

39 “And [or, Moreover], you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit on the ground that the promise is to you and to your youth and to all that are far off, every one whom the Lord our God calls to him.”

The above rendering is not terribly far removed from the NIV (1st ed.). One recent commentator on Acts has said,

Peter’s comment in v. 38b about the Holy Spirit requires careful attention. A simple copulative conjunction (*kai*, “and”) joins the statement to the one preceding it, which negates any attempt to understand the Spirit as the necessary result of baptism. Later episodes in Acts provide evidence of the Spirit’s independence of any such formulaic interpretation... (Beverly Roberts Gaventa, *The Acts of the Apostles*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2003, p. 80).

A large majority of English translators place a semicolon in verse 38 as follows: “... sins; and” In using the semicolon, they are acknowledging, at the least, that independent clauses are involved. But, as noted, some recent English translations do actually punctuate with a period between the two clauses (NIV, TNIV, NCV, SEB, cf. Rotherham, Barclay).

If one recognizes that there is no established grammatical relationship between *unto* (*eis*) and the promised gift of the Spirit, then it has to be asked whether Peter meant that people might receive the gift of the Holy Spirit (in his empowering role) without water immersion in the name of Christ? The answer, yes, is affirmed by the remainder of Acts. It is shown in the conversion of Saul, the conversion of the house of Cornelius, and by the Twelve themselves (presuming they were later immersed along with the 3,000).

Balance. Are there other reasons for interpreting as above? Yes. It would appear that the whole passage is smoother and more graceful if it is divided into the sentences as suggested. The passage contains one blessing (forgiveness) and one promise (the Spirit). A person receives the blessing of forgiveness as a result of obedience to the commands of repentance, confession of the name of Jesus, and baptism. However, an individual receives the promise of the Spirit upon being called by the gospel. It should be noted that participation in Holy Spirit baptism was always a promise, not a command.

Being called by God. Peter assures those who consent to his gospel message that they would “receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.” The condition of the promise of Holy Spirit reception is that of being “called” by the gospel (Acts 2:39). This had already taken place with those who were listening to Peter’s sermon, and who were “cut to the heart.” These were people who, prior to their baptism, conceded the truth that Peter had preached that Jesus was the Christ—thus they already had “faith” in the sense of assent. Their anguish and their question, “What shall we do?” show that they recognized that they had killed Christ and were thus already remorseful. So these were people who had been called by the word of the gospel, and who were being responsive to it. On such terms they were eligible,

even prior to baptism and forgiveness of sins, for the promised Holy Spirit empowerment. While it is true that in Paul's letters "the called" are usually those already Christians, he too can parse conversion into separate steps (Romans 8:28-30).

He had "faith." The curing of the crippled man in Lystra (Acts 14:8-10) is an instructive incident (though it pertains to healing, not to reception of the power of the Spirit). Paul was preaching. The man was listening. And Paul discerns (prophetically) that, "he had faith to be made well" (that is, faith in the gospel proclaimed). Paul commands him to stand up, and the man was healed. The apostolic policy was evidently not to heal the disbelieving, which would have been counter-instructive. The man was mentally consenting to the message of the gospel being preached. He had been "called," but not yet forgiven. Thus he was eligible for healing (see also Luke 5:20; Acts 16:30).

The words *faith* or *believe* in the sense of intellectual assent are frequent in Acts.²¹ In the same way that those who assented to the gospel were eligible for healing, anyone who heard and consented to the truth of the gospel—whoever was called by the gospel—was eligible for the conferral of the Spirit. The house of Cornelius follows the same pattern. Peter was preaching, they were listening, they were consenting—then the Spirit comes.

The future tense of Acts 2:38b. There is also the matter of the future tense *and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit*. The sentence in Acts 2:38 does not read, "Repent and be baptized and you will receive forgiveness," but "Repent and be baptized for forgiveness." The forgiveness is no doubt to be considered concurrent with the repentance and baptism. Yet in the next sentence (clause), the future tense is used, "And you shall receive the gift of the Spirit." Why is the future tense used? Some effort has been made to explicate this. For example, it is said that the baptism is future, therefore, the promise is future. However, in such a case, the forgiveness of sins should also be spoken of as future. It is not. Another suggestion is simply that the future tense is not significant based on the phrase in Acts 16:31, "Believe and you will be saved." However, since salvation in Acts and elsewhere is usually thought of as a real future event, the future tense is not without significance there. Some have suggested that *eis* (*for* or *unto*) in 2:38 has a future force. This carries some plausibility, although one would have to believe that the reason for using *eis* was to establish the purpose of baptism. Its purpose, forgiveness, is not future to such obedience, but concurrent with it. Further, this still does not grammatically make *eis* construable with the reception of the spirit. Even if a plausible explanation for the future tense were to be accepted, different from the one suggested below, the case for conferral of the Spirit by the apostles would hardly be compromised.

Is there a more feasible suggestion for the future tense other than those which seek to minimize its force? Yes. At least two of the examples of baptized people in Acts show what Peter must have meant. The Samaritans were baptized. Yet their reception of the Spirit was future to that event by several days or weeks (Acts 8:12-17). Likewise, in Acts 19:5-6, the 12 Ephesian disciples were baptized. Their reception of the Spirit was not concurrent with baptism because it awaited Paul's hands. This was likely a short period of time, but necessarily an interval. Some want to dismiss the idea of any disconnect here, but it clearly exists.

Although it is disputed, the same futurity ("be baptized...you will receive") seems to be referred to in Acts 19:2, "Did you receive the Holy Spirit since [after] you believed?"²² The same kind of phraseology is used in Acts 11:17. It hardly seems a reach to understand Peter to be saying in 2:38, "Repent and be baptized for remission of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit [when we apostles lay hands on you], for the promise"

Empowerment. A third reason for this translation is that it seems most logical to interpret the promised gift of the Spirit as empowerment with the Spirit—an empowerment which requires a means of conferral. The evidence that the imparting of the Spirit throughout the book of Acts has reference to empowerment has already been presented (see pp. 16ff).

The promise. To interpret Acts 2:38-39 as a reference to the indwelling Holy Spirit as taught by Paul is contrary to the context of Acts as a whole. Further, the word *promise* in reference to the Holy Spirit brings this gift of the Spirit in very close relation with the preceding context. The "promise of the Spirit" seems certainly connected with "promise of the Spirit" in 2:33, six verses earlier. The promise in 2:33 is surely related to the promise of the Spirit in 1:4-5 (which is expounded by Peter in Acts 2:16-20); and the promise in 1:4-5 is strongly related to the promise of empowerment in Luke 24:49.

²¹ See Acts 8:12-13; 11:17, 21; 14:9; 18:8b; 20:21b; see also 9:26; 15:11; 24:14; 27:25.

²² See AV; NIVmg; Meyer, 1884, p. 365; cf. McCord's NT; Berry Interlinear).

In a rather vague manner, the suggestion has been made that if one looks at the context one will see that the promise has reference to salvation. It is true that salvation or forgiveness is in the context, along with numerous other subjects. However, the immediate context deals extensively with Holy Spirit baptism, the promise of it, the arrival of it, the prophecies about it, the reactions to it, and the meaning of it. Moreover, the “promise,” *as stated*, is not the promise of salvation, but the promise of the Holy Spirit. And in Acts the reception of the Holy Spirit is distinctly separated from personal individual salvation in every instance.

Not sanctification. Many expositors down through the centuries have candidly recognized that the promised Holy Spirit gift in Acts 2:38 is in fact the same gift promised in Joel 2 (Acts 2:17ff.), that is, the extraordinary empowerment. And some also affirm that, at that time, the indwelling “sanctifying,” “regenerating,” “renewing” gift received at baptism was manifested in empowerments. They are not good in explaining why, if this is true, the Samaritans were first baptized and then, only after the passage of at least several days, received their “sanctification” of the Spirit. Only if the original conversion of the Samaritans was counterfeit could such a situation be adequately explained. But there is no evidence for counterfeit conversion (8:12, 13, 16). If the original conversion had been defective, wouldn’t that have called for a “re-baptism”? But there is no record of “re-baptism.” Nor are they good at explaining why the Ephesian 12 had to await Paul’s hands for the Spirit.

They must also explain how both Cornelius and Saul could have been saved prior to baptism—both receiving the empowerment first, then baptism—when the hypothesis is that the two are identical. It is far more consistent and simple to recognize that the gift of the Spirit in Acts is always empowerment, and to then acknowledge that this is also true in Acts 2:38b-39.

Parallel passages? A final reason that the above translation is to be preferred is the matter of Scriptural analogy. Since Acts 2:38 occurs near the beginning of 28 full chapters, and speaks of such significant matters as the Holy Spirit and forgiveness of sins, it would seem reasonable to expect that such an important passage would have several if not numerous parallel passages in the following material. But where are the parallel references later in Acts in which it is affirmed that repentance and baptism are the conditions by which the gift of the Holy Spirit is obtained? In fact, not only are there not several, there are none (one might think of 5:32. It will be considered below).

Examples? Where are the examples in Acts of people being baptized and thereby receiving the promised Holy Spirit? There are none. In fact, just the opposite is observed. The reception of the Holy Spirit in Acts, when it is mentioned, is always disconnected from baptism. One only has to look at the baptism of the Samaritans (Acts 8), the baptism of the house of Cornelius (Acts 10), and the baptism of the 12 Ephesian disciples (Acts 19). In every case there is a disconnect in time between baptism and specified reception of the Spirit. The reception sometimes precedes and it sometimes follows baptism, but the detachment is always clear.

The apostles themselves did not receive the promised empowering Spirit at baptism--and it is reasonable that they were immersed later on the same day as the 3,000. On any view of it, their reception of the empowering Spirit was separated from their water immersion. Paul was filled with the Spirit. Some believe the filling occurred when he was baptized. But 9:12, 17 makes it far more likely that he received the empowering Spirit at the laying on of the hands of Ananias. *In point of fact, as it is usually interpreted, there is no evident parallel to Acts 2:38 in all of Acts. Is that not remarkable?*

It is usual to state that in Acts the normal pattern (the rule) is that the Holy Spirit (empowerment) is given at baptism, as a consequence of baptism. In fact, in the majority of passages, there is no association of the Holy Spirit with baptism.²³ Notice the following table:

²³ See 8:12-16; 36-38; 16:15, 33; 18:8; 22:16.

Table 2

Temporal Relationship of Water Baptism and Holy Spirit Baptism

Conversions	Before Baptism	Interval	Baptism	Interval	After Baptism
1. Samaritans			Baptized	✓	Received Spirit
2. Cornelius and house	Received Spirit	✓	Baptized		
3. Ephesian 12			Baptized	✓	Received Spirit
4. The Twelve	Received Spirit	✓	Baptized		
5. The 3,000			Baptized	✓	(Received Spirit?)
6. Paul	Received Spirit	✓	Baptized		

Examples 1-3. In the first three instances listed (the most explicit), there is no direct nexus between the reception of the (empowering) Spirit and baptism. The Samaritans received the Spirit days or even weeks after baptism. We are told that this was atypical. The house of Cornelius received the Holy Spirit prior to baptism. We are again told that this was an exception. The Ephesian 12 received the Holy Spirit, not at baptism, but at the laying on of Paul’s hands. This is usually just ignored. However it too would have to be considered an exception since the Spirit came by Paul’s hands.

Examples 4-6. What of the next three examples? It is certainly true that the apostles did not receive the outpouring of the Spirit at their baptism (water immersion). We are sometimes told that they were never baptized in the name of Jesus based on his completed work on the cross. Thus, it is claimed, that the apostles’ reception of the Spirit is atypical. The 3,000 are supposed to have received the Holy Spirit at baptism, yet the text indicates forgiveness at baptism, and a *future* reception of the Spirit: “ye will receive the Holy Spirit.” The most natural reading of Saul’s reception of the Spirit’s empowerment indicates that it came not at baptism, but at the hands of Ananias—again an exception to the supposed rule.

Exceptions only? By the theory, the three clearest examples, and the most natural reading of the three other examples must all be regarded as “exceptions” to the presumed “rule” of Holy Spirit reception (empowerment) at baptism. In fact, in Acts, every potential statement of the rule, or example of the rule: “reception of the Spirit at baptism” must be regarded as an exception to the rule. That hardly constitutes a rule. Six possible examples, and not one of them clearly shows the supposed principle. Why does Luke only give us “exceptions”? If this is the case, Luke certainly does his readers no favors—leaving them in the dark as to exactly when and how the Spirit (empowerment) was conferred. Further, it hardly gives one confidence in the “rule.” In fact, many if not the great majority of modern authorities simply throw up their hands and affirm that one can make no systematic sense of the order and means by which the Spirit came upon the early Christians.

Indeed, there is not a single passage in the book of Acts which either specifically or in substance affirms: “Repent and be baptized unto the remission of your sins and the gift of the Holy Spirit.” Why? Because there is no such rule. Rather the rule is that which is explicitly stated in Acts 8, in Acts 9, and in Acts 19. The Spirit (empowerment) was conferred by the laying on of apostolic hands.

The Holy Spirit in accounts of conversion. Further, in Acts the giving of the Holy Spirit is specifically associated with virtually none of the accounts of persons becoming Christians (see the conversions of those at Solomon’s porch, 4:4; the priests, 6:7; the Ethiopian, 8:35ff; the residents of Lydda and Sharon, 9:35; the residents of Joppa, 9:42; Sergius Paulus, 13:12; the Gentiles of Pisidian Antioch, 13:44ff; the residents of Iconium, 14:1ff; the residents of Derbe and Lystra, 14:8-21; Lydia, 16:11ff; the jailer, 16:25ff; the Thessalonians, 17:1ff; the Bereans, 17:10ff; the Athenians, 17:22ff; Crispus and the Corinthians, 18:8; and the Ephesians, 19:18).

The Holy Spirit in appeals for conversion. Nor is the Holy Spirit mentioned in the following appeals for conversion: Peter to the audience in Solomon’s Porch (3:12-26); Paul to those of Pisidian Antioch (13:16ff); Paul to the Ephesian elders in the summary of his preaching to them (20:21); Paul to Felix (24:24-25); or Jesus’ commissioning of Paul’s preaching (26:17-18, cf. 26:20). These facts would appear to be rather remarkable, since it is often claimed that the essence of salvation in Acts is the work of the Holy Spirit in an individual’s heart. In fact, in

Acts the conversion of no one is dependent on the reception of the Holy Spirit. This is true because in Acts Luke is focusing entirely upon the temporary extraordinary empowering gift, not the indwelling gift of the Spirit as set forth elsewhere in the NT.

Acts 5:32. What of Acts 5:32 (see also p. 17 above)? It is most likely a reference back to the reception of the Spirit by the Twelve on the day of Pentecost. “Has given” indicates reference to an event in the past. “Obey” (better: “listen to”) is not likely a reference to obedience in baptism. It is very probably a reference to the apostles’ pre-Pentecostal responsiveness to Jesus. The passage (5:32) is not an invitation to the Sanhedrin, but a rebuke of them, which explains why they are so enraged (see Culy and Parsons, p. 101). It was not the Jewish leaders, but the apostles who adhered to Christ and who were then validated on Pentecost by receiving the extraordinary outpouring of the Spirit. The SEB translates: “God has given the Spirit to those who obeyed him.” It was not immersion in the name of Jesus that gave the apostles the Spirit, but their responsiveness to the word of the gospel during the ministry of Jesus.

Summary. So how should Acts 2:38-39 be understood? We paraphrase (interpret) as follows:

Repent and be baptized everyone of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of your sins.

Moreover (*kai*), you shall (be eligible to) receive the gift of the Holy Spirit (as we apostles have time and opportunity to lay hands on you), on the grounds that the promise (the one in Joel 2, in regard to extraordinary empowerment) is for you, and for your youth, and for all that are afar off throughout the world; everyone whom the Lord our God calls to him, who responds to the word of the gospel (is eligible).

Q & A

Q: If everyone whom the Lord called by the gospel was to receive the promised empowerment, then is it not implied that all received the special gifts merely by being called? **A:** The intention of the promise was a widespread distribution of gifts. However, in actual practice we see that those disciples who had not had access to apostolic hands had not received the gifts (Acts 8; Acts 19). All who were called were eligible. And there was a widespread distribution, but by the means ordained—conferral of the Holy Spirit by the apostles (Acts 8; 9; 19).

Q: If the promise of Acts 2:16ff. made all persons eligible for the spiritual empowerment, then did not everyone receive the same gift of power as the apostles? **A:** No. The Spirit in his office of empowerment assigned particular roles and measures of power as he willed (1 Corinthians 12:11; 14:13; Hebrews 2:4). He bestowed upon the apostles and others the manifestations and measures he chose.

Q: If the promise of Acts 2:16ff. made all persons eligible for the spiritual empowerment, then did not the 120 receive the Spirit at the same time the Twelve did? **A:** No. The text is specific that the Twelve were the initial and direct recipients. The 120 must have received the Spirit later by the laying on of the apostles’ hands.

Q: It still looks to me as if “repent and be baptized” in Acts 2:38 are stated as preconditions for the gift of the Holy Spirit? **A:** Yet if the rest of Acts has any consistency at all, this cannot be the case. Cornelius and his house, Saul, and the Twelve themselves received the spiritual empowerment before baptism. In Acts 2:38-39 forgiveness is what is received on condition of faith, repentance, and baptism. The gift of the Holy Spirit is promised to those who are among those “called.” There are two benefits, each with its own conditions. Likewise in Acts 2:38, 39, there are two blessings mentioned: (1) forgiveness of sins, conditioned on penitent believing baptism; and (2) the gift of the Spirit, conditioned on consent to the message of the word.

Paraphrase: “Repent ye, and be baptized every one of you ... unto the remission of your sins. And ye shall [be eligible to] receive the gift of the Holy Spirit [by the hands of us apostles], because to you is the promise [of Acts 2:16-20], and to your children (Acts 2:17), and to all that are afar off (Acts 2:17), even as many as the Lord our God shall call unto him. [even all who respond in faith to the message Joel 2:32 LXX]. And with many other words he testified, and exhorted them, saying, ‘Save yourselves from this crooked generation’” (Acts 2:38-40). Or more simply: “Be baptized upon penitent faith resulting in forgiveness; moreover anyone who finds himself called by the gospel will be eligible to receive the Holy Spirit.”

Q: Does not your understanding endorse Pentecostalism? **A:** No. First of all Pentecostals teach what they call “subsequence.” That is the (empowering) Spirit always comes subsequent to salvation, never prior to salvation. The present analysis indicates that the house of Cornelius, Paul, and the Twelve all received the empowerment of the Spirit prior to salvation, the forgiveness of sins. Second, the thesis here is that the empowerment had to be conferred

by the apostles, an apostleship that was confined to the first century. There are other valid arguments for the cessation of the extraordinary spiritual gifts.

Q: Did not Cornelius receive the same gift as the apostles? If so, why couldn't he confer the gift on others? **A:** Cornelius and his house received the same gift as the apostles in manner, that is, directly from heaven. The empowerments received by the two groups were not identical in all respects.

Q: If the 3,000 baptized on Pentecost were supposed to have the apostles lay hands on them so they could receive the Spirit, why is there not an explanation and description of it happening? **A:** When one looks at Acts, one realizes that Luke had a tremendous amount of material to cover in a limited amount of space. He could not repeat every important point every time he took up a new portion of his history. Nor could he say everything at once. A careful examination of the structure of Acts reveals that Luke is trying in the first seven chapters to lay the foundation for the spread of the gospel out from Jerusalem. After he finishes this important task, at his first opportunity (Acts 8:14ff.), he gives an extended discussion of the method of the conferral of the Spirit. Authors who engage in the description of complex events, no doubt expect readers to go back and apply to earlier parts of a discourse clarifications they detail in the later parts of their writing.

Q: Does not Acts 19:2 teach that one should receive the Holy Spirit empowerments when one is baptized? **A:** No. It teaches the opposite. The usual meaning of the Greek construction is exactly as translated in KJV (cf. also NIVmg. See also Acts 11:17, NASB).

Q: In Acts, when the sequence is detailed, is it depicted that there is always an interval (before or after) separating water immersion and empowerment by the Spirit? **A:** Yes.

Q: The empowering Spirit either comes before or after baptism. You keep talking about an interval between the two. Could you cite all the places in Acts where this is recorded? **A:** Acts 2:1-4 (before); 2:38 (after); 8:14ff. (after); 9:17 (before); 10:44ff., 11:15, 15:8 (before); 11:17 (NASB, before); 19:2ff (KJV, NIVmg., after).

Q: Does not the suggestion that Ananias is apostolic teach apostolic succession? That is, if the Twelve received the Spirit initially on Pentecost, then Ananias of Damascus must have received apostolic power by one of the Twelve. Paul received apostolic conferral through Ananias. Could not Paul have conferred the apostolic empowerment on others—and so forth down through the generations? **A:** No, for the following reasons: (1) Each apostle of Christ must have witnessed the risen Christ and received a commission directly from him. This phenomenon was limited to the first century. For most of those men who were to become apostles, the witnessing event seems to have taken place prior to Jesus' ascension, Paul being the only apostle to have witnessed the risen Christ post-ascension (1 Corinthians 15:5-10). This would make apostolic succession to the present-day impossible. (2) Each apostle had to manifest the signs, wonders, and mighty works of a true apostle (2 Corinthians 12:12). No such manifestations took place following the first century. (3) The apostleship of the Twelve was designed for the foundation of the church in the first century (Ephesians 2:20; 4:11ff.; Revelation 21:14). On that analogy, apostleship generally was for the foundation of the church, not for self-perpetuating succession. Recall that whereas Judas following his death was replaced, prior to the beginning of the church; James, following his death, was not replaced after it was founded. (4) The manifestation of gifts in the first century—of which apostleship was the foremost (1 Corinthians 12:28)—was designed for the inauguration of the gospel. The inaugural signs were not the salvation, they merely heralded and facilitated the beginning of the salvation. Inaugurations do not go on interminably.

Q: I thought that people could pray for the special gifts of the Spirit? **A:** After one had initially received the apostolic conferral of the Spirit, one surely was free to pray for other special gifts from the Spirit (1 Corinthians 12:31; 14:1, 13).

Q: You keep talking about the laying on of the apostles' hands. Is it not true that this is not the way the Spirit was conferred? **A:** Please take note of the OT background, see p. 25. See comments on Romans 1:11, p. 27. For the case of Ananias, see p. 26.

Q: It is said that the promise was "to all" (2:17ff). **A:** Of course there were widespread gifts of the Spirit promised by Joel 2, extending beyond the Twelve (2:17ff). The question is how and when were these gifts distributed? The evidence is that apostles were the initial recipients, and then, by their hands, the Holy Spirit was widely mediated to many others in the early church (the extension of the gospel directly [without the hands of the apostles] to the Gentiles at the house of Cornelius being a kind of second "Pentecost"). Therefore the ultimate fulfillment was for many others besides the apostles, but by due means, and in due order.

Q: What is the fire in Luke 3:16? **A:** It is the fire of eternal judgment. Many note the close grammatical connection of “Holy Spirit and fire” and believe it refers to a single event. We now know that there are at least twenty-plus centuries between Pentecost and final judgment. But the first generation of Christians did not know that. They had been told that only the Father knew the interval, and that they had to be ready at every moment. What they did know was that the end could not come until after the beginning (Pentecost and the Holy Spirit). The end and the beginning were thus related. In that sense they were one event, and still are (see Acts 2:17-20; 3:19-21; 10:42).

Q: How do we know that it was the Twelve only, and not the 120 additionally, who received the initial outpouring on Pentecost? **A:** Acts 2:1 says that, “They were all together in one place.” Many interpreters believe that the apostles, along with the 120 disciples mentioned in 1:15, are the *all* of this passage. In fact, such analysts are in the vast majority. Others believe the *all* are the apostles only.²⁴ A few others (BC 4.17; Barrett, 1998, p. 112) hold this to be an open question. Barrett points out that some ancient MSS insert the word *apostle* after all. Some of the reasons adduced for considering this group to be the 120, rather than the Twelve, are as follows (with a response in italics):

(1) It is said that the promise was to all (2:17ff). *Of course there were widespread gifts of the Spirit promised by Joel 2, extending beyond the Twelve (2:17ff). The question is how and when were these gifts distributed? The evidence is that apostles were the initial recipients, and then, by their hands, the Holy Spirit was mediated widely to many others in the early church (the extension of the gospel directly [without the hands of the apostles] to the Gentiles at the house of Cornelius being a kind of second “Pentecost”). Therefore the ultimate fulfillment was for many others besides the apostles, but by due means, and in due order.*

(2) It is said that the “all” (cf. 1:4) must refer to the group mentioned in 1:15, the “all” being redundant if it does not refer to the 120. *On the contrary, “all” refers to the whole of the apostleship. Luke has just taken several sentences (1:15-26) describing how the apostolic college was made complete. Only at the point of that completeness could the Spirit come. Note the word “all” in 2:7, a reference to the apostles.*

(3) It is affirmed that the place of the coming of the Holy Spirit was the upper room (1:13) where the 120 had met. *However, it is not explicit that the meeting of the 120 (1:15ff) actually occurred in the “upper room.” If that assumption is made, it still remains unlikely that the Holy Spirit descended on the apostles in that same room. The description of the scene leads one to conclude that the actual pouring out of the Holy Spirit occurred in the environs of the temple (see note below). Yet even if the baptism occurred in the upper room, the text is still sufficiently clear that the 12 were the recipients.*

(4) It is pointed out that the house of Cornelius also received the “same gift” as the apostles, so why not the 120 (11:17)? *In response, the event at the house of Cornelius is explicitly described in singular terms as a repetition (a direct outpouring) of what happened to the apostles on Pentecost (11:15), that is, that it was a new “Pentecost,” but this one for the Gentiles.*

(5) It is claimed that 2:15 seems to make a distinction between the apostles (or at least Peter) and “these,” that is, supposedly, the 120. *But Peter could have been gesturing at the apostles when he said “these.” It remains true that the apostles at that particular moment certainly received the Holy Spirit and spoke in tongues on this Pentecost, while it is uncertain that any of the 120 did.*

(6) It is noted that the 120 are found in the context. *Contrariwise, the Twelve are mentioned with far greater frequency and in closer proximity contextually to the “all” than the 120.*

(7) It is said that the event occurred on Pentecost, therefore, all 120 disciples were likely together. *However, even granting that the 120 were in the vicinity of the event, it would not imply that the 12 were not in an even more specific proximity. The text is much more explicit that the 12 were the recipients.*

(8) It is noted that Luke 24:34 mentions the eleven and “those with them.” *Of course others were associated with the apostles, but it remains the case that the apostles, the official witnesses (Luke 24:48; Acts 1:22), were the focus.*

For the following reasons (compare the discussion in Bales, 1960, pp. 29-36) it seems certain that “they ... all” were the newly reconstituted 12 apostles:

²⁴ Among the commentators who see this as the Twelve are Calvin, 1552, pp. 50-51; McGarvey, 1892, 1.21; Lipscomb, 1896, p. 34; Boles, 1971, p. 33; Ash, 1979, p. 40; C. S. C. Williams, 1964, 62; and Dupont, 1966, p. 203.

- (1) Although the 120 disciples are in the remote context (1:15), the word *apostles* (1:26) is the explicit immediate grammatical antecedent of *they* and *all*.
- (2) The explicit subsequent referent of *all* is the apostles (2:14, cf. 2:7; 4:33; 5:12-13 with comments by Johnson, 1992, p. 95).
- (3) The focus on the apostles in Acts 1 is unmistakable. Others appear in the narrative only at 1:14f. and are distinct from the apostles who are addressed earlier.
- (4) The 120 are mentioned (1:15) primarily in order to have a pool from which to draw candidates for the replacement of Judas, not in order to focus on them as the recipients of the outpouring of the Spirit. In the whole of chapters 1 and 2 there is only one verse where there is any clear and distinct reference to the 120 (1:15). To think that they are mentioned anywhere else in Acts 1 and 2 is assumption.
- (5) Acts 2 centers particularly and explicitly on the apostles (2:14, 32 [cf. 1:22], 37, 43). In fact, the apostles are a primary focus throughout all of chapters 1-5.
- (6) The apostles were known as the “men of Galilee” (1:11; 13:31). Could the whole of the 120 have been from Galilee or have been identified by the listeners as Galileans (verse 7)?
- (7) The “all” of 2:1 is coordinate with the “all” of 2:32, in which the apostles are indicated by the fact that the “all” are “witnesses” (see comments on 1:8).
- (8) If the 120 are in view beginning in 2:1, why is it that in the subsequent context only the apostles are mentioned (2:14, 37, 42)?
- (9) The old Israel (the twelve tribes) originated with the 12 patriarchs. It was important for there to be a full college of 12 apostles for the day of Pentecost, the founding of new Israel. This full college would be the referent to the “all.”
- (10) It seems that when the text says, “they all began to speak” (verse 4), it would be more reasonable and orderly to think of the 12 speaking to various groups, than of 120 all speaking at one time in such a multiplicity of languages.
- (11) “Each of them” in verse 3 is emphatic, which would seem to favor the idea that it was a select group, the 12 apostles, not the 120 who received the outpouring.

A recap of the reasons Acts 2:38-39 does not promise the indwelling gift of the Holy Spirit to those who are baptized

1. There is no *undoubted* reference to the indwelling “sanctifying” gift of the Holy Spirit in any of the writings of Luke (that is, Luke-Acts). On the contrary, most all references to the Spirit in Acts are *indisputable* references to empowerment.
2. In fact, the Holy Spirit in Acts is entirely in reference to special empowerments. This important theme is clearly identified both at the end of Luke (24:48); and at the beginning of Acts in Acts 1:8 and 2:16-21. Therefore, if Acts 2:38-39 should promise the Holy Spirit to all baptized, then all who are now baptized should be empowered with those extraordinary and miraculous abilities, such as were common in the NT church.
3. All of the rules of exegesis are violated by forcing Acts 2:38-39 to teach Holy Spirit reception (empowerment) at baptism. Such an interpretation disregards every element of exegesis: ●the immediate context ●the remote context ●the explicit statement of the grammar ●the word usage ●the parallel passages. Most of all, the usual interpretation of the passage violates the overwhelming message of Acts as a whole.
4. While the *indwelling* Holy Spirit is not mentioned in the immediate *context* of 2:38-39 or in the wider *context*, the special gifts are mentioned frequently and predominantly (in fact, only). Therefore, none of the distinctive terminology of Holy Spirit indwelling is present in Acts: *dwell, earnest, seal, life, sanctify, sonship*.
5. The terminology associated with the Holy Spirit in 2:38-39—*receive (lambanō)* and *gift (dorea)* occurs consistently only in 8:15-20; 10:45-47 (with 11:17); and 19:2-6. In each passage, there is a clear reference to the extraordinary empowering gifts. In these passages, the Spirit is received, not at baptism, but either after a significant amount of time following baptism or at a time prior to baptism. All references to the Holy Spirit in Acts are references to the extraordinary gifts.

6. Forgiveness of sins is what is ascribed to baptism. *Repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins. Unto (eis) is not grammatically construable with the later promise of the Holy Spirit.*
7. The Holy Spirit is not promised on condition of baptism, but on condition of being “called” by God. *You will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit for (gar) to you is the promise and to whoever may be called by the Lord our God. Gar states the condition upon which the Holy Spirit will be received—that is, upon condition of being “called,” not upon the condition of being baptized. There are two blessings mentioned: forgiveness and the Spirit. Each is received upon distinct conditions: (1) forgiveness upon repentance, the name, and baptism (2) the Spirit upon being called.*
8. The versification of 2:38-39 is unsound, and the punctuation of 2:38-39 as usually found is incorrect. Verse 38, as it is ordinarily punctuated, contains one sentence and part of another. The versification and punctuation separates material that clearly should be construed together, and construes material that should be separated.
9. Properly punctuated and versified Acts 2:38-39 would appear as follows:

38 “Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins.

39 “And [*kai*] you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit, for the promise is to you and to your children and to all that are far off, every one whom the Lord our God calls to him.”

[One may recall that *and (kai)* at the beginning of a Greek NT sentence may be rendered *moreover, also, etc.*; or it may be regarded as merely a connective word and omitted in translation.]

10. If the receiving of the Holy Spirit is connected with baptism there is no satisfactory explanation for the future tense in 38b (“you will receive”).
11. The logical antecedent of the second person in Acts 2:38b-39 is not those who have repented, confessed the name, and been baptized; but those who have crucified Jesus, and have been cut to the heart.
12. The word *promise* and the concept of the “promise” in verse 39 is clearly identified in its context as the promise of Holy Spirit baptism, the pouring out, the empowerment of the Holy Spirit.²⁵ In Acts this is normally conferred by the laying on of apostolic hands. The Twelve received the Spirit directly from heaven. For very apparent reasons, the house of Cornelius also received the Spirit directly. The one who conferred the Spirit upon Saul—Ananias of Damascus—though not one of the Twelve, possessed indications of having apostolicity similar to Paul’s.
13. In none of the 28 chapters of Acts (nor in the 24 chapters of Luke) is there any *parallel* passage ascribing either the indwelling Spirit or the empowerment of the Spirit to baptism. There are parallel passages *promising* a reception of the Spirit without mention of baptism and on the basis of being “called” (Luke 11:13; 24:48-49; Acts 1:5, 8; 2:17-19, 33; 11:16).
14. Nowhere in Acts is there an *example* of the Holy Spirit empowerment or indwelling being received at baptism. There are, however, *examples* of the Holy Spirit being received without baptism and upon condition of being “called” (2:4; 5:32; 8:15-19; 9:17; 10:44-47; 11:15; 15:8; 19:2 [KJV], 6).
15. The other instruments mentioned in 2:38, (1) repentance and (2) calling on the name of Jesus as Christ, are not associated in Acts with reception of the Holy Spirit. Repentance is joined with forgiveness (5:31; 8:22; 26:18); with healing (28:27); and with life (8:22). “Calling on the name” is associated with salvation (Acts 2:21; 4:12); and with forgiveness (10:43; 22:16). It is exceedingly strange that there is no nexus in Acts between the Holy Spirit and the three instruments mentioned in 2:38—if one assumes Luke had intended to communicate it.
16. Acts 5:32 says the Holy Spirit had been given (on Pentecost) to those who had obeyed (listened to) Jesus—that is the Twelve (the tense of *obey* being governed by the main verb *given*). It does not ascribe the Holy Spirit to baptism. Were it to mean that the Holy Spirit is to be given to those baptized, it would be a promise of special gifts. It does not mention or refer to baptism.

²⁵ Acts 1:4, 5, 8; 2:1-4, 6-13, 14-19b, 33; cf. Luke 24:48-49.

17. In Acts the reception of the Holy Spirit (either the indwelling of the Spirit or the empowering of the Spirit) is not directly related to individual salvation. There is an association, indirect only, since the text tells us that the Spirit was conferred upon those who had been receptive to the message.
18. The sequence of (1) the preaching of forgiveness and then (2) empowerment for proclamation, as found in 2:38-39, is also found in Luke 24:47-48 and in Acts 5:31-32. The two items are distinct matters.
19. The sequence of (1) Spirit-empowered proclamation, and then (2) a reference to forgiveness or salvation, and its conditions is found throughout Luke-Acts. These two matters are not the same. The proper paradigm is Luke 4:18-19 *The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, Because he anointed me to preach good tidings to the poor: He hath sent me to proclaim release to the captives, And recovering of sight to the blind, To set at liberty them that are bruised, To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord.*
20. The empowerment of the Spirit for *preaching* forgiveness and salvation is not identical to forgiveness and salvation.
21. The message in Luke-Acts is not (1) preaching; then (2) penitent confessing baptism resulting in the reception of the Holy Spirit unto forgiveness. The message is (1) *preaching* done by the power of the Holy Spirit; then (2) *forgiveness* conditional upon responding in penitent obedient faith to the preaching. Promises of Holy Spirit empowerment are made to all those who are receptive to the gospel—a promise that can be fulfilled either before baptism or following it.
22. To join penitent confessing baptism with both forgiveness of sins and Holy Spirit empowerment for proclamation of salvation is to do that which is foreign to the whole of Luke-Acts.
23. As Acts 2:38 is commonly interpreted, there is no evident parallel to it in all of Acts. Acts 2:38a has parallels, as for example in 2:41 and 22:16. Acts 2:38b-39 has parallels, as in 8:15-17; 19:1-7; 10:44-48; 11:15-18; 15:8. But the passage, as it is usually construed, has no parallel. This would be quite astounding if one assumes the usual interpretation to be correct.
24. As previously noted, in Acts the giving of the Holy Spirit is associated with virtually none of the accounts of persons becoming Christians.
25. Also as noted, the Holy Spirit is not mentioned in the appeals for conversion.
26. The passage (Acts 2:38-39) could be analogized as follows: A philanthropist in a small town makes these statements to the youth of his village:

“You, the youth of this community, have been terribly negligent in your education.”

When they heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to the philanthropist, “What shall we do?”

And he said to them, “Change your attitude, apply to a college, get accepted and thus receive a full scholarship from me for your expenses.

“And you (who have been negligent, but wanting to do better) will receive a gift of \$2,000.00, for this gift is to you providing you are a qualified student genuinely interested in my offer of higher education.”

Later the philanthropist makes clear that certain agents of his will bestow the \$2,000.00, not on every youth, but on those who qualify—on some who have already been accepted to a college and on some though they have not yet been accepted.

CHAPTER 15—CONCLUSION

But ye shall receive power, when the Holy Spirit is come upon you: and ye shall be my witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea and Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth (Acts 1:8).

Highlights of this Study

- The Scriptures teach that there is just one Holy Spirit, but that he fulfills, or has fulfilled, at different times and with different people distinct roles, offices, or functions.
- One of the offices of the Holy Spirit is the visitation of an individual for the purpose of empowerment.
- Another office of the Spirit is that of indwelling, accompanied by sanctification.
- *Empowerment* was not directly related to the salvation of the one empowered.
- However, the Spirit's *indwelling* is indicative of and directly related to a person's spiritual status before God.
- A single person could both be visited for empowerment and indwelt for sanctification. But the two roles were still distinct.
- The baptism of the Holy Spirit was a first-century event, an empowerment, and not an indwelling.
- The book of Acts only focuses on the empowerment of the early church.
- It is especially Paul who discusses and applies the truth about the indwelling of the Spirit.
- Those empowered in the apostolic period of the church only received such empowerment in connection with the laying on of apostolic hands (Cornelius' house being the understandable exception).
- The Twelve had a unique position in the church, and alone initially received empowerment on the day of Pentecost in accord with Joel 2.
- There was a wider circle of apostolic men, beyond the Twelve, who held an office similar to the apostleship of Paul.
- The Twelve conferred the Holy Spirit power on a wider circle of apostolic men. Apostolic men would also have conferred the Spirit on others with apostolic qualifications (at least in the case of Ananias of Damascus and Saul). The apostolic college then made the Holy Spirit empowerment truly widespread among the first generation of Christians. They did this by conferring the gift, through their hands, on converts and on those consenting to the gospel and about to become Christians.

If one is tempted to dismiss the thesis advanced here by saying that it is too complex, one should reflect on the alternative theories of the Scriptural evidence, with all their intricate reasonings and explanations, including those who are unable to discern *anything* reasonable about the reception of the Holy Spirit in Acts. Also, one should consider the OT narratives about the founding of Old Israel—and the Spirit's role therein, and note the parallels with Luke's account of the founding of New Israel.

Because of (1) Luke's condensed style (especially in the early chapters of Acts), (2) a neglect of context, and (3) translators' misconstruals Acts 2:38-39 is easily misunderstood as if it were a reference to the indwelling Spirit. It may be asked, if a person does receive the indwelling Holy Spirit at baptism (as taught in Paul's letters), why is it important to understand that Acts 2:38-39 does not reference it. In response we would affirm that it is always important to correctly interpret God's word—even when the error seems harmless. In this case, however, the one error creates a rippling or cascading effect upon other parts of the text of Acts. These cascading errors make it difficult to understand and correct those whose interpretation of Holy Spirit baptism is erroneous to the point of affecting their entire Christian conduct. Bible students have always known that the early church did receive the Holy Spirit for the purpose of empowerment. Many scholars have been able to make the case for cessation. The proper interpretation of Acts 2:38-39 will strengthen both of these positions.

As has been set forth, the special powers promised to the early church were specifically conferred through apostolic men. With the close of the apostolic period of the church the promised empowerments necessarily ceased.

Does this last point mean that the Holy Spirit is largely irrelevant for the Christian life? May it never be. The promise of God's indwelling Spirit is a promise that every Christian will enjoy until the return of our Lord. Faith in God's assurances concerning that indwelling ought to have the same radical and profound and beneficial impact in the lives of Christians that the indwelling of God in the temple had on his ancient people—truly, even more so.

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