

**Sovereign Grace Ministries**

**Pastor's College 2007**

**Subsequence: *a biblical-theological defense  
of Pentecostal pneumatology***

“...you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. This promise is for you and for your children and for all who are far off, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to himself” *Acts 2:38b-39*

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### Appendix A: Pentecostal pneumatology as an application of Trinitarian theology

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## I. Introduction

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My motive for this study is as follows: the maintenance of a biblically significant charismatic dimension to Christianity. It is not mere coincidence that the Pentecostal revival, to which the contemporary church historically owes much of its charismatic experience, held as one of its main theological tenants the view of a subsequent baptism in the Holy Spirit. There is something pro-Charismatic about the Pentecostal view of the Spirit's baptism, which has a proven track record of producing experientially charismatic churches unmatched by other pneumatologies.

The Third Wave position, while not at all cessationist concerning the spiritual gifts, and even held by a few prominent charismatic leaders (i.e. John Wimber), has not shown itself to be quite as prolific as the traditional Pentecostal view in producing churches that are able to maintain a robust pneumatology and a distinctively charismatic experience over a long period of time. The primary reason for this is that the Third Wave position has a somewhat cessationist interpretation of Acts. What I mean is that Cessationists and 'Third Wavers' agree that what is seen in Acts should not be normative for today.<sup>1</sup> Therefore, since most of the biblical data about the baptism in the Spirit is contained in Acts, we should not be surprised the Third Wave perspective of the Spirit baptism tends not to produce experiences that are quite as charismatically prolific as the Pentecostal view.

Although the scope of this paper does not include divulging such a historical investigation, I would be dishonest if I did not disclose this motivation for investigating scripture. My *goal* is to find out what the Bible teaches about Spirit baptism. My *motive* in searching scripture is to learn from God's Word exactly how to maintain a robust pneumatology and experience of the Holy Spirit. My *finding* is that the Pentecostal understanding is both the most scripturally sound and historically proven way of doing this. Although there are certainly abuses of it in some (or many) circles, like all theology that may be abused, such abuse of theology is insufficient reason to seek out new theology, if the abused theology is biblical. I believe that the Pentecostal view of the Spirit's baptism is oft abused, yet thoroughly biblical, and should therefore be profusely defended and correctly applied.

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<sup>1</sup> I will illustrate the similarities between cessationists and Third Wavers on this point: Walter Kaiser defends a cessationist view of the baptism in the Holy Spirit in chapter 1 of *5 Views on Spirit Baptism*. In a section entitled "What is the Biblical Precedent for Using Historical Precedent for Doctrine?" on pages 25-29 he makes the argument that the historical narrative of Acts is not suitable to develop normative doctrine for the church today. Wayne Grudem, a Third Wave proponent takes a similar position, saying "Though it was a 'second experience' of the Holy Spirit, coming as it did long after their conversion, *it is not to be taken as a pattern for us, for we are not living at the time of transition in the work of the Holy Spirit*" (emphasis mine) *Systematic Theology*, p. 772.

Our goal is very simple, to answer the question *what does the Bible mean by the baptism in the Holy Spirit*. We can learn what is meant by the baptism in the Holy Spirit by examining how Jesus and John the Baptist use the phrase in the context of biblical theology (with a particular dependence on Luke’s historical theology) and its role in redemptive history, which begins to be played out in Luke’s narrative of the early church.

If we can determine what is meant by these phrases in the context of Luke’s narrative and how they are applied to the larger redemptive framework of the gospel being spread from Jerusalem to Rome, then we can better understand how we are to understand the best use of the phrase in our current context based on the scriptural precedent. We will begin by examining the biblical data.

## **II. The Biblical Data**

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### **A. Summarizing the Third Wave position**

In effort to fairly represent the Third Wave position, I have summarized the argument made by Wayne Grudem in his *Systematic Theology*. He points out that there are “seven passages in the NT where we read of someone being baptized in the Holy Spirit”<sup>2</sup>. These are Matthew 3:11, Mark 1:8, Luke 3:16, John 1:33, Acts 1:5, 11:16 and 1 Corinthians 12:13.

The first four, occurring in the gospels, refer to John saying something to the effect of “I baptize you with water...but he [Jesus] will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire” (Mark 1:8). Two of the seven occur in Acts (1:5, 11:16). Jesus says “John baptized with water...you shall be baptized in the Holy Spirit” (1:5), and “I remembered the word of the Lord, how he said...*you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit*” (Acts 11:16). The other occurrence is 1 Corinthians 12:13, where the ESV reads “For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body.” Grudem’s argument then proceeds along the following lines.

1. The wording of Paul’s phrase in 1 Corinthians is very similar to the baptism in the Spirit phrases that appear in the gospels. Therefore, the early church would have understood that Paul was referring in 1 Corinthians 12 to the same work that was spoken of in the gospels and Acts.
2. The phrase refers to something that happened to all believers when they became members of the body of Christ, “that is, when they became Christians” and therefore must “refer to the activity of the Holy Spirit at the beginning of the Christian life when he gives us new spiritual life (in regeneration).”

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<sup>2</sup> Arguments credited to Grudem are found in *Systematic Theology, Chapter 39: Baptism in and Filling with the Holy Spirit*, pp. 763-87.

The underlying assumption is this: *Since Paul seems to use this phrase to refer to something that happens at the beginning of the Christian life and because it was a common experience among all the believers at Corinth, this phrase can only refer to conversion itself, wherever it appears in scripture.* Our strategy will involve examining relevant passages in Luke-Acts, 1 Corinthians and the Gospel of John to see if this argument stands the test of scripture.

### **B. Luke-Acts: a biblical theology of the Holy Spirit**

Luke is responsible for about one-fourth of the volume of the NT. He is a profound theologian and historian, providing us invaluable data regarding the life of Christ and the early church. In addition to his contribution to our understanding of redemptive history, the two volumes of Luke and Acts can also be viewed as a self-contained biblical theology of the Holy Spirit.<sup>3</sup> Luke has a distinctively heavy emphasis on OT passages about the work of the Holy Spirit in Israel, and interprets the Spirit's current activity through these OT lenses. Luke examines the Holy Spirit the way a good biblical theologian should investigate any subject: taking the OT patterns, he asks what meaning we should assign to the current activity of the Holy Spirit in light of the change brought by the cross of Christ. This historic understanding of the Holy Spirit gives Luke a very unique pneumatology when contrasted with the other biblical authors.

This is important, because, as J. Rodman Williams says, "it is evident that the Spirit of God is largely depicted as the Spirit of enablement."<sup>4</sup> It is evident, as we shall see, that Luke took his cues on the Spirit from the Old Testament, in which the Spirit of God is portrayed in primarily charismatic terms. This understanding helps us interpret the physician's two books.

In addition to having a unique pneumatology, Luke "gives an interpreted narration"<sup>5</sup>. Luke does not merely report history, but provides interpretation of that history not primarily through authorial comments, but through the unique manner in which he presents the narrative that give away his

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<sup>3</sup> A biblical theology is simply a linear study through the whole Bible to investigate how a particular theme is developed throughout the Bible's storyline, with respect to Christ. I began to see Luke as, in part, a biblical theology of the Holy Spirit upon reading *The Charismatic Theology of St. Luke*, by Roger Stronstad, particularly his first chapter on the methodology of interpreting Luke. He makes the points that Luke, as a historian, is very dependent on the Old Testament and invested didactic meaning into his narrative writing. "If for Paul the lessons of the Old Testament had didactic lessons for New Testament Christians, it would be most surprising if Luke, who modeled his historiography after Old Testament historiography, did not invest his own history of the origin and spread of Christianity with didactic significance" (p. 7).

<sup>4</sup> *Renewal Theology*, vol. 2, J. Rodman Williams, p. 160. Williams divides the Old Testament work of the Holy Spirit into six categories, all of which pertain to enablement for service: designing the temple, leading the people, judging, ruling, prophesying and empowering.

<sup>5</sup> *The Charismatic Theology of St. Luke*, Roger Stronstad, p. 8.

theological burden and didactic purpose. Two prime examples of this are the baptism of Jesus and the beginning of his ministry, which we shall examine later.

While Luke must be read and understood in light of all scripture (following that great reformation principal that the whole counsel of God's word be used to interpret itself) we must not impatiently "define Luke's meaning...according to Paul's meaning"<sup>6</sup>. Other NT authors like Paul are not the first interpreters of Luke. Like *any biblical text*, the best and first interpreter of an author is that author himself, using the other material he has written.<sup>7</sup> This is particularly true in the arena of pneumatology. Given Luke's distinctive pneumatology, Pauline proof texts are actually poor interpreters of Luke, and may prohibit us from getting at a better understanding of Luke's pneumatology. I make this point up front because I believe that this is one of the primary fallacies committed by cessationists and those holding the Third Wave position: interpreting Luke's writings on the Spirit in distinctively Pauline terms. While I think Paul and Luke *both affirm a subsequent baptism*, each one does have a distinct pneumatology in general, and both authors should be given priority when interpreting their own writing.<sup>8</sup>

### **i. Luke's unique pneumatology**

Most of the scriptural data on the baptism in the Holy Spirit is found in Luke and Acts. Excepting the references attributed to John the Baptist in Matthew and Mark, and Paul's reference to a baptism in the Spirit in 1 Corinthians 12:13, the only place where we find texts describing this baptism

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<sup>6</sup> *The Charismatic Theology of St. Luke*, Roger Stronstad, p. 10

<sup>7</sup> This is a sound hermeneutic principal: examine first what the text means in light of the surrounding context, considering other similar texts written by the same author. There is a tendency, such as that demonstrated by Wayne Grudem, to jump from Luke to Paul and then back to Luke again, carrying the full weight of the Pauline baggage onboard the Lukan train. I believe that a more sound strategy would be to fully explore Luke without prematurely bringing Paul into the discussion.

<sup>8</sup> A Third Wave argument is that we should develop doctrine from the didactic, not the narrative. John Stott says, "revelation of the purpose of God in scripture should be sought in its *didactic*, rather than its *historical* parts". Gordon Fee says "unless Scripture explicitly tells us we must do something, what is merely narrated or described can never function in a normative way" (both citations taken from *5 Views on Spirit Baptism*, Chapter 1 by Walter Kaiser, pg. 25). The problem with this is that though we may like for God to reveal his purposes in purely *didactic* form, he has chosen to reveal much in *historical* form. The purposes of God are most clearly seen in the life of Christ, which is provided in *historical narrative*. Although some Third Wave proponents say we cannot build theology based on narrative, nobody actually lives up to this assertion, or else we could not build doctrine based on the teaching of Christ, which is provided in narrative form in the four gospels. Much sound theology has been built upon historical narrative, and this argument seems to be untenable and one of convenience. What Third Wave proponents seem to mean is that we cannot build *Pentecostal theology* based on *certain events in Acts*, because they are predisposed not to accept the Pentecostal premise that Luke, like every other gospel writer, invested his writing with didactic meaning. As one Third Wave proponent said: "The problem with second blessing and other empowerment theologies is not that they appeal to the narrative material in Acts to make a doctrinal point (as some cessationists have argued); *Luke-Acts is equally as theological as, say, Paul's letters*" Richard B. Gaffin, Jr., *Are Miraculous Gifts for Today?*, p. 30.

occur in Luke and Acts. Therefore, it is absolutely vital that we understand the role that the Holy Spirit plays in Luke's two-volume work if we are to correctly interpret this data.<sup>9</sup>

Luke's pneumatology is one of several unique characteristics of his work. (A definitive work on this subject is *Mighty in Word and Deed: The Role of the Holy Spirit in Luke—Acts*, by James B. Shelton). How can we see that Luke has a *unique* pneumatology? The examples are numerous, but one shall do immediately: the baptism of Jesus Christ. All of the Gospels portray Christ as the anointed one, the Messiah. "The Messiah is described in both the Old and New Testaments as fitted by the Holy Spirit for the exercise of his vocation."<sup>10</sup> In the OT tradition, someone having the Spirit of God was anointed to fulfill some office. For Jesus to be able to baptize others with the Spirit (Mk. 1:8) was a sign of exalted status, being able to dispense of God himself.

Though all the gospel writers portray Christ as Messiah, Luke, is unique in *connecting the Holy Spirit to Christ's anointed ministry*. Other gospel writers simply say he was anointed. Luke tells us when the anointing 'event' occurred. This is pertinent to our discussion because the baptism in the Holy Spirit is the literary tool Luke uses to demonstrate Christ as the anointed Messiah. The Holy Spirit as 'anointer of Christ' is one example of how Luke's pneumatology is distinct from the other gospel writers, who take it for granted that Christ was Messiah without featuring the Holy Spirit. In other words, the other gospel writers view the Messiah in Christological terms, *Christ the Messiah*. Luke views his messianic ministry in charismatic terms, *Christ the 'anointed by the Spirit' one*.<sup>11</sup>

This distinct pneumatology affects how Luke interprets the baptism in the Holy Spirit. In Matthew's gospel, the baptism of the Spirit and fire is primarily a baptism of judgment. "For Matthew the reference to Jesus as baptizer was primarily used to warn the Pharisees and Sadducees that Jesus would exercise justice in the immediate context."<sup>12</sup> For Luke, however, the baptism is one of anointing for service at the outset of ministry both for Christ and later his disciples.

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<sup>9</sup> If most of the scriptural data were Pauline, then we would be greatly served by our good understanding of Pauline pneumatology. However, we must learn to think outside of Paul's box if we are to take into account the differences between his pneumatology and Luke's. As an example, we would err to read John fully engulfed in Pauline Christology. In order to fully understand Johannine Christology, a concerted effort must be made to distance ourselves from 'familiar' Paul, and listen with new ears to what 'beloved' John would say. Similarly, if we are to understand Luke, a concerted effort must be made to step away from broad Pauline pneumatology and focus more narrowly on Luke's view of the Holy Spirit. Otherwise, we will never fully understand the intended didactic lessons of Luke's narrative.

<sup>10</sup> *Renewal Theology*, vol. 2, J. Rodman Williams, p. 161

<sup>11</sup> As Stronstad says, "there is also a prophetic anticipation for the gift of the Spirit in the coming age when God will visit His people and restore their fortunes. This activity of the Spirit is concentrated upon a unique charismatic leader" citing Isaiah 11:2, 42:1 and 61:1, *The Charismatic Theology of St. Luke*, p. 24.

<sup>12</sup> *Mighty in Word and Deed*, James B. Shelton, p. 7.

It is impossible to determine when the baptism of the Spirit occurs with respect to conversion based on the Matthew, Mark and John passages in their immediate context alone. In all cases, John the Baptist simply says that someone will come after him who is greater than him, baptizing people with the Holy Spirit and fire. This teaching is picked up by the gospel writers to demonstrate that Jesus was the anointed Messiah, and to proclaim judgment on the unrepentant.<sup>13</sup>

This leaves us with Luke-Acts, 1 Corinthians 12:13 and perhaps John 20:22 to determine exactly how the baptism of the Spirit is related to regeneration and conversion. We will examine 1 Corinthians 12:13 and John 20:22 later, but for now will investigate the relevant texts in Luke. To summarize Shelton, Luke's unique pneumatology has the following characteristics:

1. The baptism of the Holy Spirit is not primarily one of judgment (ala Matthew), but one of empowerment for witness.
2. The primary evidence of the Spirit's activity is inspired speech and actions.

Shelton summarizes: "Luke emphasizes the Holy Spirit's role in miracles and in the proclamation of the church. The role that seizes Luke's attention most, however, is that of Spirit-inspired witness."<sup>14</sup> This recognition is crucial in determining what he means when he uses the phrase *baptize in the Holy Spirit*. We must first understand Luke's meaning in the context of his writing before we attempt to tie the phrases to their larger biblical theological context. When reading Luke, this question should be on the back of our minds: *how does Luke write about the Holy Spirit, and how should that help interpret what he records the Spirit doing in any particular passage?* This is a basic hermeneutic principal that we are comfortable applying to any study: read the passage in its literary context first, then expand outward to consider other books by the same author, then the larger biblical story line.

## **ii. Jesus' baptism and inauguration of ministry**

How does Luke's unique pneumatology impact his view of the baptism in the Holy Spirit? Time does not permit us to examine every pertinent point of his narrative, for there are so many. We confine

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<sup>13</sup> "The baptism of fire portended destruction for the unrepentant, and the eschatological discourses in the Synoptics are the messianic pronouncement of judgment upon those who refused to repent and prepare for the advent of the kingdom" *Conversion-Initiation and the Baptism in the Holy Spirit*, Howard Ervin, p. 2.

<sup>14</sup> *Mighty in Word and Deed*, James B. Shelton, p. 13



these to a footnote on Shelton<sup>15</sup> and content ourselves with highlighting two: Jesus' baptism in the Holy Spirit and beginning of his ministry.

Jesus' Baptism: The distinct nature of Luke's pneumatology comes through in his account of Jesus' baptism. This can be seen in the absence of John at the baptism and the de-emphasis of the baptism itself. Luke says: "Now when all the people were baptized, and when Jesus also had been baptized and was praying, the heavens were opened" (Lk. 3:21).

Compared to the other accounts in Matthew and Mark, the actual water baptism itself almost disappears. Luke does not even mention that John baptized him, and simply refers to the baptism in passing ("and when Jesus also had been baptized") rushing quickly to the descent of the Holy Spirit. The primary function of the Holy Spirit coming onto Jesus was to empower him and lead him. Even the Third Wave proponent James Dunn recognizes that the primary purpose for the Spirit's descent here is anointing for ministry: "We may legitimately speak of the descent of the Spirit on Jesus at the Jordan as a baptism in the Spirit; and we certainly cannot deny that it was this anointing with the Spirit which equipped Jesus with power and authority for his mission to follow."<sup>16</sup>

The significance of Jesus' baptism in the Holy Spirit for the believer's baptism in the Spirit should not be underestimated. Luke, by distinguishing Jesus' water baptism from his Spirit baptism, and interpreting this baptism as one of power for mission (as Peter would later preach in Acts 10:38), is drawing a close connection "between the event of the Holy Spirit's coming and remaining on Jesus and of Jesus' baptizing others in the same Holy Spirit. This suggests that through both the Spirit's coming and His remaining on Jesus, He would also endow others with the same abiding Spirit of power for the ministry of the gospel."<sup>17</sup>

The Inauguration of Jesus' Ministry: Luke's unique pneumatology can be seen in the way that he adjusts the synoptic order of Jesus' entrance into ministry. Matthew and Mark begin his public ministry in Capernaum (Matthew 4:12, Mark 1:21), before Christ's rejection at Nazareth (Matthew 13:34, Mark 6:1-6). Luke, however, uses the story of Jesus' rejection in Nazareth to introduce his public ministry (Luke 4:16) putting it *before* the Capernaum account (Luke 4:31). In Luke's account of Jesus' rejection at Nazareth Christ is portrayed as anointed by the Spirit of the Lord to preach the good news (Luke 4:18),

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<sup>15</sup> Shelton cites Luke's birth narrative and his treatment of Jesus' conception, the witnesses of John, Mary, Elizabeth, Zachariah and Simeon and Anna, as well as his unique presentation of the teaching of John the Baptist, Jesus' temptation, his presentation of the miracles, Jesus' rejoicing in the Holy Spirit, the Lord's prayer and the Spirit as the answer to prayer, his relocation of the blasphemy sayings, and also the ascension and farewell of Christ as a few examples of how Luke's distinct understanding of the Holy Spirit bursts through the narrative when it is carefully read.

<sup>16</sup> *ibid.*, p. 49.

<sup>17</sup> *Renewal Theology*, vol. 2, J. Rodman Williams, p. 169.

hinting at his agenda, portraying Christ as “the Spirit-led man *par excellence*.”<sup>18</sup> Luke wants Jesus’ first words in his public ministry to be that the Old Testament prophecies of a Charismatic Messiah “have been fulfilled” (Luke 4:21) in the person of Christ. Emphasizing the empowering work of the Spirit in Jesus’ ministry was such a priority that he altered the chronology (assuming Matthew and Mark agree on the correct chronology) to allow that these Spirit-oriented words might be Christ’s first public ones.

Why would Luke record the narrative like this, emphasizing the activity of the Holy Spirit in the baptism, temptation and launch of ministry? Luke’s pneumatology is very much in keeping with the Old Testament understanding of the enabling power of God, and he is using these events to advance his mini biblical theology. John had prophesied that Jesus would baptize Israel in the Holy Spirit (Luke 3:16), making all anointed prophets and servants of God. Jesus, by virtue of receiving this baptism himself, had become the consummate prophet, and would fulfill his Spirit-led ministry, dispensing of that Spirit to his followers.

There is a precedent set here: *in Luke’s narrative the baptism of the Holy Spirit is a singular work of empowerment that inaugurates a man’s anointed ministry*. This is true for Christ, and in parallel fashion for the disciples as well. “The same Spirit from heaven anointed both Jesus and His disciples at the beginning of their ministry.” And not to be missed among Luke’s beautiful parallelism (since Jesus had been born of the Spirit in Luke 1:35), “is that in both cases [Christ and his disciples] the *Spirit came upon those who were ‘born’ of the Spirit [ref. D. John 20]*”<sup>19</sup> This parallelism helps us understand Luke’s pneumatology and better understand the function that the baptism in the Holy Spirit serves in Luke when we are determining what the baptism in the Holy Spirit phrase means.

### **iii. The literary function of Pentecost in Luke-Acts**

Between the resurrection and ascension, Jesus lived with the disciples. During this time he “delivered a charge to His disciples ‘not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Father’”<sup>20</sup> that they would be “clothed with power from on high” (Luke 24:49). Williams points out three things about the end of Luke and beginning of Acts: “(1) there was the promise of the Father, which can be none other than the Holy Spirit [Acts 2:33]; (2) Jesus said they had heard this from his lips; and (3) this had to do with being ‘baptized in the Holy Spirit’.”<sup>21</sup> *The literary significance of Pentecost in the context of*

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<sup>18</sup> *Mighty in Word and Deed*, James B. Shelton, p. 65

<sup>19</sup> *Renewal Theology*, vol. 2, J. Rodman Williams, p. 174

<sup>20</sup> *ibid.*, p. 177

<sup>21</sup> *Renewal Theology*, vol. 2, J. Rodman Williams, p. 177

*Luke's two-volume work is that Pentecost represents the disciples' initial reception of the promise of the Father* (i.e. the clothing of power from on high in the Holy Spirit). They had already received the baptism of repentance (cf. Luke 3:16, Acts 1:5) and had the Holy Spirit breathed into them (John 20:22)<sup>22</sup>, but had not received and prayerfully awaited the reception of the gift of the Spirit.

Care must be taken to distinguish the literary function of Pentecost in Luke-Acts from the redemptive-historical significance of the event. Undoubtedly Pentecost did usher in the New Testament church age in which all of God's people, upon conversion would be indwelt with the Holy Spirit. A problem emerges, however, when we take the redemptive-historical significance and impute meaning into Luke's writing that may be beyond the original authorial intent.

One example of this is how we may interpret Acts 2:38-39. Peter says that the promise of the Spirit is for all nations and generations. What does he mean by that? Someone arguing for the Third Wave may say he meant that when we repent and believe the Holy Spirit indwells us and regenerates our heart. This happens, of course, but could it have been what Peter meant? Paul taught about the Spirit's work in regeneration after 14 years and an experience in the third heaven! I think it's a bit optimistic to say that Peter had been able to come to this conclusion in a couple hours. His reluctance even to share the gospel with non-Jews (Acts 10) makes it clear that he probably wasn't speaking with a very sophisticated understanding of redemptive history in his Pentecost sermon. So for us to inject Peter's words in 2:38-39 with heavy redemptive-historical meaning probably goes beyond their original meaning to the original hearers.

Jesus said to his disciples, "You heard from me; for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now" (Acts 1:5). Jesus references John the Baptist's prophecy that Christ would baptize them in the Holy Spirit and applies it to what the disciples will experience at Pentecost. The redemptive-historical meaning of this should not be lost. Thinking in terms of Luke's biblical theology of the Spirit, in the OT the Holy Spirit was given almost exclusively to anoint for service. Commenting on the empowering work of the Spirit, Roger Stronstad says, "these charismatic motifs describe the gift of the Spirit of God to his people for divine service or vocation."<sup>23</sup> Yet, "In the coming age, however, the Spirit will not rest exclusively upon the Messiah. Rather, he will

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<sup>22</sup> Norman Geisler, *When Critics Ask*, pp. 423-424: "If Jesus meant them to receive the Holy Spirit at that moment (in John 20:22), it was apparently in a *different sense*. Here the Spirit is given to "to forgive the sins" (v. 23). But in Acts 1:8 the Spirit was to be given to provide "power... [to] be witnesses" for Him to the "end of the earth."...the promise of the Spirit in John was for His *indwelling* the believer (cf. John 14:16), not for His being baptized by the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:5; cf. 1 Cor. 12:13), which is a different act of the Holy Spirit. In this sense, then, there is no conflict between the two passages, since they speak of different activities of the Spirit which came at different times."

<sup>23</sup> *The Charismatic Theology of St. Luke*, Roger Stronstad, p. 24

share the charismatic gift of the Spirit with the restored people of God. In the prophet Joel we meet the vision of a widespread charismatic or prophetic ministry.”<sup>24</sup> Jesus announces that what John the Baptist had promised would indeed come to pass. The mantle (which he carried by virtue of his baptism in the Spirit in Luke 3) of anointed, prophetic service would be passed on to a newly formed charismatic community, experiencing even greater, more wide-spread power than the OT predecessors. The baptism of the Spirit in Acts 2 (according to Acts 1:5) is the first fruit of this post-resurrection endowment to the new Israel.

This is a crucial element of Luke’s biblical theology, which shapes his pneumatology. In the OT the Holy Spirit came on a select few people at various times for special service. In the NT, the Holy Spirit would be available for *more permanent endowment* of special power for life-long service. This is exactly what Joel said: “And it will come about after this that I will pour out my Spirit on all mankind; And your sons and daughters will prophesy, Your old men will dream dreams, Your young men will see visions.” Prophecy! Dreams! Visions! Service! These are things that described occasional outbreaks of charismatic activity of the OT. These same things would now characterize those who were baptized in the Holy Spirit under the new covenant!

Shelton cannot be improved upon: “Many assume that the Pentecost experience is a conversion to Christ and an initiation into the church, when in reality, Luke primarily considers it an experience of empowerment for mission. The assumption that it is a conversion-initiation experience is often made because Luke’s pneumatological motives are assumed to be the same as Paul’s.” When one imposes Paul’s pneumatology on Luke, one comes away with something different than that which Luke intended, just like bringing Paul’s Christology to John is unsatisfying. We will discuss Paul’s use of this phrase in 1 Corinthians later, but we must make the following summarizations:

1. There is no direct reference to conversion in any of Luke-Acts references to the baptism of the Spirit.<sup>25</sup> These passages are *loaded* however with implications regarding the anointing and service of the disciples.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> *ibid.*, p. 25

<sup>25</sup> I do not mean that one cannot infer the salvation of anyone who receives the baptism in the Holy Spirit. What I do mean is that the phrase never serves the literary function of describing an individual’s regeneration. We can see this by examining each of these individually. For example, in Acts 1:5, Jesus promises this baptism, a promise that is fulfilled in Acts 2:1-4, according to Peter (Acts 2:33). So what happened as a result of this baptism? Were they saved? This is nowhere explicitly stated that they were saved, but it is certainly stated that they spoke in tongues and anointed to speak and preach. Similarly, in the narrative of Samaria, Cornelius and Ephesus (Acts 8, 10 and 19) it is at best unclear as to the relationship between the reception of the Holy Spirit and regeneration. What is perfectly clear is the reception of the Holy Spirit and outward manifestations such as tongues. This is what I mean when I say there are no explicit and direct connection between the baptism and conversion, while there is a very explicit connection between such a reception and charismatic anointing.

2. Therefore, *honest exegesis can find no explicit textual equivalency between the phrase “baptism in the Spirit” and individual conversion in the gospels and Acts.*

Our definition of the baptism in the Holy Spirit, therefore, must account for this absence of an explicit textual link to conversion. It must also account for the profound emphasis in Luke-Acts on empowerment. By virtue of the baptism in the Holy Ghost, believers were endowed with anointing to advance the kingdom of God, conquering Satan’s devices by the power of God resident within them, demonstrating through supernatural service the miraculous accomplishment of Christ on the cross: sin and death had been defeated once and for all. They did this by preaching the gospel to hostile authorities (Acts 4:8-12), healing the sick (3:6-10), praying for boldness (4:23-31) to face martyrdom (7:54-60). This was the result of the baptism of the Holy Spirit, what Craig Keenan marvelously described as “the fulfillment of Joel’s prophecy about all Israel being anointed prophets” and the fulfillment of John’s prophecy that Christ would baptize Israel “with the Holy Spirit and with fire.”<sup>27</sup>

#### **iv. Peter’s promise (Acts 2:38-39) and the pattern of Acts**

Clearly, Third Wave folks will admit, the apostles had an amazing encounter with the Holy Spirit. While their experience is certainly unique in many respects, I do not believe we can write it off as merely historical. Peter prevents us from doing this when he tells us that the fundamental reality of Pentecost, the gift of the Spirit, is available for every believer thereafter.

“Repent and be baptized every one of you for the forgiveness of your sins” he commands at Pentecost. Why? What will result from this forgiveness? The crowd is promised that they too “will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit” (Acts 2:38). Was this only for the disciples at Pentecost? Was it only for the believers in Jerusalem, until the gospel had reached Rome and the expansion figuratively complete? No, Peter does not allow us to think that, saying “For the promise is for you and for your children and for all who are far off, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to himself” (2:39). God includes all nations (“all who are far off”) throughout all centuries (“you and...your children”) in this promise. You, brother or sister, are included in this promise.

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<sup>26</sup> Consider, for example, William’s point that “John[ the Baptist]’s endowment was totally directed beyond himself. It had nothing to do with his own salvation or edification, but everything to do with his mission, namely, that of making ready ‘for the Lord a people prepared’” *Renewal Theology*, vol. 2, p. 163. He also cites the example of Mary, Elizabeth, Zechariah and Simeon in the infancy narrative. In each of these cases, “the Holy Spirit’s activity is that of *supernatural enablement for a particular purpose*” *Renewal Theology*, vol. 2, p. 165.

<sup>27</sup> *Three Crucial Questions about the Holy Spirit*, Craig Keenan.

But what is the promise? Some Third Wave interpretations interpret this as regeneration, saying that Peter is promising that all who call on the name of the Lord will be regenerated by his indwelling presence. This is true, of course. But this is not what Peter is promising here. It could not have been. As we have seen, there is no clear textual indication that would prove the disciples experienced regeneration at the Pentecost outpouring. There is, therefore, no obvious reason to think that it is a promise of regeneration that Peter extends to others. He certainly does extend the promise of salvation and forgiveness of sins (2:38), but also extends the “promise” of being clothed with power from on high, which he calls “the gift of the Spirit” (2:39). Given the OT precedent and Luke’s reliance on it, to promise the gift of the Spirit was a promise of enabling power.

We cannot assume that Peter had already managed to sort through what Paul worked 14 years to formulate, an understanding that the Spirit is active in regeneration. All Peter knew was that he had followed Christ (Luke 5), been handed the keys of the kingdom of heaven (Matthew 16:19), and yet denied Christ to a servant girl (Luke 22:56-57) and spent the last week or so locked up in a room with the other disciples, wondering what was to become of them. Then, with a sudden rush of wind something described as *tongues of fire* came and rested on them and they started behaving in a way that had people thinking they were drunk (2:15). Yet, somehow, this unquenchable energy that was rising up inside them transformed a man who denied Christ to a little girl, possessing him to speak at the risk of his own life to the multitudes, boldly confronting them for their role in the death of the Messiah. This was the ‘gift of the Holy Spirit’ from the ascended Christ: *the active, inspiring, empowering and emboldening presence of God to witness about Christ*. Peter, amazingly, says that this same gift is *available* to all who would repent and believe.

What a comfort this must have been. They were saved through the name of Christ (Acts 4:12), even if they didn’t understand the instrumental role of the Spirit in regeneration. Yet they were thrilled to know that the promise of Christ to be with them by sending the Spirit (John 14:26) had been fulfilled. Peter is promising in Acts 2:38-39 to all who believe that they too can experience the comfort of knowing Christ is present with them by witnessing in their own lives the proof-positive manifestation of his Holy Spirit. We can see why Martyn Lloyd-Jones calls this baptism ‘blessed assurance.’<sup>28</sup>

If this was how Peter understood the gift of the Spirit, and if it was this promise that Peter made available to all who would call on the name of the Lord, this verse is paradigmatic for the rest of Acts, in

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<sup>28</sup> Chapter 2 of his writing *Joy Unspeakable* has this title.

which we see God continuing to pour out this baptism of power on the Samaritans, Paul, the household of Cornelius and the Ephesians (Acts 8, 9, 10 and 19).

The way in which we interpret Acts 2:38-39 determines how we view Acts 8, 9, 10 and 19. Clearly these chapters are the outworking of 2:38-39. If chapter 2 promises a subsequent baptism of power and anointing, then the Samaritans, Cornelius and the Ephesians can even more easily be interpreted likewise. Much has been written on Acts 8, 9, 10 and 19, to which I will not add. Let us summarize Luke's biblical theology of the Holy Spirit:

- In the OT, the primary role of the Holy Spirit is to empower for service.
- Joel saw a day when this power for prophecy, dreams and visions would be available not just for the chosen leaders or choice workers, but much more broadly available, even to the lowest of the female servants (Joel 2:28-29).
- John the Baptist prophesied that Joel's prophecy of a charismatic community would be brought to fruition through Christ baptizing Israel with the Holy Spirit and fire (Luke 3:16).
- Jesus promised to inaugurate that community after his ascension via the baptism in the Holy Spirit at Pentecost (Acts 1:5).
- Peter prophesied that this baptism of the Holy Spirit for boldness, anointing and outward manifestations would be a possibility wherever the gospel spread (Acts 2:38-39).
- The story of Acts bears this out in the examples of the Samaritans, Cornelius and Ephesians.

There is no real potential for the baptism in the Holy Spirit to mean conversion in the Luke-Acts passages themselves. This potential is created when we come to the text with a certain disposition to impose undue redemptive-historical significance on passages to the neglect of their immediate meaning in context. Ironically, viewing Pentecost almost exclusively in terms of its redemptive-historical meaning has drained the two volumes of Luke-Acts of their rich biblical theology of the Holy Spirit. Luke is the only author to record Pentecost, yet it seems he is the last one consulted in terms of its meaning.

#### **v. Summary: Normative narrative**

Walter Kaiser asks a good question. "What is the biblical precedent for using historical precedent for doctrine?"<sup>29</sup> Theologians like Fee and Stott make good points. We cannot arbitrarily choose which parts of a narrative are to be normative for the church today. It would be quite ridiculous, for example, to read Acts 16 and assume that all church plants must be like the first in Macedonia, equipped with at least one wealthy woman (v.14), a servant girl recently delivered from demonic possession (v. 18) and a

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<sup>29</sup> He asks this in his chapter in *Perspectives on Spirit Baptism*, p. 25.

jail-worker who had almost committed suicide (v. 27). These elements of the story are not normative and should not unduly influence our church planting methodology!

There must be some clear, objective standard by which we can evaluate whether or not an element of the narrative should be considered normative for the church today. I believe the only such standard that exists is *apostolic interpretation*. In other words, if the apostles—under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit—considered a particular event to be normative, *then it is normative*.

This is what we have in Acts 2:38-39, apostolic interpretation of a narrative event. The disciples had received the gift of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost (Acts 2:1-4). In 2:39 Peter, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, proclaims this same promise (“this promise is for you”), the promise of the Father, namely the gift of being clothed with power from on high in the Spirit, is available not just to the current generation (“you and your children”) but future generations (“all who are far off”).

What promise is Peter extending? Is he extending the promise of regeneration? He is making available to all what they had just experienced, *which did not include regeneration*. The “promise of [the] Father” was anointing and power (Luke 24:49) in the Spirit. Those who repent and believe (2:38) can receive the enabling spirit of promise (2:39). Therefore, the biblical precedent for using the Acts 2 narrative for doctrine is Acts 2:39, the first apostolic decree in the history of the church. *Peter’s first apostolic decree was that the Pentecost reception of the gift of the Spirit was to be the continuing standard throughout all generations of the church*. The charismatic promise of the Father is available for all! Based on this inspired interpretation of Pentecost and *apostolic pronouncement of continuance*, we are on safe ground interpreting this initial second blessing (and its outworking in Acts 8, 9, 10 and 19) as normative for today. Not only are we on safe ground, *we are required to view it this way*, if we are to be submitted to apostolic decree, even if we cannot point to any parallel event in our own experience. *It may be that God has yet more for us to experience in accordance with the testimony of the early church*.

### **C. 1 Corinthians 12:13: mystical or functional unity?<sup>30</sup>**

If there is ever a verse that has been used to argue against the Pentecostal position of the baptism in the Holy Spirit, it is 1 Corinthians 12:13. Grudem’s argument rests heavily on this verse, as we have already covered. In the ESV the verse reads: “For in 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 Cor. 12:13). It would seem, the Third Wave argument goes, that Paul is using the baptism in the Holy Spirit to refer to

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<sup>30</sup> I must express my indebtedness to Brent Detwiler in the exegesis of this verse. See footnote 30.



incorporation into the body of Christ, union with Christ, something obviously tied closely with regeneration, a common experience among all believers. If this is true, baptism in the Holy Spirit cannot be subsequent to conversion, because nobody can be converted and not united to the mystical, universal body of Christ.

It is clear from the context of 1 Corinthians 12, and the entire book of 1 Corinthians, that Paul is interested in maintaining the unity of the church at Corinth (1 Cor. 1:10). A pertinent question for this discussion is *what is the basis of that unity according to 1 Corinthians 12:13*. Are the Corinthians unified in this verse because they have all been joined to the same *universal* body of Christ, or for some other reason?

In the first eleven verses of 1 Corinthians 12, Paul acknowledges the incredible diversity of gifts given by the Holy Spirit. Yet, he points to a common experience shared by them all. Our question is this: *does this common experience have to be conversion, or can it be something else?* A few points:

1. The translation of 'into': The ESV translates εἰς ἓν σῶμα in verse 13 “into one body”. The word for ‘into’ has a semantic range that includes ‘unto’, ‘for’ or ‘in relation to.’ This word has at least eight different “remote” meanings including “(1) in... (2) upon... (3) against... (4) among... (5) With respect to, with reference to... (6) As, expressing equivalence.... (7) Because of... (8) For the purpose.”<sup>31</sup> To understand Paul’s meaning, we need to consider his analogy. Undoubtedly, Christ is the one who baptizes people in the Holy Spirit. But according to the ESV translation, Christ baptizes people ‘in’ the Holy Spirit ‘into’ the body *of Christ*. So Christ would be both the agent of the baptism (the one doing the baptizing) and the location of the baptism (the substance baptized into). This is awkward for Christ to be both the agent and location of the baptism. Does Christ baptize people into Christ? It seems as though the union with Christ and consequent blessings are result of the eternal plan of the Father (Eph. 1:3-6), who unites us to Christ through the indwelling of the Spirit. The Father blesses us by uniting us to Christ, which seems a bit different than Christ uniting us to himself, baptizing us in himself.

Paul is saying in 1 Cor. 12:13 that Christ baptized each of the Corinthians in the Holy Spirit *for*, or *with respect to* the church. All of the believers at Corinth had been baptized in the Holy Spirit, receiving innumerable spiritual gifts. The reason that they had been baptized in the Holy Spirit was so that they would be equipped to edify the local church at Corinth. When we understand that Paul is speaking here of a subsequent baptism which all the believers at Corinth experienced, not a universal conversion that

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<sup>31</sup> This insight can be credited to Brent Detwiler in his lecture *Interpreting 1 Corinthians 12:13*, given at the Sovereign Grace Ministries Pastors College, 05/04/2007. On this point, Detwiler provides the following footnote citation: “Dana, H.E. and Mantey, Julius R., *A Manual Grammar of the Greek New Testament*, pp. 101-102”.

all believers experience, it makes much better sense of the context of 1 Cor. 12, in which Paul is addressing their current charismatic practice.

If Paul was simply trying to draw their attention to their common *experience of regeneration*, it would have been inadequate to produce the kind of unity in the church he desired. “Of course we’ve all been saved,” a proud Corinthian could have said, “but look at the gifts *I’ve* been given *after being saved!*” No, Paul is informing them that all the gifts they have received *as believers, after being saved* have come from the same Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 12:1-11), and the empowering baptism of the Holy Spirit they experienced *as believers* was to give them gifts *for/with respect to the one body, the church* (εἰς ἓν σῶμα), not for their own benefit or exaltation. In other words, Christ baptizes believers in the Holy Spirit for the sake of the church, not for the sake of the individual believer.

2. Past tense of ‘baptize’: The verb for baptize, ἐβαπτίσθημεν, is in the aorist passive tense, indicating an action that happened to someone in the past. The assumption by Third Wave proponents is that Paul is making a theological statement about all believers. The present middle/passive (βαπτίζομεθα) would have read “in one Spirit we *are all baptized*” and made this point more clearly. Paul was intimately involved in the establishment of the church at Corinth, and it is very reasonable to think that he was aware that each member had been baptized in the Holy Spirit. His statements that they were all baptized in the Holy Spirit could simply refer to a common experience they had all shared early in their Christian life. In the early church it was the exception, not the norm, that someone would *not* have experienced a subsequent baptism of empowerment. Paul is simply stating the obvious when he says they have all been baptized in the Holy Spirit. What is profound about this statement, and challenging to the Corinthians, is not that they have all been baptized in the Holy Spirit, but that this baptism in the Holy Spirit is *to benefit the church*, not become a source of pride for the individual.

3. Paul’s analogy of the body: When Paul talks about the body of Christ, does he mean the mystical, universal body of Christ, or does he mean the local church at Corinth? This has bearings on whether or not the baptism can refer to regeneration or not, since although it is possible to be a Christian and not part of the Corinthian church, it is not possible to be a Christian and not a member of the mystical, universal church.

Wayne Grudem, a Third Wave proponent, says that the body of Christ in 1 Corinthians 12 cannot refer to the universal body of Christ which is referred to in Ephesians 1:22-23 and 4:15-16. His reason is this: in Paul’s imagery, Christ is not the head of the church, *we are*. “In this metaphor, Christ is not viewed as the head joined to the body, because the individual members are themselves the individual

parts of the head. Christ is in this metaphor the Lord who is “outside” of that body that represents the church is the one whom the church serves and worships.”<sup>32</sup> Remember that in 1 Corinthians 12, Paul says that they are mouths, eyes, feet and hands. How can Christ be the head if the members are the mouth, ears and eyes, constituting the head? Therefore, the body in view in 1 Corinthians 12 according to Grudem is not the universal body of Christ, but the local church at Corinth, of which all were members. Therefore, Paul cannot mean that they were saved when they were made part of the ‘one body’, or he must mean that *they were saved by virtue of being joined to the church at Corinth*. This would mean that members of the ‘churches’ at Ephesus and Thessalonica had qualitatively different experiences of conversion, perhaps not being saved at all!

Paul is not saying “you were saved by becoming members of the church at Corinth.” 1 Corinthians 12:13 means, “You were all baptized in the Holy Spirit and equipped with spiritual gifts to function as members of Corinth, for the unity of the church at Corinth, not to serve yourselves and divide the church at Corinth.” So the baptism in the Holy Spirit here is *constitutive*, but not in the sense that the universal body of Christ is being assembled. It is a constitutive baptism in the sense that it provided them with complementary gifts whereby they could be joined to one another as a local expression of the church in Corinth. Therefore, to exercise their gifts in a divisive way neglected the very reason for which they were given, *to unite and join them together* and facilitate their local functionality.

There is no verse outside of 1 Corinthians 12:13 that directly speaks of a baptism in the Holy Spirit in non-charismatic terms. Yet many have tried to use this verse to establish precedence for a non-charismatic baptism of regeneration, neglecting the fact that it occurs in the middle of one of the most prolifically charismatic chapters in the Bible. The message of 1 Corinthians 12:13 is this: *all of you were baptized in the Holy Spirit and received consequent gifts of the Spirit (i.e. tongues, etc) so that you would exercise those gifts to serve the church, not yourselves*. God had the needs of the Corinthian church in mind when he gave each one the gift of the Holy Spirit and its resultant spiritual gifts, baptizing them in the Holy Spirit *eis*—into, for and with respect to—the local body, not *eis* themselves!

#### **D. John 20: empowerment, or belief?**

John 20:22 reads in the ESV: “And when he had said this he breathed on them and said to them, ‘Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you withhold forgiveness from any, it is withheld.’”

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<sup>32</sup> *Systematic Theology*, Wayne Grudem, p. 858

The temptation for Third Wave proponents must be to view this as an empowerment for mission similar to that which was received at Pentecost. The argument is made that Jesus is giving them the Holy Spirit to comfort them until Pentecost.<sup>33</sup> Peter would speak to the 120 believers in Acts 1, explaining why Jesus had to go away in order to fulfill scripture, and they would choose Matthias to replace Judas. This endowment of the Holy Spirit given by Jesus in John 20, it is argued, is a temporary equipping for preliminary work that would need to be done before the full manifestation came at Pentecost. Peter speaking to the 120 is seen as evidence that this giving of the Holy Spirit was to equip him with boldness for the intermediary tasks between the ascension and Pentecost.

There are two possibilities for what actually occurred in John 20. First, the Holy Spirit regenerated the disciples' hearts and made them authentic regenerate believers. Second, the Spirit was given in a purely charismatic way, empowering them for intermediate service between the ascension and Pentecost.

What is at stake here? Much for the Third Wave position, and little for the traditional Pentecostal position. If first case is true, and this was regeneration, then it becomes increasingly difficult to maintain the baptism of the Spirit in Acts 2 is synonymous with conversion, because John 20 occurs chronologically prior to Acts 2. The disciples, under the scenario would have already been converted, and would now be receiving another gift of the Holy Spirit for anointed service. If the second scenario holds, and this is a temporary charismatic endowment, then the moment of conversion for the disciples is still unclear, and Luke's ambiguity regarding the conversion remains subservient to his focus on empowerment as the predominant meaning of the phrase *baptism in the Holy Spirit*.

Commentators are divided here, although the best view seems to be purported by Kostenberger, who notes the connection between John 20:22 and Genesis 2:7, when God “‘breathes his Spirit into Adam at creation, which constitutes as a living being.’ Here, at the occasion of commissioning of his disciples, Jesus constitutes them as the new messianic community in anticipation of the outpouring of the Spirit subsequent to ascension.”<sup>34</sup> Many commentators agree on this <sup>35</sup> and it seems to be the best treatment of the text. John sees Jesus' giving of the Spirit as breathing new life into them. Not only does this, in my view, most easily reconciled with Luke's pneumatology, particularly his use of 'baptism in the

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<sup>33</sup> This argument, for example, is made on page 3 of the document *The Holy Spirit, found online* [http://www.rmni.org/teaching\\_papers/The%20Holy%20Spirit.pdf](http://www.rmni.org/teaching_papers/The%20Holy%20Spirit.pdf)

<sup>34</sup> *John: Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament*, Andreas J. Kostenberger, p. 575.

<sup>35</sup> Morris, Barret, R. Brown, Witherington, Keener and Whitacre are all cited by Kostenberger as having seen similar connections between John 20:22 and Genesis 2:7.

Spirit' and the Acts 2 narrative, it also flows most consistently with the narrative of John 20, as we will hope to show.

The effect of this reception of the Spirit in John 20:22 can be seen in the story of 'doubting' Thomas. There are two parallel incidents: Jesus appearing to the ten disciples, excluding Thomas (20:19-23) and his appearing to Thomas (20:24-26). There is a degree of parallelism between the two short passages: in both cases the disciples are gathered in the room with the doors locked and Jesus appears to show his hands and feet. In the first case the ten disciples are present and Jesus, after showing his hands and feet breathes his Spirit into them. In the second case all the disciples including Thomas are there and Jesus shows his hands and feet to Thomas, upon which time 'doubting' Thomas believes (20:28-29).

We learn what happened when Jesus breathed the Spirit into the disciples by examining the story of Thomas, and asking: *what did Thomas not receive because of his absence when Jesus breathed the Spirit into them?* Did he not receive empowerment, or did he not receive regeneration? What was the difference between Thomas and the rest of the disciples by virtue of this reception of the Spirit? The difference between Thomas and the disciples was not that all were believers yet Thomas was un-empowered, whereas the others were empowered. The difference between Thomas and the rest of the disciples was that Thomas was an unbeliever, yet the remaining disciples were believers, having seen Christ. This can be shown by the following elements of John's narrative:

First, the disciples were still "inside" with the doors still "locked" (20:26). If the disciples had received a supernatural empowerment for works of service (albeit in lesser form than Pentecost) might they have at least unlocked the doors? They were locked in the room when Christ came the first time (20:19) and were still locked in the same room eight days later when Christ came back for Thomas, hardly the emboldened group we see in Acts 2. If the breathing of the Spirit was for power in service it took them a little while to realize their newfound strength.

Second, the problem with Thomas was not that he needed to be empowered for witness. His problem was that he was a hardened unbeliever. His hard-hearted defiant statement "I will never believe" (20:25) is even more amazing because it is made while being evangelized by eyewitnesses to the resurrection, he himself being a disciple of Christ during his earthly ministry. John does not portray Thomas as an un-empowered believer who needs to be strengthened. Thomas is an unbeliever living in rejection of the basic tenants of the gospel, denying that Jesus even rose from the dead. It was not until Jesus personally appeared to him that his heart received illumination and he was able to say in believing faith, "My Lord and my God" (20:28).

Third, Jesus does not tell Thomas to be strengthened and empowered, but commands him “do not disbelieve, but believe” (20:27). Thomas, as well as the rest of the disciples, believed when they saw Christ (“have you believed because you have seen me?” 20:29). The breathing of the Holy Spirit into the disciples is tied with belief in the resurrection. Those who had received the Holy Spirit breathed into them believed that Christ had indeed risen. Thomas, who had not been breathed into, was a hardened unbeliever, refusing to accept the good news of Christ’s resurrection. This is the difference that the breathing of the Holy Spirit made: the difference between being a testifying believer, sharing the gospel with Thomas (20:25) and a hardened unbeliever vowing never to believe.

Fourth, in John’s gospel to believe is to receive eternal life. Immediately after the account of Thomas, he tells us he wrote his gospel so that his readers might “believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name” (20:31). Jesus says to Thomas, and to all who would hear the gospel preached, “Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed” (20:29). Those who hear the gospel have the choice to believe the testimony of the apostles even though they have not seen the risen Christ and have the Holy Spirit breathed into them by Christ to bring them new life, or to doubt like Thomas and refuse to believe because they have not seen, not having the new life of the Spirit breathed into them. John tells us that believing brings eternal life (20:31), which is Spirit of God breathed into us by Christ. By believing in the gospel, the good news of Christ’s resurrection, and having the Holy Spirit breathed into them, every follower of Christ thereafter would receive eternal life as the disciples in the upper room. By the end of John’s gospel, all the disciples had received new life and thus fulfilled the purpose of his gospel, which was written so that all who read it, like the disciples, would believe and thereby receive eternal life in Jesus’ name.<sup>36</sup>

The disciples, having been regenerated (received new life) in John 20:22, obviously remained that way until Pentecost. Therefore, what happened to them at Pentecost was not a work of regeneration<sup>37</sup>, but in keeping with Luke’s pneumatology, a work of empowerment for witness and service.

### **E. What does it mean to be ‘filled’?**

There are nine verses in the New Testament in which someone is said to be filled with the Holy Spirit (Luke 1:15, 41, 67; Acts 2:4; 4:8, 31; 9:17; 13:9, 52) and one command to be filled with the Holy

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<sup>36</sup> “Jesus himself was ‘born’ of the Spirit in the womb of the Virgin Mary; the disciples were born of the Spirit in the room where Jesus breathed upon them and said, ‘Receive the Holy Spirit’ (John 20:22). In Jesus’ case, of course, it was generation; in the disciples’ it was regeneration. But for both, being born of the Spirit preceded the coming of the Spirit” *Renewal Theology*, vol. 2, J. Rodman Williams, p. 174.

<sup>37</sup> Wayne Grudem acknowledges that “the disciples were ‘born again’ long before Pentecost” *Systematic Theology*, p. 769

Spirit (Ephesians 5:18). Other examples could be found of similar experiences, such as Jesus rejoicing in the Holy Spirit (Luke 10:21), but we will limit ourselves to examining the ten aforementioned verses. I believe we can divide these verses into three categories:

1. Preparing for the birth of Christ: Jesus was the anointed one, the Messiah. Surrounding his birth and that of his forerunner John the Baptist, there was a flurry of charismatic activity that led to a number of people being filled with the Holy Spirit. John the Baptist was said to be filled while still in the womb (Luke 1:15) which led to Elizabeth being filled and blessing Mary (Luke 1:41). Zechariah was filled with the Spirit and prophesied about John the Baptist and the coming of Christ (Luke 1:67). Although charismatic activity saturates the life and ministry of Christ in Luke and all the gospels, after Luke 1 we don't read explicitly of someone being filled with the Holy Spirit again until Pentecost.

2. Fillings associated with the Spirit baptism: Two of the references (Acts 2:4, 9:17) occur in texts describing the baptism in the Holy Spirit. The disciples at Pentecost, upon receiving the promised gift of the Holy Spirit from the Father, were "all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance" (2:4). After being converted, Paul was baptized in the Holy Spirit when Ananias commanded him to "be filled with the Holy Spirit" (9:17). Although there are not explicit references to being filled with the Spirit, we can safely assume that the outpourings of the Holy Spirit on the Samaritans (Acts 8:17), Cornelius' household (Acts 10:44) and Ephesians (Acts 19:6) can also be described as fillings with the Spirit, since Peter said that they received the Holy Spirit just as the disciples at Pentecost (Acts 10:47). We learn three things about these initial fillings from the Luke-Acts narrative:

*First, fillings occurring with the initial baptism in the Holy Spirit are dramatic and accompanied by obvious, outward manifestations.* At Pentecost there was a dramatic "mighty rushing wind" (Acts 2:2) that came into the upper room. In Samaria, the reception was obvious enough that a pagan magician noticed and wanted to buy the power (Acts 8:19). Paul's dramatic baptism included "immediately" regaining sight (Acts 9:18). Speaking in tongues was the most common initial evidence of the baptism in the Holy Spirit. Tongues of fire rested on the disciples at Pentecost, and they began to speak in unknown languages (Acts 2:2-4). The Gentile believers with Cornelius were heard "speaking in tongues and extolling God" (Acts 10:46). There was no uncertainty as to who had received the baptism in the Holy Spirit. The signs were outward and obvious, even at times to the point of giving the appearance of drunkenness (Acts 2:15).

*Second, the initial reception of the Spirit comes through prayer and waiting:* The disciples were told to wait in the city until they were clothed with power (Luke 24:49). It was as they were all gathered and waiting together that the Holy Spirit came (Acts 2:1). Paul was waiting at the house on Straight Street, and we

can safely assume he was praying to his new Lord (Acts 9:17). Cornelius was said to have prayed continually (Acts 10:2), which probably accounts in part for the readiness of his household to receive Peter's message. Those who wait on the Lord and pray for the Holy Spirit will receive the gift. It may require extended periods of waiting, or it may come suddenly. In either case, Christians should earnestly pray and ask God for the gift, in faith that the Father delights to give the Holy Spirit to those who ask (Luke 11:13).

*Third, the initial reception of the baptism in the Holy Spirit often comes through the laying on of hands:* Paul received the Holy Spirit when Ananias laid his hands on him (Acts 9:17). The Spirit was given when Paul laid his hands on the Ephesians (Acts 19:6). This may have been Timothy's experience as well, receiving the gift of the Spirit through the laying on of hands (2 Timothy 1:6).<sup>38</sup> The Holy Spirit may fall and baptize believers without the laying on of hands, which seems to be the case with Cornelius in Acts 10, but this can also be imparted by faith through the laying on of hands. When Christians lead unbelievers to the Lord, or encounter believers who have not received the baptism in the Holy Spirit, we should pray for these brothers and sisters, laying our hands on them so that God can give them the gift of the Holy Spirit.

*In summary,* the baptism in the Holy Spirit is accompanied by an initial filling of the Spirit, accompanied by obvious manifestations, typically speaking in tongues. It may be preceded by prayer in which we ask God to give us the gift of the Holy Spirit (Luke 11:13). Although it requires faith to receive the gift, faith is not needed to know if one has received the gift. In other words, faith is the "conviction of things not seen" (Hebrews 11:1). The baptism in the Holy Spirit is very plainly seen. So faith is operative in the receiving of the Holy Spirit rather than in confirming legitimate reception.

3. Fillings associated with witness: The third category of 'fillings' with the Holy Spirit occurs in the lives of people who have already been baptized in the Holy Spirit. These fillings are not associated with the baptism itself, but they occur at various times during the believer's life, closely connected with the work of ministry and preaching the gospel. We read about Peter and John being taken before the

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<sup>38</sup> This may not refer to the baptism in the Holy Spirit, but some other gift. The verse reads: "For this reason I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on my hands, for God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control" (2 Timothy 1:6). I am inclined to believe that Paul laid his hands on Timothy, as was his custom, so that he would receive the baptism in the Holy Spirit. A couple of indicators in the verse point to this. First, Paul says "the gift of God" not the gift from God, which could mean the gift was God himself, the reception of God the Spirit. Thus, fanning into flame the gift of God would mean fanning to flame the Spirit within him, similar to Paul's command in Ephesians 5:18. Second, the gift was received through the laying on of hands, which is very similar to many other accounts of the baptism in the Holy Spirit. Third, Paul describes this gift as "a spirit...of power." I believe this could be translated with a capital 'S' referring to the Holy Spirit, who is a spirit of power. *The 'gift of God' himself was a 'spirit' of power received through the laying on of hands. This seems remarkably similar to Paul's customary impartation of the gift of the Holy Spirit.*



elders and scribes in Jerusalem, and Peter “filled with the Holy Spirit” spoke to them about Christ (Acts 4:8). Was John filled with the Holy Spirit? The text does not say, but it does say that Peter was filled and the result of that filling was bold witness. This theme of boldness carries throughout the rest of the chapter, when the believers were gathered together to pray for boldness. In response to these prayers “the place in which they were gathered together was shaken, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit” and the result was that “they continued to speak the word of God with boldness” (Acts 4:31). Like Peter, Paul was also “filled with the Holy Spirit” (Acts 13:9) when he prophesied that God would make Elymas the magician blind. There are several things we can learn about the post-baptism fillings associated with witness:

*First, being filled with the Holy Spirit is not a purely devotional experience:* modern day charismatics may unduly internalize the experience of being filled with the Holy Spirit. In none of these examples were the men filled as a result of reading the word of God in personal quiet times. These fillings occurred spontaneously on the mission field and resulted in more than personal edification. They resulted in bold witness for Peter (Acts 4:8) and the believers (Acts 4:31) and bold prophesy and miraculous activity for Paul (Acts 13:9). Being filled with the Spirit is more than sensing the presence of God in worship or hearing his voice through scripture. To be filled with the Spirit in this sense involves feeling an unquenchable surge of inner spiritual power rising up within you, compelling you to witness and to attempt and succeed in doing the impossible and miraculous.

*Second, being filled in this way is not a normal melodramatic experience:* it is often said that both Pentecostals and those who hold the Third Wave position should both pursue continual fillings with the Holy Spirit. I think this is true, but must be qualified. What do we mean by ‘continual’ fillings. Do we mean *being filled in a continual way?* I think a misconception can arise that being filled with the Spirit is something that can or should happen every day. But this filling for witness with dramatic consequences does not seem to be something that is an every day experience. It’s more dramatic and less often than we might think. Being filled with the Holy Spirit is a charismatic experience in the sense that it typically leads to the exercise of some gift, not merely the edification of the believer who was filled.

This is where our view of the baptism in the Holy Spirit affects our expectation concerning subsequent fillings with the Spirit. If we believe that the baptism in the Holy Spirit *automatically* happens (at conversion) even if it is not dramatic or of any noticeable consequence, then it is very easy to expect subsequent fillings to be more or less automatic even without any dramatic evidence. Everybody knew when Paul or Peter was *filled* with the Holy Spirit, even as it was obvious when believers were *baptized* in

the Holy Spirit. There is a difference between being *edified in your spirit* (the purpose of tongues) and being *filled with the Holy Spirit*. I think believers can confuse spiritual edification with being filled with the Spirit. You may be more or less edified spiritually on a daily basis as you pray, sing, read scripture, meet with other Christians, hear the word preached and meditate on God's word. This is not synonymous with being filled with the Holy Spirit who at times rushes upon Christians like a wind, compelling them to do extraordinary things in supernatural strength. Believers who experience this third category of filling associated with empowerment can point to the most recent occasions when it happened and what resulted.

4. Fillings associated with joy: This is not to say that all fillings with the Spirit after the initial baptism are *outward* or *missional*. There are times when God seems to pour out his Spirit simply to provide an inner experience of refreshment and joy. Jesus "rejoiced in the Holy Spirit" (Luke 10:21). Luke tells us of a time when "the disciples were filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit" (Acts 13:52). Joy is a fruit of the Spirit which should be cultivated daily. However, there are times when God grants *charismatic joy*, Spirit-enabled seasons of unusual manifestations of joy. Of course Jesus always had joy at every step he took in his life, for it was the "joy that was set before him" (Hebrews 12:2) that he endured the cross. Yet there was also an event in which Jesus celebrated with usual joy *in the Holy Spirit*. The disciples, likewise, continually experienced the ongoing joy of salvation (Galatians 5:22, Psalm 51:12), yet were also spontaneously filled with joy in the Holy Spirit (Acts 13:52). We should cultivate joy daily, and yet expect various seasons in which the Holy Spirit will fill us with unusual, intense and liberating expressions of joy by the Spirit of power that lives within us. Let us daily edify ourselves by reading scripture and praying in the Spirit, expecting occasionally to be rushed upon by the Spirit of God, filled for joy and for witness.

### **Conclusion:**

I have not gone about this subject the conventional way, building a case upon key subsequence passages in Acts, such as Acts 2, 8, 9, 10 and 19. It is fairly well established and acknowledged by cessationists and Third Wave positions alike that a pattern of subsequence exists in Acts. The question then becomes whether or not that pattern is normative for today.

I have attempted to show that Luke intends this pattern to continue, by virtue of Peter's paradigmatic promise in Acts 2:38-39, and that these promises cannot refer to regeneration if we properly understand Luke's pneumatology and interpret the promises about the baptism in the Holy Spirit according to his charismatically oriented understanding of the Holy Spirit.

Much more could be said about the development of this charismatic theology throughout the Epistles. Much of Paul's writings, such as 1 Corinthians 12:13, which have been traditionally understood in reformed and cessationist circles in anti-subsequence terms, are actually more *naturally read* and accurately understood in pro-charismatic terms. Even though Paul's pneumatology has different characteristics than Luke's (a broader emphasis, including regeneration), both acknowledge a subsequent baptism of empowerment. This baptism is acknowledged in Paul (1 Corinthians 12:13, Ephesians 1:13-14), although it is not as commonly featured.

For future reading on this subject, I would recommend *Joy Unspeakable*, by D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones, *The Charismatic Theology of St. Luke*, by Roger Stronstad, and *Mighty in Word and Deed*, by James B. Shelton. Of course volume 2 of *Renewal Theology* by J. Rodman Williams is a classic must-read as well.

I hope that this exploration of Luke-Acts will assist the reader in reading the Bible with new eyes and an *expectant* heart, engaging the text and engaging God, experiencing all that God has made available through Christ to the believer, by virtue of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. May the church continue to suffer the influence of Pentecost.

## **Appendix A: Pentecostal pneumatology as a Trinitarian application**

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### **A. The conversion paradox**

I believe that Christians who have experienced the regenerating work of God can be described by the following paradox: *fully inhabited yet awaiting reception*. Christians are fully inhabited by the third Person of the Trinity at regeneration. Yet they may still await the reception of the full ministry of that same third Person to arrive in such a manner that has little to do with their conversion.

These two truths, the inhabitation (or indwelling) at conversion, and the promise of further reception (or subsequent empowering) are two truths that may seem paradoxical, yet are both supported scripturally and should be equally upheld without attempts to bring reconciliation that the scripture does not provide. Scripture is full of these paradoxes, and we've grown comfortable with many of them (i.e. sovereignty and human responsibility). We can grow comfortable with this scriptural paradox as well: *after conversion a Christian is both fully inhabited yet promised future reception of the Spirit*.

So, we have two questions to ask here:

1. Is this paradox possible?
2. If possible, to which of these realities does the phrase "baptism in the Holy Spirit" apply?

### **B. Paradox explained by the doctrine of the Trinity**

Q. Is this paradox even possible?

Is this paradox of being fully inhabited while awaiting a promised reception even scripturally possible? I believe that it is not only possible, but also an appropriate application of the doctrine of the Trinity. First, however, let us review what it is that we are claiming:

1. Christians receive the Holy Spirit in all of his personal fullness at conversion.
2. Christians are promised further reception of the Holy Spirit after being saved.

This seems impossible. How can we await further reception of the Holy Spirit after we are saved, if we already received him fully when we are saved? One of the things that Pentecostals are accused of is

the belief that they are *more full* of the Spirit, having a greater measure of him than others, which leads to class Christianity and other problems.

But we should make a distinction here. There is a difference in the Trinity between the three persons and the roles that they play. Their *ministries*, we could say, are to be distinguished from their *nature*. We know from studying the orthodox doctrine of the Trinity that:

1. In nature, they are equal
2. In roles, they are different

So, are the Father, Son and Holy Spirit all equal? In terms of their nature, yes they are all equally God. Yet, in terms of what they do, no they are not equals. There are various degrees of authority and submission and different activities that each one uniquely performs. In theological terms this is called the difference between the ontological Trinity (nature) and economic Trinity (work and activity). We can think about each person of the Trinity in two different ways:

1. Personhood: each is equally God (ontological Trinity)
2. Ministry: each has different activities (economical Trinity)

We apply these categories in many different ways (such as the roles and relationships in marriage). I believe that we can apply it to our experience of God and the Spirit's Baptism as well. The question could be put this way: *do we receive the Spirit fully when we believe, or is there more to be received later?* I would answer by further clarifying what we mean by *fullness*. Thinking in Trinitarian categories, there are two possibilities of this fullness:

1. Personal fullness: being inhabited by the Spirit of God himself in all of his character, attributes and nature.
2. Ministerial fullness: experiencing the Holy Spirit fully engaging in every one of his divine responsibilities.

We receive the Spirit in *personal fullness* when we are saved, but we do not necessarily experience the *ministerial fullness* of the Spirit in our lives. He may fully inhabit our hearts without performing all of

his divine functions. So our paradox is explained: we are inhabited (personal fullness) and awaiting further reception (ministerial fullness). In other words, for a Christian to pray for more of the Spirit is fully appropriate if he is asking God who dwells in him personally to come in all of his ministerial fullness as well.

The difference between the ontological and economical trinity as applied to our experience of conversion is this: we fully receive the ontological Spirit without necessarily fully receiving the economical Spirit.

Here is my thesis and the reason why I belabor the point: ***applying the doctrine of the Trinity to this discussion about the baptism of the Spirit not only helps us justify the Pentecostal theology, but also alleviates some of the potential abuses of it.***

### **C. This results in Christocentric pneumatology**

Some may think that the Pentecostal position takes attention away from Christ and puts it on the things of the Spirit. Well, if we are thinking about it, quite the opposite is true. The Third Wave position says that we need Christ to save us, and that once he saves us, the Holy Spirit inhabits us both to sanctify us and empower us. The Pentecostal position goes a bit further.

While the Third Wave position says that Christ acts upon us to save us, and then by virtue of that we have life, sanctification, empowering, etc; my opinion is that Christ not only has the prerogative to put his Spirit in us, but he also has the prerogative to determine the limitations of what that Spirit does when he is in us, determining the times at which he should be released into the various aspects of his ministry.

It is a beautiful picture of the relationships and roles within the Trinity that the Holy Spirit does not always launch himself immediately into every aspect of his empowering ministry, as if the believer's heart were his own domain to be independently ruled apart from the Father or Son. No, the Spirit will inhabit our hearts, and while setting his hand to some of his tasks upon arrival, will not immediately engage in all of them, keeping one submissive eye on Christ to see when the Son, working on the faith of the inhabited believer, should at last bring that believer to a place of anticipation and say to the believer "be baptized in my Spirit" and then say to the Spirit "now empower this one!"

Pentecostals are stereotyped as being distracted from Christ by the Holy Spirit. This theology, however, is thoroughly Christocentric. Far from taking attention away from Christ and his work on the cross, it brings us back to both of them once again. Christ will not be upset with the believer who comes

to him and prays, “Jesus, you have saved me and I am utterly dependent on you for my salvation. But I am also totally needy of you for service as well. You must do a work to save me, and you must do a work to strengthen me. And while the former work is by far the most glorious, a small part of its glory is the way in which it positions me to receive this latter work, which I am now asking you for. So do this latter work. Baptize me in your Holy Spirit.”

Then you can be assured of God’s gracious disposition to answer that prayer, and give you the gift of the Holy Spirit, as Christ himself taught: “If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him” (Luke 11:13).

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