

# Receiving the Spirit

## *The New Testament Witness and Implications for Contemporary Faith*

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The purpose of this work is to explore what the Bible has to say about “Baptism in the Holy Spirit” and attempt a definitive statement on it as a doctrine and its place within Christian experience.

This work, though hopefully thorough, is not exhaustive. For the sake of brevity – which I’ve clearly missed – there are numerous areas I haven’t explored at all, most significantly the Old Testament expectation and promise of the coming of the Spirit of prophecy at the start of the messianic age.

The sections of this work are listed out below. I’ve started by attempting to categorise the spectrum of views on the subject, then moved on to examining the key texts in the New Testament, before returning to questions of how to synthesise this data into a ‘doctrine’.

I will argue that Baptism in the Holy Spirit is experiential; logically subsequent to regeneration though most naturally understood as part of conversion-initiation; basic Christianity, not an added extra for a spiritual elite; available to all without qualification or pre-condition; fundamentally about Christian assurance, but with eschatological, ecclesiological, missiological and charismatic significance following on from this; a fundamental internal sign of Christian faith, and external sign of Christian community; initiatory into a life of ongoing dramatic encounters; and to be expected, sort and enjoyed by all.

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# 1. The Spectrum of Views

There is a wide spectrum of views on what the phrase Baptism in the Holy Spirit refers to. A taxonomy of those different views is a difficult task, Malcom Kyte's paper tries to summarise everything into 4 viewpoints, and lumps a lot of people with different views together.

It isn't clear where, for example, Martyn Lloyd-Jones would fit within this, and it misses a lot of the difference between them. It's also historically reductionist. Baptism in the Holy Spirit was not an invention of the Pentecostal Movement. Several strands of teaching touch on it through history.<sup>1</sup>

Michael Eaton makes a clearer attempt that is more fitting historically, but has a tendency to lump a number of more modern variations together into large categories. As a result I have attempted my own taxonomy below.

I started by asking the following five questions.

1. Timing. When does it happen? Is it something that happens:
  - a. Immediately upon conversion
  - b. Subsequent to conversion, whether shortly after or a long time after. This would include those who feel the experience can be simultaneous, though isn't always
  - c. Concurrent with conversion, where receiving the Spirit is logically subsequent to conversion, but always simultaneous, so much so that it's sometimes spoken of as conversion. Adherents would strongly disassociate themselves from Pentecostal teaching on subsequence
2. Nature. Is it a conscious experience that you would know if it had happened, or an unconscious event to be taken on faith?
3. Means. Does this happen by faith in Christ, or through some other means, e.g. the sacraments?
4. Purpose. What is the experience for? Some of the most common positions include:
  - a. Regeneration – it is what makes you born again
  - b. Service – including various spiritual gifts, it gives you power to fulfil your calling. May be a more or less supernatural interpretation
  - c. Witness – zeal and boldness to speak of Jesus to others
  - d. Assurance – deep heart-felt knowledge of your position in Christ. Can cross over with the other.
5. Signs. How do you know it's happened? Varies widely depending on the answer to the event's purpose. Varies from specific gifts (e.g. tongues), to gifts generally, assurance, holiness, boldness, everything in between, or nothing at all.

I have then attempted to assign the most obvious name, mostly taken from Kyte or Eaton's work, to each view that answers the following questions differently, while trying to not be historically reductionist. The following list suffers from many of the same problems as the others mentioned, which are endemic to this type of activity, but hopefully is a helpful roadmap to the terrain before we look at what the Bible has to say on these questions.

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<sup>1</sup> Eaton, *Baptism with the Spirit*, 13

## Classical Pentecostalism

*An Experience, Subsequent to conversion, by means of Faith for various Service, demonstrated by Tongues.*

The 'original' view on Baptism in the Spirit in the modern era.<sup>2</sup> A separate experience is possible for all and should be encouraged. This is subsequent and distinct from regeneration, and will always be accompanied by the gift of tongues. This would have been the prevalent view until the Charismatic movement in 1960s moved the doctrine out of the denominational bounds it had for the rest of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century.<sup>3</sup> The purpose of receiving the Spirit is typically described as to give power for mission and service.<sup>4</sup>

## Neo-Pentecostalism

*An Experience, Subsequent to conversion, by means of Faith typically for Service with various signs.*

Very similar to the classic Pentecostal view, but found among charismatics of numerous denominations. It tended to characterise the new churches birthed by the charismatic movement with those remaining within denominations more likely to adopt the Subsequent Release viewpoint to describe their experiences.<sup>5</sup> Those new churches were, at least in their inception, birthed from this doctrine.<sup>6</sup>

The primary difference to the classic Pentecostal view is that there is not a definitive expectation of the gift of tongues as *the* sign of the gift of the spirit. It is more likely to be described as *a* sign of the gift. While tongues are actively encouraged, other signs can accompany receiving the spirit.<sup>7</sup>

This view would typically have an understanding of Spirit-baptism that uses Acts as the lens to interpret the epistles.<sup>8</sup>

## Subsequent Release

*Immediate on conversion, Unconscious followed by later Conscious experience, by means of Faith for a variety of purposes, usually Witness and with various non-specific signs, most often zeal.*

A primarily Anglican attempt to integrate charismatic experience with the historic faith of the denominations of those experiencing it.<sup>9</sup> Kyte describes it as "integrative" for this reason, but this isn't a helpful taxonomy as his description includes the theology of James Dunn, which is substantially different from what is found in most Charismatic Anglican contexts.

The term Baptism in the Spirit is typically avoided as it's seen as emotive and divisive.<sup>10</sup>

The essential idea is that the gift of the Spirit is given at conversion like the classic Reformed view. However, in order to release the 'latent potential', a second experience is needed.<sup>11</sup> This experience

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<sup>2</sup> Dunn, *Baptism in the Holy Spirit*, 2. It can first be found in Topeka Bible College around 1900, but the movement's routes are most naturally charted to the Azusa Street outpouring in 1906.

<sup>3</sup> Kyte, 'Different views', 1

<sup>4</sup> Williams, *A Theological Pilgrimage*

<sup>5</sup> Kyte, 'Different views', 2

<sup>6</sup> Hosier, *Christ's Radiant Church*, 87

<sup>7</sup> Kyte, 'Different views', 1

<sup>8</sup> Kyte, 'Different views', 2

<sup>9</sup> Kyte, 'Different views', 2, Eaton, *Baptism with the Spirit*, 31

<sup>10</sup> Kyte, 'Different views', 2

<sup>11</sup> Eaton, *Baptism with the Spirit*, 32

is essentially equivalent to the Pentecostal Baptism in the Holy Spirit, but instead is described as releasing a gift which is already given.<sup>12</sup>

This view developed as a typically Anglican *via media* among those experiencing Charismatic renewal, but for whom the pastoral or theological implications of the experiences they were having were untenable.<sup>13</sup> It is, if I may, a domestication of the experiences some were having. It also stops the division that can be caused between “haves” and “have nots” by making the important moment the one that all Christians have experienced, but unlike the Classic Reformed view being open to seek further experiences that bring substantial change in a believer’s life.

It often appeals to the theology of James Dunn as a theological grounding for its ideas, which will be why Kyte considered them the same view, but this tends to show a misunderstanding of what Dunn argues. There is a substantial adoption of Dunn’s view that Spirit baptism is central in the process of conversion, but without embracing all of his conclusions.<sup>14</sup>

This view would typically have an understanding of Spirit baptism that uses the epistles, especially 1 Corinthians 12.13, as a lens for interpreting Acts.

Practically speaking this approach can work

I would argue that this position arose as an attempt to reconcile charismatic experiences with a theology that doesn’t allow difference or perceived ‘deficiency’ in believers. It’s a very Anglican doctrine, the *via media* sits at its heart. There’s much to commend it, and when brothers and sisters encourage dynamic experiences for all believers, and initiate new believers into experiential Christianity at the point of their response to the gospel I have little to critique in terms of practice. However, I think that this position tends its adherents practice away from the New Testament. I find it to be a very frustrating halfway house.

### **Subsequent Gifting**

*Immediate on conversion, Unconscious followed by later by confirmatory conscious experience by means of Faith for Power with no immediate signs, later signified by use of the Gifts*

This is associated with Vineyard and the Third Wave of the Spirit.<sup>15</sup> The Spirit is received at conversion, but subsequent experiences should be sought for spiritual gifts.<sup>16</sup> Very similar to the subsequent release view, but primarily associated with more charismatic churches, and more likely to seek a conscious (or many conscious) gifting experiences subsequent to conversion.<sup>17</sup>

This view would often be clear that a conscious experience is required, but the Spirit already indwells all believers due to the way the Spirit was poured out on the church at Pentecost. The

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<sup>12</sup> Pawson pejoratively describes this as the ‘time-bomb’ theory. He has little time for it. Pawson, *Jesus Baptises in One Holy Spirit*, x

<sup>13</sup> Kyte, ‘Different views’, 2-3

<sup>14</sup> Kyte, ‘Different views’, 3

<sup>15</sup> Thiselton, *Hermeneutics of Doctrine*, 440. Thiselton considers third wave thinking to be a necessary corrective (‘a more measured reflection’) to the maverick aberration of neo-Pentecostalism. He was much nicer in person. (439).

<sup>16</sup> E.g. John Wimber, “It comes at conversion ... Conversion and Holy Spirit baptism are simultaneous experiences. The born-again experience is the consummate charismatic experience.” Quoted in Storms, ‘Baptism of the Holy Spirit – Part I’.

<sup>17</sup> Kyte, ‘Different views’, 4. Kyte includes this within his broader ‘integrative’ view.

subsequent conscious experience is an empowering for ministry. The focus here is on Jesus' ministry as a model for believers, instead of trying to replicate the experiences in Acts 2.<sup>18</sup>

Stackhouse characterised the view as divorcing charismatic experience from theology. The theology is essentially the same as the 'subsequent release' view, but the expectation of experience and power is often substantially different.<sup>19</sup>

### **Sacramental Release**

*A variety of views on timing, Unconscious by means of the Sacraments for Power with Various signs*

Very similar to subsequent release, but held among 'higher' churches, (e.g. Romans Catholics, Anglo-Catholics, Eastern Orthodox, Lutherans). The gift of the spirit is received through the sacraments, either baptism or confirmation, so this may or may not be the point at which the individual would be considered regenerate. This is present in the very early church, a link can be found in the Epistle of Barnabas, 2 Clement and the Shepherd of Hermas,<sup>20</sup> all of which are second or third generation Christian documents. There is also some evidence in Irenaeus, but this is less clear.<sup>21</sup>

The supernatural gifts are given through these sacraments as well, but sometimes they need to be released by a later experience. This is what is happening in the 'Baptism of the Spirit'.<sup>22</sup> Baptism in the Spirit would be rejected as a term by most, because the church was baptised in the Spirit at Pentecost, but that experience is then extended to others via the sacrament of baptism and continually experienced via the sacraments.<sup>23</sup> This is necessarily a non-experiential view, though there is an openness to later experiences.<sup>24</sup>

The Roman Catholic Church has pronounced that the dramatic charismatic experiences that some Catholics began to have during the charismatic renewal was a renewal of the sacramental graces that they had already received through the sacraments.<sup>25</sup>

### **Seal of the Spirit**

*Subsequent to conversion, Conscious by means of Faith for Assurance and demonstrated by that Assurance*

Particularly associated with Martyn Lloyd-Jones, but with a rich history within the English Puritan movement.<sup>26</sup> Eaton argues at some length that Lloyd-Jones' doctrine is largely that of Thomas Goodwin (1600 – 1680).<sup>27</sup>

Receiving the Spirit is conscious and subsequent to conversion, this has the effect of sealing the believer, providing them with assurance that what has already happened to them is true. It moves

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<sup>18</sup> Kyte, 'Different views', 5

<sup>19</sup> Kyte, 'Different views', 5

<sup>20</sup> Eaton, *Baptism with the Spirit*, 18

<sup>21</sup> Eaton, *Baptism with the Spirit*, 19

<sup>22</sup> Kyte, 'Different views', 5.

<sup>23</sup> Kyte, 'Different views', 5

<sup>24</sup> Eaton, *Baptism with the Spirit*, 19

<sup>25</sup> Kyte, 'Different views', 5

<sup>26</sup> Eaton, *Baptism with the Spirit*, 29

<sup>27</sup> Eaton, *Baptism with the Spirit*, 17, 82-93, 161-190

one from being logically and syllogistically a son of God to experientially a son of God.<sup>28</sup> It is to be sort by all believers and is the basic expectation of Christian life.

### **Classic Reformed**

*Immediate on conversion, Unconscious, by means of Faith for Salvation with no signs*

Receiving the Spirit is synonymous with regeneration, it is the act by which a believer is united with Christ and made alive by the Spirit. It is primarily something done by the Spirit to you, and while the Bible speaks of us 'having' the Spirit, this isn't a particularly active metaphor in this theological outlook.

For example Richard Gaffin says, "the gift of the Spirit is a unique epochal event, part of the once-for-all accomplishment of redemption (*historica salutis*) rather than as parts of its ongoing application (*ordo salutis*) ... [it is] not capable of being repeated or serving as a model for individual Christian experience."<sup>29</sup>

There is no future expectation of experience. Some reformed traditions do have an experiential aspect, especially those associated with the English Puritans and their ideas of 'experimental' religion. This begins to move towards an understanding nearer the Seal of the Spirit, but that view was not universally held by all who looked for future experience.

The experiences in Acts are probably elements of the initial spread of the gospel, and so correlate with Acts 2 as unique and unrepeatable.<sup>30</sup>

### **Conversion-Initiation**

*An Experience Concurrent with conversion, perhaps synonymous. By means of Faith, for Salvation with various visible signs.*

This view is especially associated with James Dunn and some modern Pentecostal scholarship.<sup>31</sup> Dunn has argued that the descriptions of receiving the Spirit in Acts are conversion experiences. This has been jumped on by various scholars to support their arguments against a subsequent receiving of the Spirit without understanding what he's saying. Dunn is firm that these experiences are conscious, experiential and essentially similar to modern Pentecostal baptism in the Holy Spirit.<sup>32</sup> However, this is not a 'subsequent' experience, but part of the 'conversion-initiation' package. It is required to consider oneself saved. If you haven't received it, you can't call yourself a Christian.<sup>33</sup>

Pentecostal scholars have then tempered this, by still refuting subsequence, and affirming that the gift of the Spirit is part of conversion-initiation, though not the part that regenerates. They would expect most believers to receive this at conversion, and some shortly after.

This is not dissimilar to an understanding of baptism as part of salvation, but not as required for regeneration. Frustratingly these scholars do not often carefully define terms like 'conversion' or

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<sup>28</sup> Eaton, *Baptism with the Spirit*, 29

<sup>29</sup> Gaffin, *Perspectives on Pentecost*, 22-31

<sup>30</sup> Eaton, *Baptism with the Spirit*, 19

<sup>31</sup> Storms thinks you can also put Whitfield in a similar camp as he had a one-stage view but an expectation of dramatic conversion experience. Storms, 'Baptism of the Holy Spirit – Part I'.

<sup>32</sup> Eaton, *Baptism with the Spirit*, 25

<sup>33</sup> Eaton, *Baptism with the Spirit*, 25

‘salvation’, and there are a variety of different positions on exactly when an experience should be expected.

This view doesn’t seem to have penetrated much beyond the academy because Dunn’s implications for the church are daunting. It would imply that a sizeable portion of those currently worshipping in Christian churches aren’t converted, or that we shouldn’t expect Acts to speak to our contemporary experience at all. Dunn’s view of scripture allows him to take the second option, but few have followed him.

Many use his research without following it to its logical, and in my opinion required, conclusion.

This is also the view of the early John Wesley, who saw sealing as synonymous with receiving the ‘Spirit of adoption’, the ‘full assurance of faith’ and the day of his new birth.<sup>34</sup> The later Wesley held something closer to view that bears his name, this was after he’d encountered teaching which distinguished the receipt of the Spirit from conversion. He was deeply concerned that he may have told people they weren’t saved when they may have been, because they did not have assurance.<sup>35</sup>

### **Wesleyan Holiness**

*An Experience, Subsequent to conversion by means of Faith for Holiness and demonstrated by that Holiness*

Associated with the Wesleys and early Methodism; more because it grew out of Wesley’s doctrine of Christian perfection than because he taught it.<sup>36</sup> A subsequent experience is required that cleanses from sin and provides a step change in the individual’s sanctification. Sanctification is a process is rejected, and a sudden ‘Pentecostal’ sanctification is sought. It was to be received by tarrying.<sup>37</sup> Sometimes this means the individual has reached perfection, this is certainly felt to be possible. This position has become uncommon among British Charismatics today.

There is an unusual subset in the doctrine of F. B. Meyer (1847 – 1929), who disliked the tarrying of Keswick meetings and wished to appropriate the same power ‘without the tide of emotion’. He described it as a ‘post-conversion enduement of power which is non-experiential by nature’.<sup>38</sup> The confusing thing about his view is the description of his experience, which he presents as a model for others to follow, is gentle and quiet but still determinedly experiential.<sup>39</sup> After all, a post-conversion non-experiential event is impossible to know if you yourself have non-experientially experienced it.

### **Power for Witness**

*An Experience, Subsequent to conversion by means of Faith for Witness demonstrated by increased Zeal*

Particularly associated with D. L. Moody and R. A. Torrey. Torrey taught that, “Every regenerate person has the Holy Spirit, but not every regenerate person has what the Bible calls the ‘gift of the Holy Spirit’, or ‘the Baptism with the Holy Spirit’.”<sup>40</sup> Their practice was to expect it to be virtually synonymous with conversion.

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<sup>34</sup> Eaton, *Baptism with the Spirit*, 23

<sup>35</sup> Eaton, *Baptism with the Spirit*, 24

<sup>36</sup> Eaton, *Baptism with the Spirit*, 25

<sup>37</sup> Eaton, *Baptism with the Spirit*, 25

<sup>38</sup> Eaton, *Baptism with the Spirit*, 20

<sup>39</sup> c.f. Eaton, *Baptism with the Spirit*, 20-21

<sup>40</sup> Eaton, *Baptism with the Spirit*, 28

They taught, not that it would make everyone an evangelist, but that it was “power for the work to which God has called them.”<sup>41</sup> While it seemed they primarily spoke of the power to witness, there is substantial crossover with the neo-Pentecostal view in that for some it would be power for any service. There was no link with the *charismata* or to sealing or assurance, this is the primary difference to the neo-Pentecostal view.<sup>42</sup>

Also found among some that might be considered “Neo-Pentecostals” the primary difference is the purpose of the gift and resulting signs expected. Moody was operating in what we would anachronistically perceive as a primarily non-charismatic context and didn’t anticipate the gift resulting in *charismata* or visible signs. His own experience was of a renewed effectiveness and boldness in evangelism, and this is what he therefore expected and taught for others.

### Summary Comments

The view I espoused in the introduction sits firmly within the neo-Pentecostal viewpoint, especially historically, but has been profoundly influenced by the Reformed Sealing view, and has been nuanced by interaction with the Conversion-Initiation view.

Kyte suggest that many of these views – any that fit within his ‘integrative’ and ‘sacramental’ groupings, which is most of them – are attempts to describe experiences in a way which allows those experiencing them to remain within traditional church structures. It is theology stemming from a pressure to compromise allowing institutions to stay together.<sup>43</sup> This seems to be a rather cynical understanding, especially for one who agrees with their conclusions! I’m sure that the pressure to do so was strong for others, but many will have reached their conclusions based on their measured decisions about what the Bible has to say.

Kyte also argues that neo-Pentecostal view, especially, lacks any theological rigour as it didn’t face internal challenge from within its movements. If it did, it too would have become integrative like those within traditional denominations.<sup>44</sup> He doesn’t comment but I would imagine that he would see the changing emphasis within groups like *Newfrontiers*, and the high profile attacks on Baptism in the Spirit from within them,<sup>45</sup> as being the fruition of his prediction. Pawson was able to comment in 1997 that the doctrine was falling ‘out of the picture’ in Charismatic circles.<sup>46</sup>

## 1.2 James Dunn & *Baptism in the Holy Spirit*

The debate on Baptism in the Spirit has been dominated for the last 40 years by the doctoral dissertation of James Dunn,<sup>47</sup> entitled *Baptism in the Holy Spirit*. His viewpoint is considered the strongest argument against the assertion that receiving the Spirit is subsequent to conversion, and its impact in the scholarly community “cannot be overstated.”<sup>48</sup> It’s used for that purpose by a great many scholars who would not agree with Dunn’s central thesis.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> Eaton, *Baptism with the Spirit*, 28

<sup>42</sup> C.f. Eaton, *Baptism with the Spirit*, 26-29

<sup>43</sup> Kyte, ‘Different views’, 7

<sup>44</sup> Kyte, ‘Different views’, 7

<sup>45</sup> E.g. Wilson, A., ‘3 Questions from Acts 19.1-17’ is an example of this.

<sup>46</sup> Pawson, *Jesus Baptises in One Holy Spirit*, xix, 10

<sup>47</sup> Atkinson, *Baptism in the Spirit*, 6-7

<sup>48</sup> Kane, *The Spirit of Christ*, 96

<sup>49</sup> E.g. “James Dunn’s book *Baptism in the Spirit* [sic] has decisively demonstrated on exegetical grounds that the use of the phrase in Paul does not allude to a subsequent experience after initiation-conversion.” Thiselton, *Hermeneutics of Doctrine*, 440. What Thiselton misses is 1) that’s not what the book’s called, 2)

Dunn argues that receiving the Spirit is synonymous with regeneration, but is still experiential.<sup>50</sup> He would therefore assert that, for Luke at least, there would be an expectation of the kind of experience outlined in Acts for all believers; this experience is required to be considered a Christian.

Dunn explains his own thesis this way:

“For the writers of the New Testament the baptism in or gift of the Spirit was part of the event (or process) of becoming a Christian, together with the effective proclamation of the Gospel, belief in ... Jesus as Lord, and water-baptism in the name of the Lord Jesus; that it was the chief element in conversion-initiation so that only those who had thus received the Spirit could be called Christians; that the reception of the Spirit was a very definite and often dramatic *experience*, the decisive and climatic experience in conversion-initiation, to which the Christian was usually recalled when reminded of the beginning of his own Christian faith and experience.”<sup>51</sup>

He doesn't mean that regeneration isn't dependent on faith, but that the result of that faith, and the proof of it, is God's response to it in gifting the Spirit.<sup>52</sup> He calls it the 'high-point' in conversion-initiation,<sup>53</sup> its most 'significant element' and its 'focal point'.<sup>54</sup>

Dunn sees himself as sitting between Pentecostal and Sacramental understandings of Spirit reception, and unifying all three major western branches of church teaching.<sup>55</sup> While I disagree with his central thesis, he does have some helpful correctives to offer.

More unhelpfully he doesn't answer the key secondary question: If this is true, how do you know if you're a Christian? What's the expectation we should all have of experience that demonstrates faith? He does point toward Pentecostal experience as largely valid, but doesn't go beyond that.<sup>56</sup> His argument boils down to stating that any that haven't had a 'vivid empowering' are not Christians.<sup>57</sup>

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Dunn's thesis instead requires "initiation-conversion" to be an experience in line with that of Pentecostal or Charismatic traditions, excluding vast swathes of the church from Christendom.

<sup>50</sup> Dunn, *Baptism in the Holy Spirit*, 225. He doesn't even really argue for the experiential nature, saying "That the Spirit, and particularly the gift of the Spirit, was a *fact of experience* in the lives of the earliest Christians has been too obvious to require elaboration."

<sup>51</sup> Dunn, *Baptism in the Holy Spirit*, 4. Elsewhere: "According to Luke and Paul baptism in the Spirit was not something subsequent to and distinct from becoming a Christian ... the gift of the Spirit may not be separated in any way from conversion, whether to be set before conversion as its presupposition or after conversion as a merely empowering, confirmatory or charismatic gift." (226)

<sup>52</sup> Dunn, *Baptism in the Holy Spirit*, 228. He suggests this formula:

"Faith demands baptism as its expression;

Baptism demands faith for its validity.

The gift of the Spirit presuppose faith as its condition;

Faith is shown to be genuine only by the gift of the Spirit."

<sup>53</sup> Dunn, *Baptism in the Holy Spirit*, 4. He uses the term 'conversion-initiation' to sum up everything involved in becoming a Christian, the total 'event'. The word initiation points to the ritual, external acts like water-baptism; the word conversion pointing to the inner transformation (7).

<sup>54</sup> Dunn, *Baptism in the Holy Spirit*, 226 "It is ... that which makes a man a Christian."

<sup>55</sup> Dunn, *Baptism in the Holy Spirit*, 224. "Catholics emphasis the role of the Church and of water-baptism (and laying on of hands); Protestants emphasise the role of the individual and of preaching and faith; Pentecostals emphasise the role of Jesus Christ as Baptiser in the Spirit and of Spirit-baptism."

<sup>56</sup> Dunn, *Baptism in the Holy Spirit*, 229

<sup>57</sup> Atkinson, *Baptism in the Spirit*, 37

He bases his argument on specific exegesis, which I will examine as we look at each passage, but also the following major principles:

- 1) The New Testament always recalls a believer to the gift of the Spirit when recalling them to the beginning of their spiritual life. E.g. Galatians 3.<sup>58</sup>
- 2) The only example of those who receive subsequently to faith in Christ is the disciples, their experience is not paradigmatic for believers.
- 3) Luke's use of the term 'promise' for the gift of the Spirit, and the association between Pentecost and Sinai.<sup>59</sup>
- 4) He argues from Paul to Acts, establishing his exegesis in 1 Corinthians 12.13 and Romans 8.9<sup>60</sup> primarily. He then reads these into other Pauline passages, Galatians 3 and Ephesian 1. He states his position in Acts.

The strongest critique of his position from Pentecostal scholars has been around this third point. Roger Stronstad calls it, 'illegitimate identity transfer'<sup>61</sup> when Dunn reads Luke as though he were Paul, importing Pauline categories into Luke's thought.<sup>62</sup> Generally they accept his thesis in Paul, which I'm not convinced of, but deny that it follows through to Luke. As Luke speaks much more on the subject than Paul, this amounts to a silencing of Luke.<sup>63</sup> Dunn himself finds Luke to be overly charismatic and considers Paul a helpful corrective to him.<sup>64</sup>

Turner has also pointed out,<sup>65</sup> language concerning the Spirit is flexible and fluid,<sup>66</sup> and so Dunn's assumption that because Paul speaks of something in one way that must read into every similar reference is not valid.

What Dunn has done is pointed, I think very successfully, to the New Testament's teaching on when we would expect to receive the Spirit. Spirit reception is an integral part of Christian initiation. David Petts explains his contribution while critiquing his positions like this:

"His chief strength is that he has rightly drawn attention to the centrality of the gift of the Spirit in conversion-initiation. I believe Ervin is wrong to limit Christian initiation to the repentance/faith and water baptism. We must with Dunn (and Acts 2.38) add the gift of the Spirit. But that is not to make the gift of the Spirit salvation itself. It is distinct from salvation as it is distinct from water-baptism. Yet it is intimately connected to both, and, in a sense, without it salvation, in the full New Testament use of the term, is incomplete."<sup>67</sup>

This is in opposition to the classic Pentecostal impulse to expect a need for 'tarrying' in order to receive. This is part of a normal Christian 'birth'.

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<sup>58</sup> Dunn, *Baptism in the Holy Spirit*, 228

<sup>59</sup> Atkinson, *Baptism in the Spirit*, 52. Especially as Luke is writing to Gentiles, "a possible historical connection that is not explicitly supported in the text is unlikely to have the significance Dunn attaches to it." (54)

<sup>60</sup> E.g. he argues that for Paul receiving the Spirit is "God's means of incorporating the convert into Christ" Dunn, *Baptism in the Holy Spirit*, 170-171; and that it is "the decisive act of grace" (172).

<sup>61</sup> Atkinson, *Baptism in the Spirit*, 27

<sup>62</sup> Atkinson, *Baptism in the Spirit*, 31

<sup>63</sup> Atkinson, *Baptism in the Spirit*, 28

<sup>64</sup> Zwiep, 'Luke's Understanding of Baptism in the Holy Spirit: An Evangelical Perspective', 139

<sup>65</sup> In 1980, before he changed his position to be much nearer Dunn.

<sup>66</sup> Atkinson, *Baptism in the Spirit*, 32

<sup>67</sup> Atkinson, *Baptism in the Spirit*, 42

Dunn also read this understanding into Jesus' experience, seeing his baptism in the Spirit on the event of his baptism in water as the experience that relates him to the new age.<sup>68</sup>

### 1.3 Reformed Sealing: Thomas Goodwin and Martyn Lloyd-Jones

The view most closely associated with Lloyd-Jones in the twentieth century finds its routes in seventeenth century Puritanism,<sup>69</sup> and is probably the first easy to track occurrence of a definite two stage reception of the Spirit.<sup>70</sup>

#### The Puritans

Thomas Goodwin is the most significant early proponent.<sup>71</sup> He described the 'sealing with the Spirit' as "a work upon the heart of the Christian in which he is given an experiential and direct assurance of his salvation."<sup>72</sup> It was a dramatic enough experience that he could describe it as like a second conversion.<sup>73</sup>

He argued that sealing is subsequent to faith, pointing to John 14.16-17, saying "one must have ceased to be part of the world before one is in a position to receive the Spirit."<sup>74</sup> In this way this receipt of the Spirit is built on union with Christ, and we are then sealed with the Spirit into fellowship with Christ.<sup>75</sup>

It is "the climax of the promise of the gospel." The gift of the Holy Spirit is *the* great promise of the New Covenant, just as the coming of Christ is *the* great promise of the Old Covenant.<sup>76</sup> He would

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<sup>68</sup> Turner, 'Jesus and the Spirit in Lucan Perspective', 8. Turner understands this in light of the rest of Luke 4 as Jesus 'taking on his messianic persona' (10-25).

<sup>69</sup> "In some cases, notably Goodwin and Howe, their doctrine of the baptism in the Holy Spirit as a definite, distinctive further experience of the Spirit is eminently clear. However, I believe that other Puritan writers also held a view of the distinctive and definite experience of the Spirit as Comforter akin to though not defined as baptism in the Holy Ghost." Garner, *The Promise of the Spirit*, 47

<sup>70</sup> Dunn, *Baptism in the Holy Spirit*, 1. While Dunn is correct, I think you can find plenty of suggestion of the view in the first couple of centuries of the apostolic and post-apostolic fathers.

<sup>71</sup> Eaton would also point to Edwards (Eaton, *Baptism with the Spirit*, 110) and especially John Owen in his early theology, (94) though he later abandoned this emphasis (101). Edwards taught that all believers should look to experience a 'divine and supernatural light'. Though he also tempered this in his most famous work, the *Religious Affections* with consistent warnings that experiences that look real may not be (110). This was within a Revival atmosphere, where he was concerned with genuine experience and that some of the enthusiasm may be detracting from it. Edwards personal experience was certainly in line with Goodwin's teaching (114-116).

<sup>72</sup> Eaton, *Baptism with the Spirit*, 83. It's a seal that makes the receiver sure of their possession of it. It is the person who is sealed, not the inheritance (83-84). Goodwin was in this way an exception amongst the Westminster Divines, most held that either they didn't understand the direct witness of the Spirit or that it was not as important as syllogistic assurance found in the word. Haykin & Jones, *Drawn into Controversie*, 278-279.

<sup>73</sup> Haykin & Jones, *Drawn into Controversie*, 280. He saw it as the "zenith of experimental life". Within Goodwin's pedobaptist framework this is seen as the fruit of water baptism.

<sup>74</sup> Eaton, *Baptism with the Spirit*, 85 - 86

<sup>75</sup> Eaton, *Baptism with the Spirit*, 87. He argues this on that basis of the principle that, "all that happens to Christ must happen to his people." Christ was sealed with sonship at the Jordan, before this experience he only had syllogistic assurance of his Sonship. He had an emphasis on the humanity of Christ as instructive for us. He did everything like us, and so we can copy what happens to him in the Spirit. Goodwin didn't extend this to his miracle working or sign gifts, but it's a natural inference within a charismatic framework.

<sup>76</sup> Eaton, *Baptism with the Spirit*, 87

describe this by saying, “The Christian has not received the blessing to which baptism points until he or she has known the Spirit in this way.”<sup>77</sup> Goodwin argued holiness was required.<sup>78</sup>

For Goodwin the humanity of Jesus and Holy Spirit in his life is a model to us, we should expect similar experiences. However Jesus himself is unique in his role in salvation history.<sup>79</sup>

His friend John Owen was less sure on the experience, but agreed on the need for assurance to be gained experientially. For Owen there were two ways this could be received: either directly, which would mean an immediate, unexplainable experience that stamps assurance on the soul, for Owen this was the more powerful and preferable method; or assurance mediated by reflection and argument. The former is experiential, the later syllogistic. We all require both.<sup>80</sup> He argued that it’s not the event we base our assurance on, but the event is the occasion or occasion on which the Spirit communicates it to us directly.<sup>81</sup> For him, as for Goodwin, the ‘seal’ is the Spirit, he is the inheritance.<sup>82</sup>

Packer argues that all of the pre-Pentecostal movement experiences of Baptism in the Holy Spirit had assurance at their heart, pointing to Finney, Moody, Torrey, Murray, Keswick and Moorhouse along with Goodwin.<sup>83</sup> This is overly simplistic as we have seen in our taxonomy, but perhaps something was lost when the Pentecostal emphasis on power gained us so much.

### **Martyn Lloyd-Jones**

Lloyd-Jones sits very much within this stream of thinking, as a modern disciple of Goodwin’s. He argued that baptism with the Spirit is:

“vibrantly experiential, so much so that it will never be forgotten as a memorable experience in the Christian life ... it experientially ‘seals’ our salvation, gives us a foretaste of heaven, empowers for witness and results in great boldness and liberty of speech. It does not take place *automatically* at conversion.”<sup>84</sup>

So, you can be a Christian without having been baptised in the Spirit.<sup>85</sup> It is done to us by Jesus,<sup>86</sup> and the Spirit is the element which he applies to us.<sup>87</sup> This is the ‘height of Christian experience’.<sup>88</sup> It happens to us, we don’t cause it,<sup>89</sup> but it isn’t automatic.<sup>90</sup> It was a clear and unmistakable experience, corporately recognised within the body of the church.<sup>91</sup> All of this could be established directly from Acts.<sup>92</sup>

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<sup>77</sup> Eaton, *Baptism with the Spirit*, 88

<sup>78</sup> Eaton, *Baptism with the Spirit*, 88

<sup>79</sup> Eaton, *Baptism with the Spirit*, 91 n.44

<sup>80</sup> Eaton, *Baptism with the Spirit*, 101. Schaeffer would have expanded this to speak of three grounds of assurance – deductive, inductive and experienced. Schaeffer, *The Finished Work of Christ*, 198-199.

<sup>81</sup> Eaton, *Baptism with the Spirit*, 103

<sup>82</sup> Eaton, *Baptism with the Spirit*, 102

<sup>83</sup> Packer, *Keep in Step with the Spirit*, 225-226

<sup>84</sup> Eaton, *Baptism with the Spirit*, 164

<sup>85</sup> Lloyd-Jones, *Joy Unspeakable*, 25-48

<sup>86</sup> Lloyd-Jones, *Joy Unspeakable*, 50-51

<sup>87</sup> Eaton, *Baptism with the Spirit*, 166

<sup>88</sup> Eaton, *Baptism with the Spirit*, 170

<sup>89</sup> Lloyd-Jones, *Joy Unspeakable*, 44

<sup>90</sup> Lloyd-Jones, *Joy Unspeakable*, 50

<sup>91</sup> Lloyd-Jones, *Joy Unspeakable*, 52

<sup>92</sup> Lloyd-Jones, *Joy Unspeakable*, 50-51

He saw it primarily as an experience of assurance. The sealing is an authentication to others and to yourself of your validity as a child of God. You then begin to experience what you were before, without realising it. "The gift is not the fact that we are sons, but our realisation of it."<sup>93</sup> Power for witness then comes via the assurance of salvation,<sup>94</sup> but that is the reason the assurance is given.<sup>95</sup>

He drew a sharp distinction between subsequent experiences and the initial one, though the Baptism in the Spirit is special because it is the first of these experiences.<sup>96</sup> Though he did see it as repeatable.<sup>97</sup> He backed away from strongly associating it with the sign gifts, citing church history as evidence.<sup>98</sup> Characterising Lloyd-Jones, or any of his Puritan forebears, as 'charismatic' or 'Pentecostal' is therefore anachronistic.<sup>99</sup> He equally rejected any suggestion of human agency being involved in receiving the seal, this is a sovereignly given gift,<sup>100</sup> he probably would even have been uncomfortable with speaking of the means as being faith, the means of the gift is grace.

Lloyd-Jones taught to expect a delay until receiving the 'seal', often a lengthy one.<sup>101</sup> Eaton's modified view that for the New Testament any real delay in receiving the Spirit is "violently abnormal"<sup>102</sup> is a helpful corrective.

Storms summarised Lloyd-Jones position as:

"an *experiential* event subsequent to regeneration (and therefore to be sought) that brings a profound, inner, *direct*, assurance of salvation (as over against a *sylogistic* assurance which one *deduces* from the fact that one believes). It also produces power for ministry and witness, joy, and a sense of God's glorious presence."<sup>103</sup>

Lloyd-Jones main gift to us is a rediscovery of the Puritan emphasis on the gift as being for assurance. You can argue that receiving the Spirit is an experience of assurance firstly on the basis of the imagery in the language, particularly that used by Paul, e.g. seal, confirm, witness. Secondly following the *paraclete* teachings from Jesus, in John 14.16-17 Jesus says that you should *know* you are in Jesus because the Spirit has come to you.<sup>104</sup>

There is a similar approach with the Anglican David Newman who describes receiving the Spirit as character transformation, but in very similar language to Lloyd-Jones: "it reproduces in us Jesus' own relationship with the Father as a son, putting the same word 'Abba' on our lips as had been on the lips of the earthly Jesus."<sup>105</sup>

This is a helpful corrective to a Pentecostal over-emphasis on power, as both can be found in the relevant passages in the New Testament. Lloyd-Jones saw the great variety of language used in the New Testament as interchangeable, but highlighting the various different aspects of the

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<sup>93</sup> Eaton, *Baptism with the Spirit*, 172

<sup>94</sup> Eaton, *Baptism with the Spirit*, 181

<sup>95</sup> Lloyd-Jones, *Joy Unspeakable*, 81-110

<sup>96</sup> Eaton, *Baptism with the Spirit*, 184

<sup>97</sup> Eaton, *Baptism with the Spirit*, 162

<sup>98</sup> Eaton, *Baptism with the Spirit*, 188

<sup>99</sup> Davies, 'Dr. D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones: An Introduction', 47

<sup>100</sup> Davies, 'Dr. D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones: An Introduction', 49. Davies understands it as an individualised extension of his teaching on revival.

<sup>101</sup> Eaton, *Baptism with the Spirit*, 247

<sup>102</sup> Eaton, *Baptism with the Spirit*, 247

<sup>103</sup> Storms, 'Baptism of the Holy Spirit – Part I'

<sup>104</sup> Garner, *The Promise of the Spirit*, 27

<sup>105</sup> Newman, *What we are about to receive*, 6

experience.<sup>106</sup> This leads me to expect both power and assurance to be aspects of the experience of receiving the Spirit.

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<sup>106</sup> Davies, 'Dr. D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones: An Introduction', 49

## 2. Acts Exegesis

### 2.1 Acts 1.1-8

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

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

*So when they had come together, they asked him, “Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?” He said to them, “It is not for you to know times or seasons that the Father has fixed by his own authority. But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.”*

#### Context

Right at the start of Acts, Luke is interested in setting out his key themes for the rest of the book: The empowering of the Holy Spirit; the kingdom of God as expressed within the Church; and the global mission of Jesus to build that Church through the witnessing of Spirit-empowered Christians.

It’s the first of these that concerns this study, but the themes intertwine. While I’m exploring what it means to be baptised with the Holy Spirit, these other two themes tell us in broad brush strokes what that experience is for. The purpose of receiving the Spirit is to express the kingdom of God within local churches and to provoke and empower members of those churches to fulfil the mission Jesus has given us.

This is Jesus’ last opportunity to speak with the early band of disciples, he’s been gloriously raised from the dead and there was then around a 40 day period when he spent time with them before his ascension, which Luke describes in verse 9. He clearly spent some time with them, the word translated “staying”, is *sunalogomenos* literally “eating salt with”.<sup>107</sup> “Eating with” and all the intimacy and extended time that that would imply might be a better translation. Jesus isn’t dropping in and out to share a few words, he’s spending a significant amount of time with them, teaching them and preparing them for what’s to come.

This section should be seen as descriptive of that whole period. Jesus spends time commanding them and demonstrating the truth of his resurrection. Luke is showing us that Jesus’ key teaching priorities for the embryonic church are the same as the key themes in Acts; the subjects that they really needed to know were the empowering of the Spirit for building the kingdom and preaching the gospel.

It’s perhaps surprising that the commands he gave them were “through the Holy Spirit”, because Luke isn’t describing revelation gained through prophetic experiences like he does later in Acts. Jesus is physically among them as Luke is keen to point out at the end of verse 3. They would have heard the commands with their ears as he talked with them. This flesh and blood man, having been personally vindicated by the Father and demonstrated to be God himself, is still described as giving his commands through the Holy Spirit. This has fascinating implications for our Christology – if we’re

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<sup>107</sup> Bruce, *The Book of the Acts*, 33 n. 20.

meant to be like Jesus, we should be aiming to act by the Holy Spirit. If even Jesus communicates ‘by’ him we must be striving to do the same.<sup>108</sup>

### Waiting to receive

The disciples are told to wait to receive the Holy Spirit, so if we can take their experiences as normative, then we need a good reason why we would not also “wait” to receive the Holy Spirit. Jesus literally tells them to stay around, or not to depart. It doesn’t seem that he’s saying a particular period of waiting is required to receive the Spirit,<sup>109</sup> but that the disciples mustn’t miss what’s coming for them, so they need to stay in Jerusalem to receive it.

They couldn’t act without it, and they wouldn’t be able to continue their mission if they weren’t empowered by the Spirit. Neither did Jesus want them to return to places that they might feel safer, Galilee for instance, as they needed to start their mission in Jerusalem; both for pragmatic reasons, it’s the place to make a large impact, and for theological reasons, the new Temple is then founded in the courts of the old.

It might seem odd that Jesus tells them to sit tight, as they’re given in verse 8 an expansive mandate to reach the whole world, shouldn’t they be getting on with it? This is a ragtag, downtrodden band of misfits who in the last two months have seen all of their dreams dashed, and then the most remarkable reversal of fortune. That’s a lot to process, and they’re still afraid, without plans or direction for what to do next, let alone to ability to manage it. Jesus’ command to go to the ends of the earth must have sounded great, and terrifying, but seemed entirely impractical. How would they do that? Evidently 3 years of training at Jesus’ side isn’t enough.<sup>110</sup> That’s why they need to wait until they receive power in chapter 2, Pentecost changes everything.

### The Kingdom

Jesus describes the gift that they needed to wait to receive as “the promise of the Father”<sup>111</sup> – this, while rooted in the Old Testament<sup>112</sup> is most clearly laid out in John 14 – 16.<sup>113</sup> As Jesus makes clear in verse 5, this was foreshadowed by John the Baptist, he’s telling them that it’s time for John’s promise of a better Baptism to be realised.<sup>114</sup> John was always pointing to a time of fulfilment, which Joel 2.28-32 described as being marked by a widespread outpouring of the Spirit of God. John’s baptism prepared his repentant hearers for judgment, but also directed them to a spiritual baptism to come.<sup>115</sup>

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<sup>108</sup> They waited for around 10 days.

<sup>109</sup> Contra classic Pentecostalism & Wagner, *Acts*, 50. Wagner would argue that ‘tarrying’ by which he means extended time spent intimately with God is required to receive power. I would accept the principle but reject the application. We don’t have textual warrant for that, this is the only occasion that anyone is told to wait.

<sup>110</sup> Wagner, *Acts*, 48

<sup>111</sup> It’s notable that receiving the Spirit is *the* promise, the one which encapsulates all of the others in the Old Testament. Moore, *Straight to the Heart of Acts*, 21. Elsewhere he comments that “Being filled with the Holy Spirit is an essential part of God’s story.” Moore, *The Bible in 100 Pages*, 77 n.3.

<sup>112</sup> E.g. Joel 2.28-32, Isaiah 44.3, Isaiah 32.15. “Although this faith appears to be new, it is rooted in divine promises of old,” Bock, *Acts*, 56.

<sup>113</sup> Bruce, *The Book of the Acts*, 34

<sup>114</sup> Bruce, *The Book of the Acts*, 35

<sup>115</sup> Bruce, *The Book of the Acts*, 35. “What he [John] envisaged is a messianic figure (probably the Davidic Messiah) who would once-and-for-all cleanse and purify Israel with the power of the fiery Spirit.” Hui, ‘John the Baptist and Spirit-baptism’, 115.

The disciples seem to have conflated this with the restoration of Israel, hence the question in verse 6. This is understandable, if the Spirit is coming now, this must be the promised new age for the kingdom of God to break in and Israel to be restored.<sup>116</sup> The gift of the Spirit is the emphatic sign that the Messiah has come.<sup>117</sup> The question isn't as wrong as some commentators make out, notice that Jesus' doesn't reject their premise when he answers them,<sup>118</sup> but it does show that the disciples are still stuck in old paradigms, expecting the coming kingdom to be physical and national, rather than the spiritual and global kingdom that they are about to start building.

Jesus tells them that it isn't for them to know, implying that the time for the full restoration of Israel isn't yet. He doesn't say so, but it is reasonable to assume from everything that happens next that the restoration of 'Israel' is found through the triumph of the church as the people of God, though trying to establish that from this text would be a stretch.<sup>119</sup>

Instead of the political power that they might have yearned for, a very different power was going to be given them through this promise. Hearing that they haven't already received the promise means it's something other than the free offer of salvation in Christ. Otherwise you would have to equate Pentecost with salvation. While it's almost impossible to pinpoint the moment that the twelve believed,<sup>120</sup> it must have been before Acts chapter 2. Either this means that the promise is subsequent to regeneration for all Christians, or there needs to be a compelling textual reason to assume that the experiences of gathered disciples who received the Spirit at Pentecost are not normative for us.<sup>121</sup> Stott would argue that in Acts 1 the apostles are in a unique position and that therefore they receive 'unique equipment'<sup>122</sup> and that the Holy Spirit is promised only to the twelve. He argues for a 'secondary sense'<sup>123</sup> of promise to the rest of us. This requires him to ignore that 'apostles' is a group which grows larger through Acts,<sup>124</sup> the wide range of individuals described as receiving the Spirit elsewhere in Acts, and to interpret the baptism as being an empowering for teaching only.<sup>125</sup> Considering the Apostles filling as special, ignoring that there's no reason to assume it's only the twelve present at Pentecost, seems to make a mockery of the experiences of the Samaritans, Cornelius or the Ephesian disciples.

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<sup>116</sup> Bruce, *The Book of the Acts*, 35. "The disciples could hardly be expected to understand Jesus' words as meaning anything other than the imminent end of the world; the consummation of all that had begun in Jesus' ministry." Turner, 'Spirit Endowment in Luke/Acts', 51.

<sup>117</sup> Bock, *Acts*, 57; Bock *Acts*, 62.

<sup>118</sup> Bruce, *The Book of the Acts*, 35

<sup>119</sup> Bruce points out, "whatever purposes of his own God might have for the nation of Israel, these were not to be the concern of the messengers of Christ". Bruce, *The Book of the Acts*, 35. Which puts speculation neatly to bed. It is the "quelling of eschatological curiosity with a call to mission," Bock, *Acts*, 49. Bock would see this as a future for a nationalistic Israel (Bock, *Acts*, 62) due to his dispensationalism, I would as above query who 'Israel' applied to here.

<sup>120</sup> It was probably different for each individual - see the discussion in the section for John 20.

<sup>121</sup> Contra this Bock would argue that the reason they wait is because it's new and previously unavailable. As we'll see this doesn't deal with the other occasions in Acts. Bock, *Acts*, 58.

<sup>122</sup> Stott, *Message of Acts*, 34.

<sup>123</sup> Stott, *Message of Acts*, 37

<sup>124</sup> Even if we're being particularly restrictive, you have to include Paul.

<sup>125</sup> Stott, *Message of Acts*, 37. Particularly the writing of Scripture, even though they didn't all write scripture, and plenty of non-Apostles did, including Acts!

After his gentle rebuke,<sup>126</sup> Jesus promises them power in verse 8 to be witnesses. He starts this sentence with a 'but', implying that the promise of the Spirit for mission is relevant to their question. It isn't for them to know when the kingdom will be restored, but they are being given to power to realise this through the preaching of the gospel. He's subtly turning on their head their political aspirations for Israel, and offering spiritual ambition for the Church.<sup>127</sup>

Baptism in the Holy Spirit builds the kingdom of God, it is the spiritual power to advance<sup>128</sup> in gospel preaching, to expose and destroy the enemy's schemes, and to create the sort of advance outposts of the encroaching kingdom that local churches are supposed to. The kingdom is restored by Pentecost, because Pentecost births the church, the outposts of the kingdom.<sup>129</sup> As the church sits in a period of eschatological tension between the ages, receiving the Holy Spirit is the primary way that the individual and the church is pulled into the reality of the kingdom of God present now. The Holy Spirit 'realises' the new eschatological situation for each of us individually.

### **The Mission of God**

Receiving the Holy Spirit is clearly linked in verse 8 to power to 'witness' for the global mission of Jesus. It's a power that directly leads to mission in the locality of those who receive it, and then drives those believers out into the lands beyond. Baptism in the Spirit kick starts gospel preaching and the resultant church planting. It's the catalyst for everything that happens in Acts as we watch the newly born church preach in Jerusalem, around Judea, into Samaria and then all the way to Rome and beyond.

If that's true then it's essential if modern local churches expect to impact their surrounding area, let alone if they dream of having an impact on regions beyond their own. Receiving the Spirit is essential both for the task of telling my neighbour or colleague about Jesus, and for the task of world evangelisation. We should take this very seriously indeed.

Baptism in the Holy Spirit includes us in the mission of God. Jesus called them to be witnesses, alluding to Isaiah 43-44 where Israel are called to be God's witnesses in the world. This was taken up by Jesus as the incarnate Servant of the Lord and the representative of all Israel.<sup>130</sup> It is now shared by him with his disciples, the receipt of power isn't just tools to allow them to do this, its incorporating us into Jesus' mission and giving us the ability to own it ourselves.

The Holy Spirit altered the people of God's understanding of mission, moving them from Israel's 'centripetal missionary consciousness'<sup>131</sup> where there is a concern to call the nations to journey to Zion, to the Church's 'centrifugal missionary activity', where the people instead journey to the

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<sup>126</sup> Contra Stott, *Message of Acts*, 41 & Calvin, *Acts*, 43. Calvin: "There are as many errors in this sentence as words." They miss that Jesus doesn't reject their premise, but completely revises their horizons in order to understand the question differently.

<sup>127</sup> "Jesus had taught his disciples to pray that the kingdom would come and that his will would be done on Earth as it is in Heaven. The disciples have not yet sorted out their desire that Jesus would break the political yoke of Rome from the long-range task of the people of God using spiritual weapons to push back the forces of evil and take back the dominion over creation that Adam forfeited to Satan in the Garden of Evil. Wagner, *Acts*, 51. As so often with Wagner the principle is great – the movement from political to spiritual warfare – but the application is a little wanting. Jesus has dominion over creation, the church doesn't need to take that back, but the spiritual powers opposed to this are strong and we do need to wage the good warfare on them.

<sup>128</sup> Wagner, *Acts*, 51.

<sup>129</sup> Bock would even describe Baptism in the Spirit as 'eschatological salvation,'<sup>129</sup> thinking along similar lines, though within a dispensational, cessationist framework. Bock, *Acts*, 57.

<sup>130</sup> Bruce, *The Book of the Acts*, 36

<sup>131</sup> Johannes Blauw quoted in Stott, *Message of Acts*, 42

nations, taking Zion with them in the power of the Spirit.<sup>132</sup> We see the same with the Spirit, previously God dwelt on a mountain, now he dwells with his people in the Church. He comes on mission with us.

### **You will receive power**

This power is one that works to make their preaching more effective, but sometimes in churches influenced by modernism there's a temptation to stop there. This is also power to accomplish mighty works.<sup>133</sup> The word *dunamis* implies miraculous power.<sup>134</sup> It fits the shape of the New Testament to see that miraculous power accompanies gospel preaching, but it doesn't fit a western paradigm at all. If we want to be authentically biblical, we should have an expectation that miraculous power will accompany our gospel preaching.<sup>135</sup>

Much like the baptism that Jesus received from John, where the Holy Spirit descended on him, this baptism is an anointing to carry on the work that Jesus has started.<sup>136</sup> Wagner argues that the how and why of its receipt aren't important.<sup>137</sup> I must differ, if it's everything it seems to be, knowing how to empower the church with the gifts available to her must be of first importance.

Jesus departed, 'scattering promises of power,'<sup>138</sup> which are still made to us. There is no Christianity which is not supernatural.<sup>139</sup> Through baptism in the Holy Spirit Jesus gives power to his disciples. It is a fundamentally gracious act, the position of God during it is always one of a giver. Power is not earned, nor is it deserved, it is gifted.

### **Summary**

- The Spirit is promised, through the twelve, to the church. This promise has not been abrogated, it's still on offer.
- They were commanded to wait because they couldn't fulfil their mission without the power of the Spirit.
- Receiving the Spirit is the chief evidence of the inauguration of the kingdom of God. The Holy Spirit continues to inaugurate the kingdom within the church by coming in power on individuals.
- Receiving the Spirit is the chief fuel behind mission. It's catalytic and incorporates the individual into the mission of the Trinity that is theirs to own due to their union with Christ. God comes on mission with us as we partner with him.
- The Spirit gifted the early church with miraculous power to accompany gospel preaching

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<sup>132</sup> C.f. Stott, *Message of Acts*, 42-43.

<sup>133</sup> Bruce, *The Book of the Acts*, 36. Contra Bock, *Acts*, 63.

<sup>134</sup> Strong on δύναμις. There is a sense in which the whole scene parallels the departure of Elijah,<sup>134</sup> especially due to the use of the unusual word *anelempthe* ("he was taken up to heaven"). The man of God leaves his appointed successor, who then acted 'with the Spirit of Elijah' (2 Kings 2.15). Jesus leaves his successors, but grants them the Spirit of Jesus to allow them to carry on, to repeat his works like Elisha did for Elijah, and perhaps even to experience a 'double portion' as was granted to Elijah. Marshall, 'Acts', 527

<sup>135</sup> Virgo contends that "Church history hinges" on this single passage, as it was what changed "fearful incompetent men" and made them "world changers." Virgo, 'Leading People into the Baptism of the Holy Spirit', 1

<sup>136</sup> Bruce, *The Book of the Acts*, 36

<sup>137</sup> Wagner, *Acts*, 52.

<sup>138</sup> Charles Williams quoted in Stott, *Message of Acts*, 42

<sup>139</sup> Martyn Lloyd-Jones, *Acts 1-8*, 16.

## 2.2 Acts 2.1-13

*When the day of Pentecost arrived, they were all together in one place. And suddenly there came from heaven a sound like a mighty rushing wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. And divided tongues as of fire appeared to them and rested on each one of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance. Now there were dwelling in Jerusalem Jews, devout men from every nation under heaven. And at this sound the multitude came together, and they were bewildered, because each one was hearing them speak in his own language. And they were amazed and astonished, saying, "Are not all these who are speaking Galileans? And how is it that we hear, each of us in his own native language? Parthians and Medes and Elamites and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya belonging to Cyrene, and visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabians--we hear them telling in our own tongues the mighty works of God." And all were amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, "What does this mean?" But others mocking said, "They are filled with new wine."*

### Context

Pentecost functions as a 'fulcrum' account in Luke-Acts. Much of Luke's Gospel has been leading up to the Messiah's pouring out of the Spirit.<sup>140</sup> Everything that follows depends upon it.

The word Pentecost means 'fiftieth', the fiftieth day after the presentation of the first sheaf to be reaped of the barley harvest, or perhaps the fiftieth day from the first day of Passover. It marks the Feast of Weeks<sup>141</sup> or the day of the 'firstfruits'.<sup>142</sup> The festival was later thought to be the anniversary of the giving of the law, deduced from the context of Exodus 19.1, where the law is given on the third new moon after the departure from Egypt, or 44 days after Passover.<sup>143</sup>

It would seem odd if the day wasn't significant since the events happen on a specific Jewish festival. This is the day that the firstfruits of the encroaching kingdom of God are given to the church, on the day that the Jewish people would traditionally celebrate the firstfruits of the harvest as a gift from God. This would also indicate a link between the Spirit and the resurrection that we see developed elsewhere in the New Testament (e.g. 1 Corinthians 15).<sup>144</sup> Perhaps there is also an allusion to the beginning of the harvest of the kingdom of God.<sup>145</sup>

Although its attestation is hard to track,<sup>146</sup> the possible link to the giving of the law seems appropriate for the day on which the new covenant believers are given the Spirit to allow them to live not under the law. Fitting in with the argument of Galatians, Pentecost is the first giving of the Spirit who allows the Christians to live without being under the penalty of the Law. The signs accompanying the giving of the Spirit also mirror those at Sinai closely, this is examined below. This

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<sup>140</sup> Bock, *Acts*, 92. He points specifically to Luke 3.15-17, 24.47-49, Acts 1.4-5.

<sup>141</sup> Exodus 34.22a, Deuteronomy 16.10

<sup>142</sup> Exodus 23.16a / Numbers 28.26). Bruce, *The Book of the Acts*, 49

<sup>143</sup> It is hard to find attestation of this tradition prior to AD150 however. Bruce, *The Book of the Acts*, 49 – 50; cf. 50 n. 5

<sup>144</sup> C.f. Bock, *Acts*, 95

<sup>145</sup> Chrysostom said, "the time has come to put in the sickle of the word; for here, as the sickle, keen-edged, came the Spirit down." Quoted in Stott, *Message of Acts*, 62

<sup>146</sup> In second Temple Judaism there was also a link between Pentecost and covenant renewal (e.g. Jubilees 1.1, 6.17) which is a clear symbolic link to the events of the giving of the Spirit. Keener feels that the Sinai link was probably later, but the broader covenant link would already have been in place, perhaps specifically with the Noahic covenant. Keener, *Acts*, 785

is the inauguration of the new covenant established on the cross, now the embryonic church is given the power to live in the covenant Jesus has made on their behalf.

The Spirit's coming is in continuity with God's purposes in giving the law, and the Spirit signals the essential difference between Jewish faith and a commitment to Jesus.<sup>147</sup> The former is Torah centred and directed, the latter is Christ centred and Spirit directed.

They would have been present in a private house, though some argue this was the temple due to the link to Ezekiel 47.1-2.<sup>148</sup> It seems likely that the place of verse 1 is the upper room of verse 13, though this is unclear in the text.<sup>149</sup> It would have been the full 120 disciples who were gathered, not just the Twelve. The Spirit's distribution is on all of them. The clue to this is Peter's citation of Joel 2 later in the chapter. It only really makes sense if among the group on whom the Spirit had been poured were the young and the old, men and women. Peter uses Joel to point to what's happening and say 'this is that'.<sup>150</sup>

Presumably as they soon find themselves among a large group of people, the disciples have left this private dwelling and taken to the streets. The crowd may then have followed them to the Temple to hear Peter's sermon.<sup>151</sup> They must have moved if they weren't already there as the Temple courts were the only place in Jerusalem able to hold 3000 people.<sup>152</sup>

### Wind & Fire

As an initial point it's worth noting that the phenomena and the receipt of the Spirit directly follow prayer by the gathered disciples.<sup>153</sup> They had waited as instructed and were asking for this. They then receive signs, wind, fire and languages.<sup>154</sup>

Bruce sees the wind as a symbol of the Spirit of God, pointing to Ezekiel 37.9-14. Ezekiel prophesied to the wind and called it to blow on the dry bones, and it was then the breath of God that moved. He also points to the allusion to Ezekiel's vision in John 3.8.<sup>155</sup> This was an event of the Spirit of God coming in power. God's coming in the Old Testament is often associated with mighty storms, wind, thunder and lightning (e.g. 2 Samuel 22.15, Psalm 18.7-15, Ezekiel 13.13).<sup>156</sup>

Contemporary Jews would have seen this as a sign of the presence of the Spirit ushering in the final Messianic Age, referencing Ezekiel 37. This would have been, "in a way more intimate, personal, and powerful than they had ever before experienced."<sup>157</sup> Previously the wind would fill the Temple (e.g.

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<sup>147</sup> Longenecker, *Acts*, 269

<sup>148</sup> Bruce, *The Book of the Acts*, 51, Bock, *Acts*, 94; contra Wagner, *Acts*, 61

<sup>149</sup> Bruce, *The Book of the Acts*, 50

<sup>150</sup> Bock, *Acts*, 94. Contra Stott's argument seen above that the Spirit is only poured out on the Twelve as a sign for the rest of the church.

<sup>151</sup> Bruce, *The Book of the Acts*, 51

<sup>152</sup> Keener, *Acts*, 796

<sup>153</sup> Arrington, *Acts*, 19

<sup>154</sup> John the Baptist had foretold that Jesus would baptise with Spirit and fire (Luke 3.16-17), this could equally be 'wind and fire', though contextually 'Spirit' is a clearer translation of the intent. His prediction is deliberately fulfilled in Luke's text, that as he starts the story of the church, the promises of the start of the story of Jesus are fulfilled.

<sup>155</sup> Bruce, *The Book of the Acts*, 50. The fourth century commentator Ephrem the Syrian sees the wind as a fragrance reminiscent of Isaiah 6.4.

<sup>156</sup> Marshall, 'Acts', 531

<sup>157</sup> Longenecker, *Acts*, 270

Exodus 40.34-35, 1 Kings 8.10-11), now it fills believers, 'making them like the Temple of old'.<sup>158</sup> Turner argues that this isn't the beginning of the new age that began decisively in Jesus' ministry, instead seeing it as part of the promised salvation.<sup>159</sup> This is a reasonable point but misses that for the Jewish people on the street in Jerusalem signs are appearing at Pentecost that the new Messianic age has begun.<sup>160</sup>

The wind appears to have been a sound, the fire an image. The manifestation of God's presence and the advent of the Spirit is visible as well as audible.<sup>161</sup> Against this Bock sees the phrase 'tongues of fire' as metaphorical and referring to the spoken tongues of a few verses later,<sup>162</sup> this is a minority view and doesn't seem to fit the way it is described as an audio-visual experience.

The Fire denotes the divine presence, for example as when Moses met Yahweh in the form of a burning bush.<sup>163</sup> There is also fire present during the giving of the law in Exodus 20, God's guiding in Exodus 13 or his judgement in Isaiah 5.<sup>164</sup> "Thus the image of the fire points to an association of heavenly glory in the presence of the Spirit as well as a theophany. Heaven and divine presence come powerfully to earth to indwell God's people."<sup>165</sup> The fire that rushed on Sinai now rests on their heads, fitting the possible law background. Keener sees a broader reference to the fire of judgment, probably the most common Old Testament image associated with fire. The eschatological judgment that is coming is the direct converse of being baptised with the Holy Spirit.<sup>166</sup>

The emphasis is on the comparison, it spread like fire, it sat on each one like a flame.<sup>167</sup> This fits with anecdotal experience about the way the Spirit often appears to first move in one individual and then spread from them to those around them. Longenecker points out that in the Old Covenant the divine presence was corporate and rested on leaders in an extraordinary fashion, here in the New Covenant the Spirit is moving to rest on individuals.<sup>168</sup> Now independent experiences are a new component of corporate experiences, and there is a new focus on the ordinary action of the Spirit in all believers.

These images are then followed by being 'filled with the Spirit' and its attendant sign of speaking in tongues. Bruce distinguishes this experience from later ones, "Being filled with the Spirit was an experience to be repeated on several occasions (4.8, 31), but the baptism in the Spirit which the believing community now experienced was an event which took place once for all."<sup>169</sup>

We will examine this distinction later in this paper, but there doesn't seem to be much textual warrant for it. Luke's language when describing this kind of experience is not technical. Bock's assertion can be established by theological argument but not from these texts alone. It isn't obvious

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<sup>158</sup> Keener, *Acts*, 799. c.f. Beale, *A New Testament Biblical Theology*, 594-613.

<sup>159</sup> Turner, *Power from on High*, 353

<sup>160</sup> c.f. Lincoln, 'Pentecost', 906. "For the disciples Pentecost involved a filling of the Spirit that was both an equipping for inspired speech and an initiation into a new eschatological epoch."

<sup>161</sup> Bruce, *The Book of the Acts*, 50

<sup>162</sup> Bock, *Acts*, 97

<sup>163</sup> Bruce, *The Book of the Acts*, 50

<sup>164</sup> For a much longer list c.f. Bruce, *The Book of the Acts*, 98 n.8

<sup>165</sup> Bruce, *The Book of the Acts*, 98

<sup>166</sup> Keener, *Acts*, 800

<sup>167</sup> Bock, *Acts*, 97 - 98

<sup>168</sup> Longenecker, *Acts*, 270

<sup>169</sup> Bruce, *The Book of the Acts*, 51. Grudem agrees, this is a convenient understanding to remove the need for this repeated experience, but does rather undermine Grudem's own charismatic convictions as it tends towards cessationism. Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 770.

why this first experience should be associated with the phrase ‘baptism in the Spirit’ found in John’s prophecy and Jesus’ promise, but not associated with later experiences with the same or similar language, or the same or similar experiences being described.

Bruce sees this experience as a once-for-all event for the church, and baptism in water is the visible sign that someone has been, by faith, “incorporated into the Spirit-baptised fellowship of the new people of God.”<sup>170</sup> His argument is based on his understanding of 1 Corinthians 12.13<sup>171</sup> and its role as a hermeneutical grid. See my comments on that passage for why I disagree.

All three signs are potent symbols of the new age, the eschatological ‘end’ of all things.<sup>172</sup> Keener sees wind from Ezekiel that can raise the dead and establish God’s people; fire that is a fiery end-time judgment on the wicked; and tongues that are a form of the end-time outpouring of the Spirit of prophecy.<sup>173</sup> This is therefore a potent emphasis that we are at the dawn of a new messianic era, the age of the Spirit. These are, “objective, external phenomena to confirm the internal empowerment taking place.”<sup>174</sup>

These signs do not accompany later fillings with the Spirit in Acts.<sup>175</sup> In my opinion this indicates that the signs are therefore to denote the nature of the experience and the particular impact in salvation history of Pentecost. This would underline the possible links with the wheat harvest and law-giving already mentioned, and with Babel mentioned below.

## Tongues

There was an expectation in the Old Testament that when people experienced the power of the Spirit they would prophecy (e.g. Numbers 11.26).<sup>176</sup> Bruce suggests that the appearance of the gift of tongues at Pentecost is a similar phenomenon.<sup>177</sup> This is an interesting perspective, it fits well within a cessationist hermeneutic as the more similar each gift of the Spirit is to inspired infallible prophecy that forms scripture the easier it is to dismiss all as not active in the church age. It requires a very loose reading of the idea of the prophetic to lump tongues in with it, and seems to me to go against the care Paul takes to distinguish between the use of tongues and interpretation, and the use of prophecy in 1 Corinthians 12 and 14.

Notably the tongues here are not interpreted so that all understand, instead bystanders understand what is being said in their own languages. Bruce would therefore see something slightly different to what we see in 1 Corinthians must be going on.<sup>178</sup> This is either because these ‘tongues’ were the

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<sup>170</sup> “The baptism of the Spirit which it was our Lord’s prerogative to bestow was, strictly speaking, something that took place once for all on the day of Pentecost when he poured out the promised gift on his disciples and thus constituted them the people of God in the new age.” Bruce, *The Book of the Acts*, 69.

<sup>171</sup> Bruce, *The Book of the Acts*, 69, n.99

<sup>172</sup> Keener, *Acts*, 783

<sup>173</sup> Keener, *Acts*, 783

<sup>174</sup> Keener, *Acts*, 799

<sup>175</sup> Arrington, *Acts*, 20

<sup>176</sup> Bruce, *The Book of the Acts*, 51-52

<sup>177</sup> “So now the descent of the Spirit was attended by prophetic speech, but prophetic speech of a particular kind – utterance in other tongues.” Bruce, *The Book of the Acts*, 52.

<sup>178</sup> Bruce, *The Book of the Acts*, 52. Bruce is keen to quickly make it clear that we shouldn’t be expecting similar phenomena in the church today. He quotes Richard Bauckham: “At first the old worn-out vessels of humanity cannot contain [the Spirit]; and there is a flood of strange and novel spiritual experiences. But when it has worn for itself a deep channel in the church, when the laws of the new spiritual life are learnt and understood, then some of the irregular phenomena disappear, others become normal, and what was thought to be miraculous is found to be a natural endowment of the Christian life.” 52, n.12. I’m very comfortable with the

actual languages spoken by members of the crowd, or because they were given a gift of interpretation. Bock disagrees, seeing this as just another application of the same gift seen in 1 Corinthians, the principles standing that tongues needs to be understood, either because they are known languages or because they are interpreted.<sup>179</sup> Bock's argument seems to hold more weight, only because there is no particular distinguishing within Scripture between the gifts.

This is a miracle of languages, not a gift of interpretation.<sup>180</sup> The gift is given to the disciples, not to the crowd. This is the beginning of the new age of the Spirit, poured out on the people of God, it would be strange to gift one of the initial gifts of this to those not yet in his people.

## Nations

Verses 9-11 list the various nations from which Jews and God-fearers had gathered to celebrate Pentecost in Jerusalem.<sup>181</sup> They are travelling to the festival from around the diaspora to attend and participate in the sacrificial services associated with it. Strangely they find that instead of travelling to be near where the presence of God dwells, they meet people in whom the Spirit of God has made his residence who invite them to partake of this mystery as well.

The gathered crowd is astonished at the sound of the raised voices of these men speaking in all of their indigenous languages rather than the *lingua franca* of Greek or Aramaic.<sup>182</sup> They wouldn't have needed the tongues to understand as they would have shared a language, instead they hear in their mother tongue.<sup>183</sup> This is an amazing condescension of God to these people, they hear in the way it's easiest for them to understand.

The list of nations starts with Parthia, Media, Elam & Mesopotamia, which are all Aramaic speaking lands to the east of the Euphrates, the area to which the 10 northern tribes were deported by Assyria.<sup>184</sup> These are those who must have ignored the Persian decree to return. The grace of the gospel reaches not just to the Jews who have followed God, but also to the edges of the people, including those who had first ignored the call.<sup>185</sup>

The list of nations continues to the north and south, and as far west as Rome. All of these people are amazed to hear men with Galilean accents speaking their own languages.<sup>186</sup> This reference to Galileans is pejorative, the region was known for having a thick impenetrable accent,<sup>187</sup> for being

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idea that the supernatural is being made natural through the inbreaking of the kingdom of God in the church; however what Bauckham seems to be doing is creating a theological rationale for the spiritual poverty of the West. It's like visiting a country riven by famine and trying to reassure the starving children that people weren't actually meant to eat food, so they will be fine if they just move on with their lives: patronising, scandalous, deeply sad and ultimately abusive.

<sup>179</sup> Bock, *Acts*, 97. For a full argument see Keener, *Acts*, 813 - 815.

<sup>180</sup> Stott, *Message of Acts*, 66

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<sup>182</sup> It's likely that the Jewish diaspora in these areas are the remaining remnant of the northern kingdom who hadn't entirely lost their identity. Bruce, *The Book of the Acts*, 54. There's another parallel here with the giving of the law, in Exodus 20.18 it is also accompanied by a range of voices.

<sup>183</sup> Blomberg, *Pentecost to Patmos*, 27

<sup>184</sup> Bruce, *The Book of the Acts*, 55. Their numbers had been bolstered by continuing Judean deportations by Nebuchadnezzar. 56.

<sup>185</sup> Bock suggests that, "the Spirit's working as the Spirit of prophecy who also helps to continue the new exodus liberation and the purging restoration of Israel." Bruce, *The Book of the Acts*, 99 n.10

<sup>186</sup> Bruce, *The Book of the Acts*, 54-58

<sup>187</sup> Specifically for having difficulty pronouncing gutturals and swallowing syllables. They were looked down on as provincial. Longenecker, *Acts*, 272

uneducated and for being a breeding ground for revolutionary malcontents.<sup>188</sup> Wagner colourfully describes it as:

“roughly equivalent to West Virginia coal miners attempting to evangelise the Massachusetts Institute of Technology alumni association. One of the first things that would turn them off would be the ‘evangelists’ unsophisticated Appalachian accent.”<sup>189</sup>

Their surprise is therefore at their diverse linguistic ability, even down to each individual’s dialect and idiom.<sup>190</sup> It is an occasion of, “simultaneous translation into the cultural form closest to each listener’s heart, the mother tongue.”<sup>191</sup>

The city is full of pilgrims from all around the dispersion, and so then God is praised in all the tongues of the dispersion.<sup>192</sup> They are literally from every ‘corner’ of the globe, from each direction you could move out from Jerusalem. The message is reaching people whose roots spanned the nations, the narrative is moving in the direction of Luke’s more universal concerns.<sup>193</sup> Tertullian also saw in this universal list a sign that the rule of Christ overshadowed Roman rule in its basic extent, more nations respond to the gospel in an instant than Rome has conquered in centuries.<sup>194</sup> Based on the list of countries, there would be at least 15 different languages being spoken.<sup>195</sup>

There is some disagreement, but there may be a link to the table of nations in Genesis 10, Stott sees this list as being a similar form, Bock and Bruce are less sure.<sup>196</sup> He points out that the nations include the descendants of Shem, Ham and Japheth, subtly showing that the whole world is represented. All of the scattered nations are being brought home. Whether there is or not, in this moment there is definitely a reversion of the curse of Babel.<sup>197</sup> At Babel language was confused to cause disunity among the people of Earth, here at Pentecost language is supernaturally used to unite disparate nations together and create a new united people by the Spirit. It makes foreigners into brothers.<sup>198</sup>

Bock warns against pushing the Babel analogy too far for three reasons, firstly Luke doesn’t spell it out, secondly the confusion of language between nations isn’t ended and thirdly they still speak in multiple languages.<sup>199</sup> Marshall is also unsure of the link due to it not being clear in the text, but helpfully points at that even if not the texts can be theologically read in the light of each other.<sup>200</sup>

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<sup>188</sup> C.f. Bock, *Acts*, 101 n. 13

<sup>189</sup> Wagner, *Acts*, 66

<sup>190</sup> “God is using for each group the most familiar linguistic means possible to make sure the message reaches to the audience in a form they can appreciate.” Bock, *Acts*, 102.

<sup>191</sup> Crouch, *Culture Making*, 148

<sup>192</sup> Bruce, *The Book of the Acts*, 59

<sup>193</sup> Bruce, *The Book of the Acts*, 100; Bock, *Acts*, 103. Lincoln adds that the “inauguration of the renewed Israel with the Twelve as its foundation and the Jerusalem church as its representative. It also foreshadows the universality of the mission of the renewed people of God.” Lincoln, ‘Pentecost’, 906.

<sup>194</sup> Bock, *Acts*, 102 referencing Tertullian, *Against the Jews*, 7

<sup>195</sup> Wagner, *Acts*, 63

<sup>196</sup> C.f. Stott, *Message of Acts*, 68. Marshall says that if the allusion to Babel is intended by Luke, then this allusion to Genesis 10 would be intended too. ‘Acts’, 532, however he on balance denies both suggestions. c.f. Davids, ‘Tongues’, 1178.

<sup>197</sup> Bruce, *The Book of the Acts*, 59; Calvin, *Acts*, 75; contra Marshall, ‘Acts’, 532. This connection can also be found in the Fathers and others throughout church history, including Origen, Cyril of Jerusalem, Gregory Nazianzus, Chrysostom, Cassiodorus, Augustine, Ephrem, Kuyper and Gregory I. Oden, *Classic Christianity*, 550.

<sup>198</sup> Wilson, *God\*Stories*, 59

<sup>199</sup> Bock, *Acts*, 101

<sup>200</sup> Marshall, ‘Acts’, 532

However it is a foretaste of Revelation 7, with every nation united in worship of Jesus.<sup>201</sup> Even then the nations speak in multiple languages, the point is the unity of heart and the understanding between them. Pentecost is a sign not of God undoing the diversity caused by Babel, but of him redeeming it, honouring it and demonstrating its innate goodness. Whereas Babel was an attempt by man to reach from earth to heaven, this is an action by God to bring heaven to earth.<sup>202</sup>

As Crouch puts it:

“the curse of Babel is miraculously undone. In the wake of Babel, God chose a single-ethnolinguistic group to be his people in order to be a blessing to the nations; Pentecost is the beginning ... of the ‘last days’ in which that blessing will be broken open and poured out upon every cultural group, every ‘nation’ ... And just as the curse on the citizens of Babel was a dramatic divine intervention ... so its reversal comes as a gift – a supernatural (... supercultural) overcoming of separation.”<sup>203</sup> He continues that its ultimate purpose was to allow the Gentiles to enter the covenant.<sup>204</sup>

Galatians is therefore the ultimate endpoint of the Spirit community, the Spirit creates culture.

So therefore we see that these tongues demonstrate that ethnic barriers to entry into the people of God have been torn down. People are communicated to in their own idiom, their diversity is honoured and they are invited to join the people of God. This is a sharp distinction from the missionary activity of the Old Covenant, the message is not “join this cultural community” but instead be invited to know God from your own cultural background. Receiving the Spirit creates a unity that transcends apparent differences.

The immediate result of the Spirit being poured out, is that without planning or intending to, the disciples find themselves fulfilling the mission that Jesus gave them to fulfil in Acts 1.9 and Luke 24.47.<sup>205</sup>

## Responses

*And all were amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, "What does this mean?" But others mocking said, "They are filled with new wine."*

The word ‘perplexed’ or ‘bewildered’ is *diaper*, meaning ‘to be a loss over something’.<sup>206</sup> The crowd really doesn’t know what to make of what they are seeing, and need the intervention of Peter’s preaching to ground the events in Joel 2 and to invite them to join in.

Others adopt a mocking tone, sneering or jeering.<sup>207</sup> Some in the crowd can’t think of another explanation except drunkenness.<sup>208</sup> New wine is sweet, only partially fermented wine, which this is

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<sup>201</sup> Wilson, *God\*Stories*, 60

<sup>202</sup> Stott, *Message of Acts*, 68

<sup>203</sup> Crouch, *Culture Making*, 149

<sup>204</sup> Crouch, *Culture Making*, 152

<sup>205</sup> Bock, *Acts*, 93

<sup>206</sup> Bock, *Acts*, 105

<sup>207</sup> Bock, *Acts*, 105

<sup>208</sup> Bock, *Acts*, 105. Ancient wine was typically much weaker than modern wine, though some wine was made for the purpose of getting drunk that might be nearer our modern varieties.<sup>208</sup> Wine was a basic staple, normally diluted with water to drink. The Greeks saw drinking unwatered wine as barbaric; this is a society where moderate drinking was socially and morally normal, and heavy drinking for festivals was approved of. However, Jewish writers in particular counselled wine only in small quantities and did not approve of drunkenness at festivals. To be drunk at Pentecost in or around the Temple would be deeply offensive. The fact that women were involved would make it doubly scandalous. Keener, *Acts*, 853-858

the wrong time of year for there to be any available, but the season isn't important, it's an insult.<sup>209</sup> They're being accused of being drunk on weak, cheap wine; in other words of gluttony and binge drinking.<sup>210</sup> Luke is probably also slipping in a reference to Jesus' description of the kingdom as being like new wine.<sup>211</sup> The hecklers ironically speak the truth, they are drunk on new wine. The Spirit is cheap, readily available, requires new structures and is intoxicating in large amounts.

Stott sees this accusation of drunkenness as coming from those who understand none of the languages.<sup>212</sup> I'm not sure this has great explanatory power. If someone was speaking a language I don't understand, or that sounds like gibberish then the responses 'they're crazy' or 'they're foreign' would seem natural. If they were drunk I might expect falling over, speaking loudly or spontaneous laughter. There must have been some form of ecstatic behaviour, Keener suggests it may have been an 'extremely atypical exuberance' but leaves it open to have had almost any form that might have fit.<sup>213</sup>

Reactions clearly differ, encounters with the Spirit of whatever sort are not self-authenticating to those that are not partaking of them. They need explaining. However they are visible to those that are not partaking of them, and can be recognised and understood by those who have received the Spirit themselves.

"Luke reports the Pentecost experience not merely as a matter of historical interest but because for him it set the normative pattern for the church."<sup>214</sup> Pentecost is paradigmatic for all believers.<sup>215</sup>

## Summary

- There is significance to the festival that the outpouring of the Spirit occurred on, it's linked with the firstfruits of the gospel being received by the embryonic church; and with the Law of Christ being written on their hearts by the Spirit.
- They gathered to pray, and then received the Spirit as promised. There is a strong link between asking and receiving.
- The signs of wind, fire and languages indicate the start of the new age of the Spirit, the in-breaking of the age to come.
- Their receipt of the Spirit was visible, audible and ultimately noticeable. It was self-authenticating but not clear to all of those not taking part. It required an explanation.
- The Spirit broke down barriers. All of the gathered pilgrims heard the truth in their mother tongue and local idiom. This reached to the edges of Judaism, to those who thought they were excluded. It creates its own unifying culture, beginning the reversal of Babel that will be completed in the age to come.
- The Spirit is free, readily available and intoxicating
- It empowered the disciples to pursue Jesus mission naturally, without strategy or pretence.
- Those who travelled to the festival to be near the presence of God, leave with the presence living in them instead.

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<sup>209</sup> Keener, *Acts*, 859

<sup>210</sup> Keener, *Acts*, 860-861

<sup>211</sup> "Whereas the hecklers within the narrative might envision Jesus' followers becoming drunk on sweet new wine, Luke's audience instead recognise a joy that previous structures could not contain." Keener, *Acts*, 861.

<sup>212</sup> Stott, *Message of Acts*, 65

<sup>213</sup> Keener, *Acts*, 853

<sup>214</sup> Keener, *Acts*, 793

<sup>215</sup> Keener, *Acts*, 794

## 2.3 Acts 2:14-39

Peter then moves on to explain to the waiting crowd<sup>216</sup> what on earth the phenomena they were witnessing were, and what conclusions they should draw from that. For our current study, the relevant sections of his resultant sermon are:

### **Acts 2:14-18**

*But Peter, standing with the eleven, lifted up his voice and addressed them: "Men of Judea and all who dwell in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and give ear to my words. For these people are not drunk, as you suppose, since it is only the third hour of the day. But this is what was uttered through the prophet Joel: "'And in the last days it shall be, God declares, that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams; even on my male servants and female servants in those days I will pour out my Spirit, and they shall prophesy.*

### **Acts 2:33**

*Being therefore exalted at the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, he has poured out this that you yourselves are seeing and hearing.*

### **Acts 2:38-39**

*And Peter said to them, "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. 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."*

### **"Not drunk as you suppose!"**

Peter directly addresses the charge stated against the disciples, but does so by making a joke of it.<sup>217</sup> He puts the crowd at ease and builds familiarity in a way very familiar to us.<sup>218</sup> It's just not realistic that they could be drunk at 9 in the morning.<sup>219</sup> However, their behaviour must have given rise to the jibe. As before there has to be a reason that they were judged to be acting as though drunk.

### **Quotation of Joel 2.38-32**

Peter begins by quoting from Joel 2, stating simply that 'this is that', the bizarre behaviour that the crowd was witness to are what was prophesied by Joel.<sup>220</sup> To do so would be to immediately indicate that what they were witnessing were the 'last days'<sup>221</sup> of God's fulfilment of his promises; Joel was announcing the coming day of the Lord. Luke has already pointed to the fact that the major sign of the age to come is the Spirit being freely available.<sup>222</sup>

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<sup>216</sup> The crowd would have been particularly large, he addressed them in the outer court of the Temple. Bruce, *The Book of the Acts*, 60

<sup>217</sup> Bruce, *The Book of the Acts*, 60

<sup>218</sup> Keener, *Acts*, 867

<sup>219</sup> Bock, *Acts*, 111. The favoured time for drunkenness then, as now, would be the evening. It would be so unusual to see someone drunk in the morning in Judea as to be ludicrous. This is even before the morning meal (typically 10am). Keener, *Acts*, 870-871. C.f. Arrington, *Acts*, 27.

<sup>220</sup> Bruce, *The Book of the Acts*, 59. "Jesus has now done what Joel promises. Thus the Spirit's outpouring fulfils the promise pointing to the last days and to the Messiah's mediation of salvation from God's side." Bock, *Acts*, 131.

<sup>221</sup> Bruce, *The Book of the Acts*, 61

<sup>222</sup> Bruce, *The Book of the Acts*, 61. The start of "decisive eras of fulfilment." Bock, *Acts*, 112

In this way the Spirit functioned as an apologetic for the early church, the sign that what they said was true.<sup>223</sup> If we still are waiting the return of Jesus then we must be in the same moment of salvation history, between the ages, so there is no good reason for assuming that we shouldn't expect the same kinds of experiences and gifts.<sup>224</sup>

Joel said that the Spirit would be poured out on 'all flesh'. The 120 Jews that they have witnessed receive the Spirit cannot be 'all flesh', neither can the 3000 saved later that day.<sup>225</sup> It refers, as Joel himself indicates, to people of both sexes (male and female), any age (young and old), and any class (free and slave<sup>226</sup>).<sup>227</sup> Luke includes the Gentiles as the rest of the book makes clear, so there is no ethnic distinction either,<sup>228</sup> the reader is meant to make this inference even though Peter wouldn't be able to make it until Acts 10.<sup>229</sup> The Spirit then has an ecclesial edge, as he creates a charismatic community with his universality.<sup>230</sup> There is a democratisation as a result of the Spirit's action that removes the Priesthood and creates a community that is ruled only by God.<sup>231</sup>

The phrase 'poured out' carried the image of a torrential downpour<sup>232</sup> on parched earth, which carries with it a sense of universality and bringing of new life.<sup>233</sup> Stott describes the gift as generous, final as it can't be gathered in again, and universal based on its wide distribution.<sup>234</sup> However we shouldn't overstretch the analogy, as while you can't gather in a rainstorm, it can keep raining. The idea that because it has rained, it can't again is unusual.

Keener sees this quotation is 'programmatic' for the rest of Acts.<sup>235</sup> In other words, the rest of Acts is the story of this outpouring, which Luke would expect to continue into his own day and that of his readers,<sup>236</sup> "God would hardly pour out his Spirit, then pour it back again."<sup>237</sup>

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<sup>223</sup> Keener, *Acts*, 880

<sup>224</sup> Keener, *Acts*, 880-881

<sup>225</sup> Bruce, *The Book of the Acts*, 61. There is also a link to Numbers 11.29. "The scope of Joel's promise in its original context was specific: it concerned the Spirit of prophecy, i.e. the organ of God's revelation to man, not to be identified with the gift of prophecy as such, but the means by which God gave a revelatory dream, vision or word to an individual who might (or might not) then prophesy." Turner, 'Jesus and the Spirit in Lucan Perspective', 37

<sup>226</sup> Peter adds the word 'my' before slave/servant, which wasn't present in Joel. "Thus God highlights the special relationship he has to those who tend to be forgotten in the social scale." Bock, *Acts*, 115

<sup>227</sup> Bock, *Acts*, 113. "The universality of the distribution is one of the main elements of the promise. Before this new period, the Spirit had been distributed to a few people on specific occasions for special enablement ... this is a key sign that the new era has come ... two often ignored groups of people, servants and women, will be included." (113-114)

<sup>228</sup> Bock, *Acts*, 145

<sup>229</sup> Keener, *Acts*, 884

<sup>230</sup> Arrington, *Acts*, 28. "The Spirit as the mark of the new community defines the church as the body of Christ and individual believers as members of his body. He constitutes the new community that awaits the coming of Jesus Christ." Van Gemeren, 'Joel', 255.

<sup>231</sup> Van Gemeren, 'Joel', 254

<sup>232</sup> Patterson, 'Joel', 255. This is because of the promised rain in Joel 2.22-26. The Spirit will be more abundant than the promised rain.

<sup>233</sup> Bock, *Acts*, 113

<sup>234</sup> Stott, *The Message of Acts*, 73-74.

<sup>235</sup> Keener, *Acts*, 872

<sup>236</sup> Keener, *Acts*, 882

<sup>237</sup> Keener, *Acts*, 882

Peter also quotes a number of apocalyptic signs mentioned by Joel. Some of which can be interpreted as referring to Jesus' death,<sup>238</sup> though many would disagree seeing it all as eschatologically future.<sup>239</sup> This has led to a minority conservative view that sees all of the Joel passage as primarily referent to the ministry of Jesus.<sup>240</sup> This is clearly refuted by Peter's own use, he is pointing to their Pentecostal experience as the Spirit being poured out, not to the Acts of Jesus that he goes on to describe to them. This is especially clear in verse 33 where Jesus is the one giving the Spirit, after he has ascended.

### **Jesus Ascended and Pouring Out the Spirit**

Peter makes three points. Jesus has been exalted; Jesus receives the promise of the Spirit;<sup>241</sup> and Jesus poured out what they can see, the gift of the Spirit.<sup>242</sup> The promise Jesus received is the Spirit, which he then in turn pours out on his people.<sup>243</sup> This is the fulfilment of Jesus' promise to mediate the Spirit in John 14-16.<sup>244</sup>

We know that Jesus is risen because people receive the Spirit and its attendant power. It is the attestation of the triumph of the Jesus,<sup>245</sup> demonstrating that he is the exalted Messiah,<sup>246</sup> and further that he is God himself.<sup>247</sup>

The Davidic kingdom that was announced at the beginning of Jesus' life and the beginning of his ministry, now reaches a new phase with the exaltation of Jesus, it begins to be established in the lives of the community birthed by the Spirit as the Davidic king gives gifts from the right hand of the Father.<sup>248</sup> On the basis of the testimony of eyewitnesses to the resurrection, and the gift of the Spirit, we should assume that Jesus is the resurrected Lord.<sup>249</sup>

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<sup>238</sup> Bruce, *The Book of the Acts*, 62. Bruce points particularly to the darkness and the blood-moon as "harbingers of the advent of the day of the Lord."

<sup>239</sup> E.g. Bock, *Acts*, 115. The initial reference in Joel was to the experience of an incoming plague of locusts that would blot out the Sun (117). I think Keener view that the signs were both prefigured and partially fulfilled in Jesus' death, but were still pointing to a final eschatological fulfilment is probably most helpful. Keener, *Acts*, 917-918.

<sup>240</sup> Sloan, 'Signs and Wonders', 225-240

<sup>241</sup> "The distribution of the Spirit is a messianic executive act." Bock, *Acts*, 130. Bonaventure in Oden, *Classic Christianity*, 343.

<sup>242</sup> Bock, *Acts*, 130. "He who had earlier received the Spirit for the public discharge of his own earthly ministry had now received that same Spirit to impart to his representatives, in order that they might now continue, and indeed share in, the ministry in which he had begun." Bruce, *The Book of the Acts*, 67. "The Spirit is the gift of the risen Christ to the church, showing that God's kingdom had arrived, and that the end-time promises were being realised." Schreiner, *The King in his Beauty*, 492.

<sup>243</sup> Bock, *Acts*, 131. Bock understands this to mean, "a combination of initiation into community and Spirit empowerment tied to proclamation in mission." Though he understands the latter to be inspired preaching only. C.f. Keener, *Acts*, 957 where he establishes the link between the promise and the Spirit as gift himself on the basis of Luke 24.49.

<sup>244</sup> Bock, *Acts*, 133

<sup>245</sup> Bruce, *The Book of the Acts*, 66-67

<sup>246</sup> "His present impartation of the Spirit to them, attended as it was by sensible signs, was a further open vindication of the claim that he was the exalted Messiah." Bruce, *The Book of the Acts*, 67; c.f. Oden, *Classic Christianity*, 488.

<sup>247</sup> Keener, *Acts*, 957. The pouring out of the Spirit is a divine role, as is being a co-regent with God. Jesus now gives to the disciples what the Father gave to him (958 n. 1071).

<sup>248</sup> Keener, *Acts*, 878. "The disciples has entered an interim eta between the first and second comings of the Messiah ... called to testify to the nations by the eschatological gift of the Spirit." (879)

<sup>249</sup> Keener, *Acts*, 944. The outpouring of the Spirit implies that Jesus is at the Father's right hand, further implying that the kingdom has been inaugurated (956).

## Call to Response

Peter declared to the crowd (verses 38-39) that they would not only receive forgiveness of sins, but also the gift of the Holy Spirit that the apostles themselves have only just received.<sup>250</sup> Any new believer can come all the way into this dynamically forming community. They can be exactly like those who have spent years with Jesus in the nature and experience of their relationship with the Father. The great leveller here is receiving the Spirit.

For Dunn & Turner, Acts 2.38 should be seen as the paradigm for Christian conversion. Dunn asks if “modern evangelism [has] held forth the promise of the Spirit explicitly enough?”<sup>251</sup> By this they mean that all conversion must involve receiving the Spirit because they understand them to be the same thing.<sup>252</sup> However, they make a good point even for those that disagree with their basic thesis, the character of Christian initiation comes especially from receiving the Spirit.<sup>253</sup>

For Luke, and for Peter, his call to response is the basic expectation regarding Christian conversion. This doesn’t mean we equate regeneration with the receipt of the Spirit, but it does mean that in the first century a new convert would be expected to then receive the Spirit as the norm. Subsequent to their conversion yes, but immediately following it.<sup>254</sup> This is normal, rather than normative.<sup>255</sup>

Garner points out that if receiving the Spirit is regeneration, then Peter’s construction is Arminian: repent, believe and then God will give you his Spirit and you will be born again. He relates how he struggled with this as a Calvinist, expecting to find that we receive the Spirit prior to our belief. He then points out that the teaching that “there is a receiving of the Spirit which follows faith ... accords perfectly with Calvinistic theology.”<sup>256</sup>

Peter says that the promise is for, even those who are far off.<sup>257</sup> That certainly includes us, despite our vast distance in both space and time.<sup>258</sup> The Spirit is “now available as the sign of the new era to anyone who turns to embrace the call of God made through Jesus.”<sup>259</sup> “The entire speech has a dialectic [with echoes of Isaiah 55] – hearers call on the Lord for salvation ... and the Lord calls them to himself.”<sup>260</sup> The gift of the Spirit is available to anyone who asks for it.

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<sup>250</sup> Bruce, *The Book of the Acts*, 69

<sup>251</sup> Dunn, *Baptism in the Holy Spirit*, 229

<sup>252</sup> See elsewhere for Jimmy Dunn’s understanding of Baptism in the Holy Spirit.

<sup>253</sup> Bruce, *The Book of the Acts*, 69. Bruce sees receiving the Spirit as an ‘inward work’ (70) of which water baptism should be seen as its ‘external token’. This doesn’t really follow from the text, as the external token seems to be receiving the Spirit itself, and perhaps the tongues and prophecy that then follow. This is the external token prophesied by Joel, not water baptism. Bruce also understands Baptism in the Holy Spirit as having taken place once for all at Pentecost. He fails to grapple with why Peter then offers it to everyone else.

<sup>254</sup> “Conversion and the gift of the Spirit are inseparably connected theologically.” Keener, *Acts*, 985. But, not necessarily temporally. “The events of Acts 2.38 are theologically a single package; this does not mean, however that they always occur in the exact sequence as in 2.38.”

<sup>255</sup> Keener, *Acts*, 985 n. 1329

<sup>256</sup> Garner, *The Promise of the Spirit*, 16-17

<sup>257</sup> This is an allusion to Isaiah 57.19. In Peter’s mind it is probably the diaspora and the God-fearers. Bock, *Acts*, 145

<sup>258</sup> “By noting that the promise is for others, [Luke] makes the proper response for the present crowd (namely repentance and baptism in Jesus’ name) and the gift of the Spirit received at Pentecost ... paradigmatic for all subsequent believers.” Keener, *Acts*, 984

<sup>259</sup> Bock, *Acts*, 144

<sup>260</sup> Bock, *Acts*, 145

## Summary

- The Spirit is a universal gift available to everyone. All types and kinds of people you can imagine, there is no distinction in who is offered the Spirit. This is the sign of unity.
- Receiving the Spirit is expected to swiftly follow conversion for all. Acts 2.38 is paradigmatic for Christian initiation. Therefore 'evangelism' should offer the Spirit, the gospel without it isn't the whole offer. The gift is offered to everyone from the moment of faith.
- A gift of the ascended Jesus, it is poured out by him. Because he is ascended, it is available. This is the fourth part of the 'Christ event' of AD 33. In order to create his new community, free from sin, united in mission and created disciples of all kinds of people; Jesus was crucified, was raised from the dead, is ascended to the right hand of the Father *and* continues to pour out the Spirit on his people.
- This is the sign of the new age. The rest of Acts is the story of this outpouring, and we should expect it to continue in our day.
- The Spirit is poured out like a rainstorm: swift and dramatic, transforming landscapes and bringing life to parched soil.
- The Spirit was the apologetic for the early church, the sign to outsiders that what they said was true.

## 2.4 Acts 8.12-17

*But when they believed Philip as he preached good news about the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women. Even Simon himself believed, and after being baptized he continued with Philip. And seeing signs and great miracles performed, he was amazed. Now when the apostles at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent to them Peter and John, who came down and prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit, for he had not yet fallen on any of them, but they had only been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. Then they laid their hands on them and they received the Holy Spirit.*

Philip has preached the gospel to the Samaritans, and seen many believe in Jesus. The apostles then come down from Jerusalem, and discover that they have not received the Spirit. They then lay hands on them and they receive. The two key questions for our inquiry are firstly, were these Samaritans believers before the apostles visited? This matters because it tells us whether or not their receipt of the Spirit amounts to their salvation.

Secondly, assuming they were, we need to know why there is a gap between their belief in Christ and their receipt of the Spirit, if it's possible to know that. This will be indicative of whether or not we think such temporal gaps are possible today, and whether or not they are normative.

### The genuineness of their faith

Firstly, did the Samaritans believe when Philip visited them?

Dunn argues that the Samaritan faith is inauthentic,<sup>261</sup> mostly because of his *a priori* commitment that to be a Christian is to have received the Spirit, so they cannot be.<sup>262</sup> Turner points out that he doesn't grapple with the fact that Luke portrays the entire trip as a success.<sup>263</sup>

It's reasonable to assume that their faith is authentic though for six key reasons. First there is no reason in the language to think otherwise,<sup>264</sup> Luke doesn't give us a hint that they aren't.<sup>265</sup> We would need a reason to assume that they were not Christians when they are said to believe, the same language for conversion he used elsewhere in Acts.<sup>266</sup>

Second the apostles do not preach the gospel to them.<sup>267</sup> Third Philip acknowledges their faith as valid in verse 12 and it's implied that the Jerusalem church does in verse 14.<sup>268</sup> Fourth Philip baptised them, and the apostles did not rebaptise them.<sup>269</sup> Fifth joy was the response paralleling his encounter with the Ethiopian eunuch.<sup>270</sup>

Sixthly the difference between the description of Simon Magus' belief and the other Samaritans. The Samaritans believe in Philip's message, Simon's belief has no object.<sup>271</sup> Any argument that we can't assume they were believers because Simon is amongst them and clearly wasn't falls down because the text does seem to differentiate.<sup>272</sup> Simon is a prime example of what Hebrew 6.4 mentions, those who 'partake' of the Spirit, but fall away.<sup>273</sup>

### Waiting for the Spirit

We now need to address why there is a gap between their belief and receipt of the Spirit. Marshall refers to verse 16 as "the most extraordinary statement in Acts."<sup>274</sup> If your basic paradigm requires receipt of the Spirit to be synonymous with conversion, then the Samaritans wait for their receipt of the Spirit demands an explanation.

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<sup>261</sup> Turner, *Power from on High*, 362-363

<sup>262</sup> Dunn, *Baptism in the Holy Spirit*, 68. He also particularly pointed to their credulity to be taken in by Simon Magus. This is perhaps not his most self-aware moment. "Possession of the Spirit was not inferred from baptism, but the genuineness (or otherwise) of the faith expressed in baptism was proved by the reception (or otherwise) of the Spirit." (66).

<sup>263</sup> Turner, *Power from on High*, 363

<sup>264</sup> Bock, *Acts*, 328

<sup>265</sup> Stott, *The Message of Acts*, 155.

<sup>266</sup> Keener, *Acts*, 1517

<sup>267</sup> Bock, *Acts*, 331

<sup>268</sup> Arrington, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 88

<sup>269</sup> Keener, *Acts*, 1523

<sup>270</sup> Arrington, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 88

<sup>271</sup> Bock, *Acts*, 329. Blomberg clutches on this to infer that the rest of the Samaritans were not believers, but as we've seen this doesn't fit the text. As with Dunn this is due to an *a priori* commitment to Spirit reception lining up with regeneration. Blomberg, *Pentecost to Patmos*, 39.

<sup>272</sup> Also the belief of one being shown later to be false does not immediately invalidate the belief of the many. "That Simon fails to persevere tells us no more about the character of other Samaritan converts' faith than Judas' failure to persevere reveals that of the Twelve." Keener, *Acts*, 1518.

<sup>273</sup> Bruce, *Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews*, 121-122. Bruce comments on how the tradition has it that Simon became a determined opponent of Christianity in the following decades. "Simon's inner motives were made manifest. He was looking for more power ... This man would like to continue with his religion, but with Christian power, and especially the authority" Van Der Merwe, 'The power of the Gospel Victorious over the power of evil in Acts of the Apostles', 56

<sup>274</sup> Stott, *The Message of Acts*, 150

Commentators vary as to their theories on why the Apostles visited in the first place. Bruce suggests that they saw it as their duty to supervise the progress of the gospel in line with the original mandate given to them by Jesus in Acts 1: from Jerusalem, to Judea and *Samaria*, and then to the ends of the earth.<sup>275</sup> Whatever the reason for their visit it must have been clear to the apostles that they hadn't received the Spirit, presumably this would be the lack of *charismata* in their gatherings.<sup>276</sup> It would be a deep concern for them as the Spirit is the sign of divine sanction.<sup>277</sup>

So, why is there a wait for the Samaritans? The majority conservative or traditional view is that there was a requirement for special evidence for the Samaritans of their inclusion,<sup>278</sup> particularly as their identity involves them being despised as outsiders by those from Jerusalem.<sup>279</sup> This makes this an acknowledgment of welcome by the leaders of the Jerusalem church, which was required before they received the signs of membership.<sup>280</sup> To do otherwise would be risk a fractious church.<sup>281</sup> While I'm sure this was welcome, it would seem a stronger message to gift them with the Spirit as in Acts 10 with the Gentiles.<sup>282</sup> This did cause friction and division within the embryonic church, which seems to undermine the argument that they needed to do so to avoid it here.

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<sup>275</sup> Bruce, *The Book of the Acts*, 168

<sup>276</sup> Turner, *Power from on High*, 374

<sup>277</sup> Keener, *Acts*, 1522

<sup>278</sup> Bruce, *The Book of the Acts*, 170; Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 774

<sup>279</sup> Samaritan beliefs were very similar to Jewish ones, but they weren't ethnically Jewish. They rejected the OT beyond the Pentateuch, and had altered some of the Pentateuch, e.g. 10<sup>th</sup> commandment was now that sacrifices are required on Mount Gerizim, the centre of their cult of worship. For the story of their origins see 2 Kings 17 and the exile of the northern kingdom, Samaritanism started out in syncretism. There is clearly still pagan syncretism in Acts 8, Simon is an example of this. C.f. Van Der Merwe, 'The power of the Gospel Victorious over the power of evil in Acts of the Apostles', 53-54. "The most likely answer as to why God withheld the Holy Spirit from these and *these only* is found in the unique relationship between the Jews and Samaritans. An important fact to remember is that this was the first occasion on which the gospel had been proclaimed not only outside Jerusalem but *inside* Samaria. This is significant for several important reasons." Storms, 'Baptism of the Holy Spirit – Part II'. He continues, "It may be difficult for us today to grasp the depth of hatred that existed between Jews and Samaritans. The Jews blamed the Samaritans for having destroyed the unity of God's people and the monarchy following the death of Solomon in 922. They were also regarded as "half-breeds" because they had intermarried with Gentiles. When the Jews returned to Jerusalem after the exile, the Samaritans hindered their efforts to rebuild the temple and constructed their own on Mt. Gerizim. In 6 A.D., during the Passover, some Samaritans scattered the bones of a dead man in the court of the temple in Jerusalem, an act of defilement that enraged the Jews and only intensified their animosity. Indeed, the Jews publicly cursed Samaritans and prayed fervently that God would never save any of them." NB: there are a number of revisionist views circulating re the Samaritans, which don't directly affect any of the conclusions here, c.f. Gundry, R., "And He Led Them to Samaria", 22-23.

<sup>280</sup> Bruce, *The Book of the Acts*, 170. "Luke does not say why there was an interval on this occasion between the converts' believing in Jesus and their receiving the Spirit; he leaves the reason to be inferred ... the most natural explanation of the interval is that when at last the Spirit fell on the Samaritan believers, they received the assurance--not from a freelance evangelist like Philip but from the authoritative leaders of the church--that they were no longer outcasts but were incorporated as full members of the people of God of the new age." Bruce, 'Luke's Presentation of the Spirit in Acts', 23

<sup>281</sup> Stott, *The Message of Acts*, 158. Schreiner expands that "God withheld the Spirit on this one occasion to prevent a breach between the Jews and Samaritans, granting the Spirit only through the hands of the apostles so that the Samaritan church would not split off from Jerusalem." Schreiner, *New Testament Theology*, 458.

<sup>282</sup> Garner, *The Promise of the Spirit*, 20

This makes the laying on of hands a sign of solidarity and fellowship,<sup>283</sup> or perhaps identification,<sup>284</sup> related to them joining the visible church.<sup>285</sup> Storms argues that Holy Spirit delayed in order to allow the leaders of the Jerusalem church to place their stamp of approval on the movement of the gospel into Samaria.<sup>286</sup> This is similar, but the primary issue here is it makes the apostles the seal of the Samaritans, rather than the Spirit.<sup>287</sup> Especially when in Acts 10 it's clearly the Spirit that provides the seal of approval.

Most proponents of this view seem to avoid the tricky question of what is happening ontologically through this process. Their opinion that receiving the Spirit is regeneration is strained even by their own interpretation, but there aren't many more explanations beyond this being a 'special case', typically due to the unique position of the Samaritans. As it's a unique example we should not consider the wait to be in any way paradigmatic.<sup>288</sup> We shouldn't forget that the Spirit is signalling the unification of the people of God, this is an epoch-making moment nonetheless.<sup>289</sup>

Bruce also offers a second possibility, that Philip didn't adequately oppose Simon's sway over the community, so Peter needed to oppose him and the demonic powers he represented before the Samaritans could be fully incorporated into the church by receiving the Spirit.<sup>290</sup> This is an intriguing suggestion as there is a confrontation between the powers here, and the Spirit clearly demonstrates his ownership of the Samaritan believers. However it misses that the Samaritans still receive the Spirit before Peter's confrontation with Simon. If Luke had meant to make this point with his narrative, he could easily have made it clearer.

Some have interpreted this as the first act of confirmation by episcopal authority, but there's no hint of that in the passage<sup>291</sup> and it comes across as special pleading for denominational viewpoints. Bock modifies this a little by seeing the Apostles' visit as an endorsement of Philip's work.<sup>292</sup>

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<sup>283</sup> Van Der Merwe understands the laying on of the apostles' hands as signifying the unity of the church, he doesn't even comment on the fact that they then "receive the Spirit". Van Der Merwe, 'The power of the Gospel Victorious over the power of evil in Acts of the Apostles', 58. If the issue was truly unity, you would expect God to do what he does with the Gentiles in Acts 10 and give them the Spirit directly.

<sup>284</sup> Bock, *Acts*, 330. It's a "special legitimisation" (331).

<sup>285</sup> Bruce, *The Book of the Acts*, 170

<sup>286</sup> Storms, 'Baptism of the Holy Spirit – Part II'. "even the explanation that I have given as to why God suspended the gift of the Spirit in the case of the Samaritans does not explain theologically how they could have been regenerated, converted, and believing Christians, members of the body of Christ, without yet having received the Holy Spirit." Storms sights his opinion in the murderous animosity between Jews and Samaritans, and the danger of an early split in the church. This is a good point, but surely there was even more danger in admitting Gentiles in Acts 10?

<sup>287</sup> Garner, *The Promise of the Spirit*, 20

<sup>288</sup> "The two stages to the Spirit's appearance are part of the scene's unusual context, where church practice is breaking new ground, so that a confirmation and an affirmation are noted in a way that is not a paradigm for later practice." Bock, *Acts*, 330. Often this argument is used to entirely obscure the simple facts of the Samaritan's experience, e.g. Dockery states that "There is no suggestion that anyone who believed was either not filled or partially filled." Dockery, 'The Theology of Acts', 46. Which is, of course, precisely what there is a suggestion of, that's why Luke feels that it needs explanation.

<sup>289</sup> Schreiner, *The King in his Beauty*, 491. This is the reunification of Israel, the fulfilment of Ezekiel 37.14-22, which precedes his great promises of the Spirit to come.

<sup>290</sup> Bruce, *The Book of the Acts*, 171-172.

<sup>291</sup> Bruce, *The Book of the Acts*, 169

<sup>292</sup> Bock, *Acts*, 330

Calvin suggested that they had already ‘received the Spirit’ in the sense of regeneration, this experience was an additional receipt for gifting with power.<sup>293</sup> Which is surprisingly close to the classic Pentecostal view of Spirit reception.

It’s also possible that the apostles were there to fix the situation in the first place,<sup>294</sup> but we have no more reason for assuming that than that they came to demonstrate solidarity with the Samaritans and see the fledgling church, and then found something not right so they fixed it.

Turner admits that he isn’t sure, but points out that if Luke thought it was an issue he would explain it. It isn’t an issue for Luke because they do receive.<sup>295</sup> Honestly, we simply don’t know why they didn’t receive the Spirit when they believed.<sup>296</sup>

### **Their responses**

According to Bruce, it’s clearly implied that their reception of the Spirit is accompanied by the same external manifestations as at Pentecost, including tongues.<sup>297</sup> There certainly must have been visible signs due to Simon’s reaction and request for the ability.<sup>298</sup> Others are more circumspect, pointing out that tongues simply aren’t mentioned.<sup>299</sup> Clearly there is some form of external manifestation, and it probably included tongues, but the text prevents us from being overly dogmatic.

### **Is this paradigmatic for us?**

Any explanation that sees the Samaritan’s wait for receiving the Spirit as because they are a special case has to assume that a delayed reception of the Spirit is “exceptional and not normative.”<sup>300</sup> Stott describes it as abnormal.<sup>301</sup> Schreiner suggests the reason it’s recounted is because it’s exceptional, saying that there is no basis for assuming such an interval from the rest of Acts.<sup>302</sup> We should be careful here because the majority of the data in Acts actually does point towards some sort of interval being known, if not common.

None of these are particularly helpful because their basic theological framework requires that this is so. Intriguingly though Turner suggests that Luke’s explanation in verse 16 indicates that this isn’t normative.<sup>303</sup> Stott points to Luke’s use of the word ‘only’ regarding their baptism.<sup>304</sup> Luke would have expected otherwise, as would his contemporaries. Their everyday experience did not contain long waits before receiving the Spirit.

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<sup>293</sup> Quoted in Stott, *The Message of Acts*, 155

<sup>294</sup> Hosier, *Christ’s Radiant Church*, 94

<sup>295</sup> Turner, *Power from on High*, 374

<sup>296</sup> Garner, *The Promise of the Spirit*, 20

<sup>297</sup> Bruce, *The Book of the Acts*, 169; Bock, *Acts*, 332

<sup>298</sup> Keener, *Acts*, 1528. “It is far more likely that Luke uses tongues as a narrative evidence for reception of the Spirit than that he implies that tongues must *always* accompany reception of the Spirit.”

<sup>299</sup> Wagner, *The Book of Acts*, 160. If Luke mentions them on every other occasion, why should we assume that they are implied on the occasion that he doesn’t?

<sup>300</sup> Bock, *Acts*, 331. In Bock’s understanding “the reception of the Spirit [is] a clear indication that people have truly believed, as God’s sanction of them.” Though he stops well short of Dunn’s thesis.

<sup>301</sup> Stott, *The Message of Acts*, 154. “Because we are not Samaritans, we receive forgiveness and the Spirit together the moment we believe.” (158-159).

<sup>302</sup> Schreiner, *New Testament Theology*, 457

<sup>303</sup> Turner, *Power from on High*, 360

<sup>304</sup> Stott, *The Message of Acts*, 156

We should therefore understand the experience of the Samaritans as theologically abnormal, but ontologically possible.<sup>305</sup> Luke's ideal is simultaneity,<sup>306</sup> but this passage is enough to show us that not every instance fits this pattern,<sup>307</sup> there is a variety of experience.<sup>308</sup> Luke's point is not about timing, it's about the necessity of the Spirit's empowerment for the Christian life.<sup>309</sup>

## Summary

- The Samaritans were genuine believers who did not receive the Spirit at the moment of regeneration.
- It isn't fundamentally clear why they experienced this gap, but it is presented as abnormal. Therefore delay in receiving the Spirit is possible, but should be seen as abnormal, not something to be encouraged.
- They received through the laying on of hands.
- There may be an element of Spiritual warfare involved.
- They receive with external manifestations that are dramatic and visible. We aren't told which, but it's reasonable to assume that it would be similar to other occasions in Acts. Tongues therefore may not always be the response to receive the Spirit, though it is clearly common.

## 2.5 Acts 10.44-48

*While Peter was still saying these things, the Holy Spirit fell on all who heard the word. And the believers from among the circumcised who had come with Peter were amazed, because the gift of the Holy Spirit was poured out even on the Gentiles. For they were hearing them speaking in tongues and extolling God. Then Peter declared, "Can anyone withhold water for baptizing these people, who have received the Holy Spirit just as we have?" And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Then they asked him to remain for some days.*

Peter finds himself led by God to be speaking to a group of Gentiles, as he speaks they are demonstrably baptised with the Holy Spirit.

Bruce describes this as the 'Pentecost of the Gentiles',<sup>310</sup> which for him means that the Gentiles participate by the Spirit in the first Jewish Pentecost as this was a once for all event.<sup>311</sup> Though he doesn't say so, he must understand this to be primarily symbolic as he has no ongoing expectation of any Gentiles receiving the Spirit like this subsequently to this first group in Cornelius' house.

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<sup>305</sup> Keener, *Acts*, 1522. "The delay inadvertently demonstrates that early Christians were aware of anomalies and that the gift of the Spirit ... was ontologically distinguishable – and at least on occasion at a time different – from conversion." (1523).

<sup>306</sup> Keener points again to Acts 2.38-39 as being the norm.

<sup>307</sup> Keener, *Acts*, 1522

<sup>308</sup> Keener, *Acts*, 1524

<sup>309</sup> Keener, *Acts*, 1527, "The Spirit's empowerment is not optional for the Christian life, and the need for such empowerment must be attended to urgently."

<sup>310</sup> Bruce, *The Book of the Acts*, 216. He suggests their experience is closest to that of Pentecost for the disciples of all the other receptions of the Spirit in Acts (217). Though I'm not sure this is evidentially true, there's no reason for assuming Acts 19 is particularly different. And based on the other three accounts we can infer that Acts 8 and the receipts following Acts 2 and throughout the rest of the book (e.g. Acts 9) would be similar if not identical.

<sup>311</sup> Bruce, *The Book of the Acts*, 216

It's notable that this appears to be a different order to that laid out by Peter in Acts 2.38,<sup>312</sup> as there is no obvious sign of repentance, though we can infer faith, and Spirit reception definitely precedes baptism.<sup>313</sup> While Acts 2.38 is programmatic for Luke's account, he's not dogmatic about fitting the events to his model. We should infer from this that receipt of the Holy Spirit doesn't always follow a strict pattern, even if there is an idealised way of doing this. The most surprisingly thing for those of us who are Gentiles<sup>314</sup> is perhaps the direct way this happens, no declaration of faith,<sup>315</sup> no offer of the Spirit<sup>316</sup> and no laying on of hands.<sup>317</sup>

It's notable that the initiative is entirely God's,<sup>318</sup> which not only informs us about the purpose of the experience but also about its nature. We could expect that any receipt of the Spirit could be at God's initiative entirely, though all of the other examples in Acts see him working through another believer.

Bruce argues that the outward manifestations were required for Cornelius and his group so that the Jewish believers would believe the unbelievable, that the Spirit had come on Gentiles,<sup>319</sup> demonstrating God's impartiality as long promised.<sup>320</sup> We see here the dramatic beginnings of the fulfilment of Isaiah 49.6, the Father's promise to his servant that it is too small a thing to simply restore Israel, salvation must go to the ends of the earth.<sup>321</sup>

The Spirit is the reason it's clear that the Gentiles were Christians,<sup>322</sup> as the Spirit is a gift only for the covenant people.<sup>323</sup> He suggests that had Peter not been presented "with a divine *fait accompli*"<sup>324</sup>

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<sup>312</sup> Bruce, *The Book of the Acts*, 217. Bruce sees it coming first, but I think there's no reason not to infer faith. Acts 11.17 suggests it and Acts 15.7-9 confirms it. Bruce acknowledges this.

<sup>313</sup> Bruce, *The Book of the Acts*, 216

<sup>314</sup> The most surprising thing is that the Gentiles can receive the Spirit, but that becomes normal very quickly for Gentile believers!

<sup>315</sup> Externally, at least.

<sup>316</sup> Though this may have been within the content of Peter's preaching, Luke's truncated summary certainly mentions Jesus operating in the Spirit's power.

<sup>317</sup> Keener, *Acts*, 1809

<sup>318</sup> Bock, *Acts*, 400

<sup>319</sup> Bruce, *The Book of the Acts*, 217. As Menzies puts it, "The reception of the Spirit is the evidential premise upon which the deduction that Cornelius and the others were forgiven could be based." Atkinson, *Baptism in the Spirit*, 54

<sup>320</sup> Arrington, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 88. Arrington points out that God is not only impartial in salvation, but also in gifting.

<sup>321</sup> Moore, *Straight to the Heart of Acts*, 121

<sup>322</sup> Newman, *What We Are About to Receive*, 4. Keener suggests that tongues is the most obvious outward sign of this, surmising that Gentile glossolalia probably confirmed their Spirit reception throughout the early church and therefore was the sign and requirement of their admission to the Christian community, rather than circumcision. Keener, *Acts*, 1812. He also comments that "Luke probably highlights tongues speaking more frequently as a sign of the Spirit's outpouring because of his emphasis on the Spirit's cross-cultural prophetic empowerment," having argued elsewhere that while it's a prominent sign of Spirit reception is shouldn't be viewed as the only sign. c.f. Davids, 'Tongues', 1178. Green describes the Spirit as 'clarifying the status' of the Gentiles. Green, 'Acts of the Apostles', 21. Esler comments that "Gentiles speaking in tongues so as to suggest possession by the Holy Spirit would have constituted the strongest imaginable inducement for the existing Jewish members of the congregation to abandon their deep-seated aversion to mingling with Gentiles." Quoted in Blomberg, *Pentecost to Patmos*, 45 n.114.

<sup>323</sup> Keener, *Acts*, 1809, pointing to Isaiah 42.1, 44.3; Ezekiel 36.26-27, 37.14, 29; Joel 2.28-29.

<sup>324</sup> Bruce, *The Book of the Acts*, 218. Bock adds, "God directs an epoch-making event in which Gentiles are accepted in fellowship and receive the gospel. Their faith leads to the gift of the Spirit, the sign that the new era has arrived." Table fellowship then ensues despite them not being circumcised. Bock, *Acts*, 401.

then he may not have been willing to baptise them in water.<sup>325</sup> His subsequent staying to eat with them is the sign of his acceptance of their status as equals, that Gentiles have been accepted into the covenant by faith alone without circumcision or baptism.

The promises originally given to Abraham, and confirmed in the prophets and psalms, and reiterated by Jesus, were becoming a reality through the power of the Holy Spirit.<sup>326</sup>

Luke uses the language of 'pouring' to describe their experience as a clear textual link to Joel 2.28-29 and Peter's quotation of it in Acts 2.17-18. His point here is that whatever Peter thought eight chapters ago, Joel's 'all flesh' clearly includes the Gentiles.<sup>327</sup>

### Summary

- There can be variation in how people receive. It's possible to receive at the moment of faith and without the laying on of hands. However this is still visible and dramatic.
- The Spirit is the sign that Gentiles have been accepted into the covenant people. Not circumcision, and not baptism.
- Water baptism is an appropriate response to Spirit-reception when it has not already been performed.
- God is impartial, even in the gifts he gives. He gifts as he wills, and takes initiative.

## 2.6 Acts 19.1-7

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

### Who are the disciples?

It isn't instantly apparent who this group of disciples actually are. The most common suggestions are that they are disciples of Jesus of some sort, Christians if you like, or that they are disciples of John the Baptist of some sort.

They may be associated with Apollos due to the similar issues needing correcting and the fact that this narrative immediately follows Apollos' introduction. Wagner, Blomberg and Pawson think that they were Apollos disciples.<sup>328</sup>

Scholars are roughly divided on exactly who they are. The key argument that they are disciples of Jesus are:

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<sup>325</sup> Bruce sees baptism in water here as the most fitting response to being filled with the Spirit. Bruce, *The Book of the Acts*, 218. Keener comments that if the greater is true, baptism in the Spirit, then the lesser should be true, baptism in water. Keener, *Acts*, 1814. This may be a helpful guide in our culture as well.

<sup>326</sup> Schreiner, *The King in his Beauty*, 492

<sup>327</sup> Keener, *Acts*, 1812

<sup>328</sup> Wagner, *The Book of Acts*, 424; Blomberg, *Pentecost to Patmos*, 63; Pawson, *Jesus Baptises in One Holy Spirit*, 88. They may well be, I think it's likely, but it's anything but certain.

1. Luke always uses the term 'disciples' without further qualification to mean disciples of Jesus,<sup>329</sup> if they were disciples of John the Baptist we would expect him to be explicit about this.<sup>330</sup>
2. The implication of the phrase 'when you believed' in verse 2 is that they are disciples,<sup>331</sup> Paul's question treats them as though they were.<sup>332</sup>

Because the disciples haven't received the Holy Spirit, Schreiner feels that they may be believers of a sort, but they must be Old Covenant believers.<sup>333</sup> I think he overstates the case, the Holy Spirit is the New Covenant sign, but not the requirement for entry. We enter the Covenant by the blood of Christ, or to put it anthropologically, by grace and its subsequently birthed faith. The Spirit's action is the proof that this is happened, but things can happen without their evidence being there. It does however make it much harder to verify. See below the suggestions of other kinds of believers that they may be, I think these are more likely.

The key arguments that they are not disciples of Jesus are:

1. Witherington puts forward the simplest and most common argument: they cannot be disciples of Jesus because they do not have the Spirit, the determining factor of true believers for Luke.<sup>334</sup> This cannot be true as we've already seen that Luke uses the term to refer to something it's possible for genuine believers to not have.<sup>335</sup>
2. Blomberg argues that Luke uses the term 'disciples' phenomenologically, according to their own description;<sup>336</sup> Paul is then using the language of appearances when he mentions their 'belief'.<sup>337</sup> Shauf argues that this is only occasion in Acts where 'disciple' is used without the definite article,<sup>338</sup> which Keener demonstrates is not true pointing to numerous occurrences.<sup>339</sup> Keener also argues that while the term 'disciple' swings the balance towards them being disciples of Jesus, this is not absolute as there were lots of disciples around in the first century.<sup>340</sup>
3. Their only having received John's baptism is used to point towards them being John's disciples.<sup>341</sup> Stott thinks that Luke clearly says that this is who they are,<sup>342</sup> the length of this section indicates that it isn't so clear cut!

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<sup>329</sup> Bruce, *The Book of the Acts*, 363; Keener, *Acts*, 2816; Bruce, 'Luke's Presentation of the Spirit in Acts', 25; Arrington, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 191.

<sup>330</sup> There is also no evidence of a group of John's disciples at Ephesus. Bruce, *The Book of the Acts*, 363 n. 7.

<sup>331</sup> Bruce, *The Book of the Acts*, 363; Bock, *Acts*, 599.

<sup>332</sup> Arrington, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 191

<sup>333</sup> Schreiner, *New Testament Theology*, 456. This has all sorts of unfortunate implications if we take Martyn Lloyd-Jones approbation that we should look at our lives before asserting that we 'have it all'.

<sup>334</sup> Quoted in Bock, *Acts*, 599. Witherington also feels the same way about Apollos, which raises the question of why he wasn't baptised again.

<sup>335</sup> "Most scholars deem that the strongest argument for their not yet being believers is that they have not yet received the Spirit, but we saw earlier that in Luke's use of the expression, it was possible for genuine believers to still need the Spirit in some sense." Keener, *Acts*, 2816. He points particularly to Acts 8 to make his argument.

<sup>336</sup> Blomberg, *Pentecost to Patmos*, 63

<sup>337</sup> Bock, *Acts*, 599

<sup>338</sup> Shauf, *Theology as History, History as Theology*, 146

<sup>339</sup> Keener, *Acts*, 2815-2816

<sup>340</sup> Keener, *Acts*, 2816

<sup>341</sup> Keener, *Acts*, 2816

<sup>342</sup> Stott, *The Message of Acts*, 303

4. It is difficult to construct a scenario where disciples of Jesus would be ignorant of Pentecost,<sup>343</sup> which would have been so prevalent in the Jesus movement. Keener suggests that if they are Christians, they cannot have been part of the formal Jesus movement.<sup>344</sup> Arrington argues that they were most likely converted prior to Pentecost, as some must have been, and has not been in touch with the wider community since.<sup>345</sup>
5. Turner thinks that they weren't Christians, as the new information given to them is Jesus,<sup>346</sup> the way Paul explains seems to indicate that they lack knowledge of him.<sup>347</sup> You could equally read the passage to suggest that Paul teaches them about the new age of the Spirit, but starts at first principles.

It isn't possible to be absolutely clear about their identity, but I think that it's more likely that they were disciples of Jesus. I also agree with Keener that if so, they must have been an unusual group, but we cannot say this with certainty.<sup>348</sup> I think that they are probably disciples early on in their walk with Jesus who have somehow encountered the gospel outside of the wider community. Stott claims that it's clear that they aren't Christians,<sup>349</sup> as hopefully we've seen a wide collection of serious commentators are agreed that it is not clear who this group is. They lean to one side or the other, with no clear scholarly consensus on the question.

#### **"Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?"**

Paul must have been able to sense that their knowledge or practice was in some way deficient.<sup>350</sup> Perhaps there was something evident in their behaviour or their prayers.<sup>351</sup> I think it's likely that if Paul worshipped with them, the lack of the dynamic presence of Spirit amongst them would have been very clear. Keener suggests that it's also possible that Paul could see that they were John's disciples, and was using the question as an 'in' to proclaim Jesus as John's promised Spirit baptiser.

Dunn understands Paul's question as one of suspicion, not of genuine inquiry. He is using a tone of surprise.<sup>352</sup> He appeals to Paul's second question to link Spirit-reception with baptism as a shorthand for all of Christian initiation.<sup>353</sup> If you follow Dunn's thesis that Spirit reception is the clearest marker of Christianity, then the question cannot be directed to those Paul thinks are Christians.<sup>354</sup> Wilson, following Dunn, points to Paul's 'clear' statements in Romans 8 and Galatians 3 that show us that he

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<sup>343</sup> Keener, *Acts*, 2816. Though, anecdotally, I've met plenty! Moore suggests the reason these disciples hadn't received was because they were ignorant of the gift of the Holy Spirit. He doesn't give a narrative for how this could have happened. Moore, *Straight to the Heart of Acts*, 205

<sup>344</sup> Keener, *Acts*, 2819

<sup>345</sup> Arrington, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 191. Wagner compares them to nativistic movements found by missionaries, who find faith among natives groups without them having received clear teaching, and often have to correct some sort of error. Wagner, *The Book of Acts*, 425-426.

<sup>346</sup> Turner, *Power from on High*, 390

<sup>347</sup> Keener, *Acts*, 2817

<sup>348</sup> Keener, *Acts*, 2817

<sup>349</sup> Stott, *The Message of Acts*, 304

<sup>350</sup> Bruce, *The Book of the Acts*, 363

<sup>351</sup> Keener, *Acts*, 2817

<sup>352</sup> Dunn, *Baptism in the Holy Spirit*, 86. "He straightaway pinpointed the question which would show whether they were Christian or not." "Johannine baptism counted for nothing because they had not received the Spirit, and so had to undergo the complete Christian initiation." (89)

<sup>353</sup> Atkinson, *Baptism in the Spirit*, 44

<sup>354</sup> Wilson, *3 Questions from Acts 19:1-17*. He reads Paul question as "when you came to believe the Messiah was coming, in response to the preaching of John the Baptist or whoever."

can't have believed you could be a Christian without receiving the Spirit.<sup>355</sup> Romans 8 is more ambiguous than Wilson allows, and Galatians 3 particularly says the opposite of what he says it does. Again we are arguing from Paul to Luke in a way which I would struggle to justify hermeneutically.

Whoever the disciples were, the question has to make sense. The very fact that the question was asked suggests "that it is at least *possible* to believe without receiving the Spirit."<sup>356</sup> The implication of the question is also that receiving the Spirit must be experiential, in order to be able to actually answer it you must know if you have or not.<sup>357</sup>

Paul's question cannot be "did you become a Christian when you became a Christian?"<sup>358</sup> Believing and receiving must be distinct events for the question to work.

### **"We've not heard that there is a Holy Spirit"**

These disciples respond with an intriguing answer. It looks like they are saying that the expression 'Holy Spirit' is new to them, which simply cannot be true.<sup>359</sup> For example, he's in Genesis 1.2, so any believer connected in any way to Judaism would be very familiar with him.<sup>360</sup> John's baptism, which they go on to say they have received, was explicitly preparatory for later receiving the Holy Spirit once the Christ had come.<sup>361</sup> Blomberg uses this as a reason to suggest that they can't be Jews,<sup>362</sup> but whatever their ethnicity to suggest that they have no familiarity with the Old Testament stretches credulity. He also suggests that they couldn't be John the Baptist's disciples, as his message was clear on the existence of the Holy Spirit.<sup>363</sup> The text itself seems to imply that they are at least that, and Blomberg has fenced himself into a corner: they can't be any of the possible options. Because they hadn't heard that there was a Holy Spirit, Grudem argues that they cannot have heard of Christ's death and resurrection.<sup>364</sup>

However, It would be better to construct the wording as, "we did not know that the Spirit had been given" or "we did not know that the Spirit was yet", both of which are allowed by the grammar.<sup>365</sup>

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<sup>355</sup> Wilson, *3 Questions from Acts 19:1-17*. "On the other hand, their receipt of the Spirit was still very much part of their initiation into Christ, so the claim that the delay between 19:5 and 19:6 implies that someone might be a Christian for decades without receiving the Spirit is quite excessive. We can, and should, conclude that receiving the Spirit is an experience, that it produces visible results and that we should lay hands on people and pray for them to receive the Spirit when they believe the gospel; but we should not jump to conclusions about what *would* have happened if Paul *hadn't* laid hands on them." Wilson is correct that we can't infer that gaps prior to receiving the Spirit of many years are in any way normal or desirable, but he does suggest something experiential is required, so what do we do with contemporary believers who haven't experienced this, and shouldn't we push to ensure that all new believers have? The logical consequence of this muddy view is that contemporary believers don't receive the Spirit when they believe, because no one has the confidence to ensure that they do.

<sup>356</sup> Petts, quoted in Atkinson, *Baptism in the Spirit*, 44. As Atkinson puts it, "the record of Paul's question coincided with Luke's thought: belief was possible without reception of the Spirit." Atkinson, *Baptism in the Spirit*, 65

<sup>357</sup> Hosier, *Christ's Radiant Church*, 96

<sup>358</sup> Pawson, *Jesus Baptises in One Holy Spirit*, 89

<sup>359</sup> Bock, *Acts*, 600

<sup>360</sup> Moore, *Straight to the Heart of Acts*, 205 n.3

<sup>361</sup> Bruce, *The Book of the Acts*, 363

<sup>362</sup> Blomberg, *Pentecost to Patmos*, 63

<sup>363</sup> Blomberg, *Pentecost to Patmos*, 63

<sup>364</sup> Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 774

<sup>365</sup> Bruce, *The Book of the Acts*, 363 n.10

This would mean that they are saying that they didn't know that the new age of the Spirit had arrived,<sup>366</sup> therefore Paul is giving them great news!

Perhaps this is another link between them and Apollos, Bock suggests that their problem may have been the same as his, having heard of Jesus but not the work of the Spirit.<sup>367</sup>

### **Their baptism**

Paul's second question implies a connection between receiving the Spirit and water baptism,<sup>368</sup> it would be an extreme anomaly for a baptised person to have not received the Spirit.<sup>369</sup> As we've seen in Acts 2, the standard practice of the church would have been to closely connect the two.<sup>370</sup>

The normal Christian formula for baptisms, given by Jesus in the Great Commission, should mean that it's impossible to be baptised and not know something of the Spirit.<sup>371</sup>

Paul rebaptises them due to their lack of experience of the Spirit,<sup>372</sup> if they had had the Spirit he wouldn't even have asked the question about their baptism. It's the sign of authenticity.

### **Receiving the Spirit**

Even if they are John's disciples and they have just come to faith in Jesus, they still don't receive the Spirit at the precise moment of their faith.<sup>373</sup> There is no significant delay before their reception, and as at Acts 8 the immediate connection of receiving is the laying on of hands.<sup>374</sup> Dunn argues that the baptism and laying on of hands should be considered one ceremony, and that attempting to split them into two acts is unwarranted.<sup>375</sup> Yet, Luke does seem to talk about them separately; first one, then the other.

Those who are keen to argue that no logically subsequent Spirit reception can be paradigmatic for us today state that the Ephesian disciples are a special case.<sup>376</sup> While the argument that the Samaritans and Gentiles are special cases as the gospel widens its scope to new ethnic groups is reaching, it at least makes sense and parallels Jesus' command in Acts 1 to reach Judea, Samaria and to the ends of the earth. Bock suggests that this group are a special case to show how John pointed to Jesus and how his disciples are included within the people of God.<sup>377</sup> There's no textual warrant for this and it

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<sup>366</sup> Bock, *Acts*, 599; Keener, *Acts*, 2819; Storms, 'Baptism of the Holy Spirit – Part II'. Paul's question is about receiving, it's reasonable to assume that their answer is too, Arrington, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 192. John's baptism was a baptism of preparation. Christian baptism is a baptism of fulfilment. Bruce, *The Book of the Acts*, 364

<sup>367</sup> Bock, *Acts*, 599

<sup>368</sup> Bruce, *The Book of the Acts*, 363

<sup>369</sup> Bruce, *The Book of the Acts*, 364

<sup>370</sup> Pawson, *Jesus Baptises in One Holy Spirit*, 90

<sup>371</sup> Keener, *Acts*, 2819 n.5185

<sup>372</sup> Bruce, *The Book of the Acts*, 364. Notice that neither the Twelve nor Apollos was 'rebaptised' as a Christian, despite only having received John's baptism. Spirit reception transformed for them the preparatory baptism into fulfilment (364).

<sup>373</sup> Keener, *Acts*, 2817 n.5166

<sup>374</sup> Keener, *Acts*, 2822. Bavinck, as a result of his cessationist convictions, argued that tongues and prophecy were given through the laying on of hands, which a temporary arrangement for the early church. Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 505

<sup>375</sup> Dunn, *Baptism in the Holy Spirit*, 87

<sup>376</sup> e.g. Bock, *Acts*, 600. For Bock this is why they received the 'Pentecostal' signs of tongues and prophecy.

<sup>377</sup> Bock, *Acts*, 600; Stott, *The Message of Acts*, 305.

doesn't fit the flow of Luke's narrative. There is no particular missiological significance to accepting in this group of Ephesian disciples, this is the example which trumps the 'special case' argument.

### Why is this in the narrative?

Dunn would suggest this is included, like the Samaritan event in Acts 8, because Luke is keen to make the point that only those with the Spirit are Christians.<sup>378</sup> However, that doesn't seem to be what Luke is getting at.

Atkinson applies the example of the Ephesian 12 to contemporary Christians from non-charismatic backgrounds, "we have a right to be concerned about teaching that either ignores the place of the Holy Spirit in Christian life and service or actually denies that the Spirit works in manifest, charismatic ways today."<sup>379</sup> Moore suggests that there are many today like them, largely due to poor teaching.<sup>380</sup>

### Summary

- It isn't clear if they were disciples of Jesus or not. I think they probably were.
- It must be possible to have believed without receiving the Spirit, otherwise Paul's question doesn't make sense. There's no reason to assume he's being sarcastic.
- You must know if you have received or not, it is a conscious experience. Otherwise, again, you can't answer the question.
- Believing and receiving must be distinct events.
- It would be normal for someone to receive the Spirit before or at their baptism, hence that being Paul's follow-up question.
- The Spirit is the sign of Christian authenticity
- However we construe the entire episode, they definitely receive the Spirit *after* they believe.
- The Spirit is received through the laying on of hands.

## 2.7 Summary of Acts

Acts does not give us a tidy doctrine, there is a wide variance in the exact sequence, experience and result.<sup>381</sup> This is instructive. This should not prevent us from building an idea of what an 'ideal' initiation looks like, but it should stop us from assuming that deviations from that ideal aren't valid.

However we can make the following statements based on what we've seen:

- The promise of Jesus that believers can receive the Spirit is ongoing and available to us.
- Jesus' mission requires the power of the Spirit.
- The Spirit creates the new community, providing unity among believers, removing barriers.
- The Spirit is received when he is asked for and is available to every believer.
- You know if you have received or not, it is experiential.<sup>382</sup>

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<sup>378</sup> Dunn, *Baptism in the Holy Spirit*, 88

<sup>379</sup> Atkinson, *Baptism in the Spirit*, 137

<sup>380</sup> Moore, *Straight to the Heart of Acts*, 205

<sup>381</sup> Hosier, *Christ's Radiant Church*, 97

<sup>382</sup> "Because [Luke] associates the Spirit with signs, witness, and church growth, it seems unlikely that he conceives of the Spirit's coming as simply a theoretical theological designation with no expectation of experiential effects in the life of the church." Keener, *Acts*, 781

- Receiving the Spirit is visible and dramatic, readily available and intoxicating. External manifestations will follow, the most common being loud and vocal: tongues, prophecy or praise.
- Receiving the Spirit is part of Christian initiation.
- It is the sign of both the new age<sup>383</sup> and of believers.
- It is possible to believe and not have received the Spirit.
- It is most commonly received through the laying on of hands.
- Acts 2.38 is the ideal theological paradigm, but not what always happens.

### Spotting a pattern

The experience must be repeatable as it's repeated in the Acts narrative. Luke emphasises the point so often it's hard to imagine he meant anything else. Luke expects the experience he reports to be paradigmatic for all believers and continue into his day.<sup>384</sup> However those who disagree with my thesis are keen to find arguments explaining why we shouldn't see the experience as repeatable. Typically this requires them to understand each recorded reception in Acts as a 'special case'.

For Bock each instance of Spirit reception in Acts is for a new 'region' or 'recognised group' to be brought into the people of God.<sup>385</sup> On the face of it this works for Acts 2, 8 and 10. It doesn't work so well for Paul in Acts 9, but particularly falls down in Acts 19. Bock is comfortable with seeing the disciples of John as another recognised group due to Luke's focus on John the Baptist and Jesus' 'replacement' of him. However it doesn't really fit, there's a flow to Acts 2, 8 and 10 that fits Jesus' mandate to the church to reach Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria and the end of the earth, that would allow us to see each as a special case.<sup>386</sup> Acts 19 is the example which decisively demonstrates that this isn't all that's going on.

Acts 19 is the one that doesn't fit the pattern. Possible suggestions: Ephesus is the new centre for Gentile mission,<sup>387</sup> which would imply that we should have expected a special case in Syrian Antioch, and then maybe later in Rome and other major metropolises throughout history.

Or it could be because they are John's disciples,<sup>388</sup> and them being included shows that all of John's disciples can be. It is very unclear why this would be required, and no one who argues for it takes any time to show why it would be the case. As we've seen this doesn't fit the narrative structure of Acts, the Ephesian 12 in Acts 19 do seem to be the exception which makes it hard to read a missiological pattern into these encounters.

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<sup>383</sup> "The Spirit is the eschatological sign that the new age has arrived, that the new creation has become a reality." Schreiner, *New Testament Theology*, 431. It's a realised eschatology, some of the end-time promise is being fulfilled now, before Jesus' return. It is taste of the age to come. Keener, *Acts*, 783.

<sup>384</sup> Keener, *Acts*, 781

<sup>385</sup> Bock, *Acts*, 331. Gaffin describes them as, "elements in the initial, foundational spread of the gospel and so correlate with the events of Acts 2 as part of a unique unrepeatable (i.e. nontypical, nonmodular) complex of events." Gaffin, *Perspectives on Pentecost*, 22-31. Storms puts forward a similar argument, Storms, 'Baptism of the Holy Spirit – Part II'.

<sup>386</sup> E.g. Wagner, *The Book of Acts*, 160, where he describes Pentecost as three phase. "There is no intrinsic need to suppose that the sequence of first being saved, then later receiving the Holy Spirit, would necessarily carry on in the church through the centuries."

<sup>387</sup> Bruce, *The Book of the Acts*, 365

<sup>388</sup> Stott, *The Message of Acts*, 305

MacArthur argues that “in order for something to be normative, it has to be common to everyone,”<sup>389</sup> suggesting that because there are salvations in Acts 2-4 without descriptions of charismatic experience this cannot be normative. It’s easy enough to assume that these patterns are implied, as it’s clearly a big deal in Acts 8 and 19 when they don’t seem to have happened. Equally his central thesis that to be ‘normative’<sup>390</sup> it must happen in every case is logically fallow, otherwise very little ever could be. Peters demonstrates the absurdity of this evidential criterion by pointing out that baptism in water isn’t mentioned in Acts 5, in Joppa in Acts 9 or in Antioch in Acts 11.<sup>391</sup> We would however assume it on the basis of the rest of the book.

Grudem says that we shouldn’t regard Acts 8, 10 and 19 as Baptism in the Spirit because the term is not used.<sup>392</sup> Firstly this ignores the variety of language used in the New Testament, and secondly with regard to Acts 10, Peter clearly describes the experience as the same as Acts 2 when he relates it in Acts 11.

Keener sums up the counterpoint well:

“Interpreters often regard up to two-thirds of Luke’s examples as ‘exceptions’ to what they view as his ideal pattern, but it seems more prudent to suspect that Luke invites his audience to recognise that the pattern varied in practice.”<sup>393</sup>

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<sup>389</sup> MacArthur, *Charismatic Chaos*, 174-175

<sup>390</sup> The argument that rather than normative, it is simply the norm doesn’t really fit the data in Acts but does easily answer MacArthur’s complaint.

<sup>391</sup> Peters, *The Case for Charismatics*, 16

<sup>392</sup> Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 773

<sup>393</sup> Keener, *Acts*, 523. As Hosier puts it: “How many unique non-typical events can you claim simply because they do not fit your theology? If every occasion described in the New Testament is abnormal, what is normal?” Hosier, *Christ’s Radiant Church*, 97

### 3. An Hermeneutical Grid

When looking at James Dunn's view and working through exegesis on 1 Corinthians, I tackled the prevalent view that we should read Paul's apparent use of the term 'Baptism in the Spirit' into the rest of the New Testament.<sup>394</sup> On those occasions I have attempted to show that this may not be what Paul meant by the term.

Particularly as his usage isn't as clear cut as often assumed, at least not without a particular theological filter, we should look to the rest of the Bible to determine what those phrases mean. After all, if the term is used the same way on every occasion then Paul represents a seventh of the Bible's overall usage; and if it isn't then one phrase cannot determine the meaning of others whichever direction we read in.

Keener points to Acts 8 stating that it is enough to "call into question the frequent practice of assuming that we understand Luke's pneumatology fully by reading it into Paul's."<sup>395</sup> Rather than taking one sentence in Paul and using that as a lens to read the rest of the Bible, we should read from the greater to the lesser and the clear to the unclear. There is far more data on this question in Acts than in Paul, so we should start with Luke, and take that understanding to Paul, being open to them discussing the same reality in different ways.<sup>396</sup>

#### 3.1 Acts for Doctrine

"Luke does not explain the Spirit, he shows him at work."<sup>397</sup> This irritates theologians! However it's a misunderstanding to say he doesn't have a very developed pneumatology, and therefore that we have to go elsewhere to find ideas to read into his writing.

Also, any argument that we cannot get theology from narrative undermines 2 Timothy 3.16, as much of scripture is narrative.<sup>398</sup> 1 Corinthians 10.11 is a helpful approach, where Paul outlines some of the story of the Exodus, teaching from it, and then says:

*Now these things happened to them as an example, but they were written down for our instruction, on whom the end of the ages has come.*

Every narrative in the Bible is written down for our instruction, so we can, and should, read them with care expecting to find both theology and praxis.

Some argue that the events in Acts were not intended to be repeated, and therefore they show us the inauguration of the new age, but not what it looks like to live in it.<sup>399</sup> There are two issues with

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<sup>394</sup> E.g. Thiselton, *Hermeneutics of Doctrine*, 444. Thiselton argues that charismatic experiences could be valid but cannot exegetically be Baptism in the Holy Spirit on the basis that this is "not Paul's use of the term."

<sup>395</sup> Keener, *Acts*, 1522

<sup>396</sup> "Luke-Acts must not be read from the angle of Paul's theology or through a Pauline lens: Paul is not the norm for Luke. ... Doing biblical theology in a methodologically sound way means to respect the individual authors' viewpoints at all costs ... For instance, if Luke employs the metaphor of 'being filled with the Spirit' or speaks of 'being baptised in the Spirit', it should not be taken for granted that sense and referent of these terms are identical to Paul's terminology."<sup>396</sup> Zwiep, 'Luke's Understanding of Baptism in the Holy Spirit: An Evangelical Perspective', 129

<sup>397</sup> Marguerat, *The First Christian Historian*, 110

<sup>398</sup> Virgo, *The Spirit-Filled Church*, 20-31

<sup>399</sup> E.g. "These extraordinary signs must be regarded as singular to this initial experience, since they are not regularly repeated elsewhere. Although the Spirit would continually be outpoured, the outpouring would never again signify the inauguration of a new era." Dockery, 'The Theology of Acts', 46.

this. The first is eschatological, we are no more into the new age than the early community in Acts was. We still live between the ages, with the kingdom interrupting the age we live in, but not yet fully realised. Therefore anything which marked the inauguration ought to still mark our experience. The kingdom is not yet fully here, which will result in a change of expectation! The second is pragmatic, there is nothing else in scripture that tells us what our experience of church should look like, coming up with arguments to do away with what we have leaves us at the whim of every new, or old, idea out there. As Keener puts it:

“Luke is recounting not simply the theological ideal but the experience of early Christians; he is the only New Testament writer to do so, and therefore his voice should be weighed very seriously when one considers the experience of the early Christians.”<sup>400</sup>

For Packer nothing in Acts is paradigmatic as it's a dispensational account of the start of the age of the Spirit.<sup>401</sup> This raises the same two questions, what age are we in now if not the age of the spirit? And, what is Acts for if it does not account our age and it cannot be used paradigmatically? In the early church, “the Spirit's presence ... was understood as God's own real presence, promised to abide till the end of history, making the Son's presence real, making the Father's love known.”<sup>402</sup> For the first few centuries of the church, while the gifts were still regularly continuing, it was considered normal to use Acts to describe the nature of Christian life and community.<sup>403</sup>

It's quite possible that what we are taught in Acts is assumed in the epistles, which would explain why the epistles don't teach us to be baptised in the Spirit explicitly. It was such an assumed basic that they didn't need to, so we only find it recorded in narratives of what the early church was like.<sup>404</sup> Acts is “the only canonical record to show what the church was like in its origination.”<sup>405</sup> Acts is the only inspired report we have of how Jesus kept his promise to baptise the disciples with the Holy Spirit.<sup>406</sup> More than that it's by far the richest resource for us to establish pneumatology.<sup>407</sup>

Virgo would contend that to understand the epistles you need to read them in light of Acts as what is taught in Acts is assumed in the later epistles.<sup>408</sup> This suggestion has explanatory power but is difficult to finally prove from scripture itself. The Epistles are written after those churches have

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<sup>400</sup> Keener, *Acts*, 1525

<sup>401</sup> Packer, *Keep in Step with the Spirit*, 205

<sup>402</sup> Oden, *Classic Christianity*, 544.

<sup>403</sup> c.f. Hyatt, *2000 Years of Charismatic Christianity*

<sup>404</sup> Virgo, ‘Leading People into the Baptism of the Holy Spirit’, 1. “Tradition aside, the major biblical sources of the doctrine of subsequence are found solely in the book of Acts. Pentecostals and Charismatics alike generally attribute this to the fact that the Old Testament and the four Gospels only relate prophecies of the outpouring of the Spirit, while the Epistles, though discussing the Spirit, do not address its baptizing as promised by Christ. Therefore, the book of Acts is the only canonical source that relates the experiential, historical outworking of the coming of the Spirit as instituted at Pentecost.” LeSieur, *Still Burning*, 25.

<sup>405</sup> Williams, *A Theological Pilgrimage*. “The Epistles were written to churches that have had their foundations secured by apostolic work and witness. Hence, we can believe that they all have already, for example, received the Holy Spirit (e.g., see Gal. 3:2; Eph. 1:13); thus the Epistles are dealing with matters that presuppose this. Hebrews 6:1-2 (NIV) speaks of various “baptisms” and “laying on of hands” as being “elementary teachings” - - but also belonging to “the foundation” - -that should be left behind as we “go on to maturity.””

<sup>406</sup> Virgo, *The Spirit-Filled Church*, 30

<sup>407</sup> Hawthorne, ‘Holy Spirit’, 493. “Only here is the initial fulfilment of Jesus’ promise to his followers that they would be infused with supernatural power detailed. Only here is the permanent coming of the Holy Spirit to live in the live of the faithful, to indwell the community of believer, the church, made known.”

<sup>408</sup> Virgo, *The Spirit-Filled Church*, 31

already received.<sup>409</sup> Pawson parallels this with water baptism, there is no exhortation in the epistles to be baptised in water, it's assumed.<sup>410</sup>

### 3.2 Jesus as paradigmatic

Jesus pouring out the Spirit on the Church as his body was taking the incarnation 'global', which implies that whatever Jesus' experience was can be found within his body. If Jesus started doing something we should continue it unless we have a good reason for assuming that it is unique to him.<sup>411</sup>

There must be ways in which Jesus holds a unique status,<sup>412</sup> but that doesn't mean we can't copy anything he did<sup>413</sup>, we're supposed to be his followers! At his baptism Jesus was clothed with the power of the Spirit,<sup>414</sup> so many of the actions he took in his life were not by his divine nature alone. He must be to some extent a model for us to follow.

### 3.3 The disciples as paradigmatic

Many would argue that the disciples are a unique point in history, not a pattern for us to imitate.<sup>415</sup> However I don't think that there is as strong a case for this as its often stated. There must be some differences, for example their having to wait to receive the Spirit, but we should be looking to them as models.

The argument tends to hinge on whether or not you think Acts continues to teach a post-conversion experiential Spirit reception. If it does, you see the disciples as a paradigm, if it doesn't you don't.

As we will see later James Dunn is willing to admit that his position doesn't fit John 20 brilliantly well,<sup>416</sup> but that even if the disciples did receive a baptism with the Spirit subsequent to their regeneration they are not paradigmatic for us as modern believers.

He argues this on the basis that they sit in a unique phase of salvation history, straddling two dispensations. Any believer prior to Pentecost is in a 'unique' position that doesn't neatly fit the

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<sup>409</sup> Pawson, *Jesus Baptises in One Holy Spirit*, 94

<sup>410</sup> Pawson, *Jesus Baptises in One Holy Spirit*, 95. He continues, "From Acts we know that is [water or Spirit baptism] were missing, *immediate*, steps were taken to remedy the deficiency. Not so today."

<sup>411</sup> Moore, *Straight to the Heart of 1 and 2 Corinthians*, 136-137

<sup>412</sup> For Turner, while there are parallels between Jesus and later disciples, to make him archetypal is too much – no disciple is called on to be the eschatological Prophet. Turner, 'Jesus and the Spirit in Lucan Perspective', 28. "Indeed the point of the parallels between Jesus' ministry in the Spirit and what takes place in Acts is not that the church has inherited Jesus' anointing, but that the risen Lord himself continues his redemptive activity, as Lord of the Spirit Acts 2:33, 16:7), through the charismata he bestows in his church." (28-29).

<sup>413</sup> "The risen Christ clearly holds a unique status, but the earthly Jesus also functioned as a model for the disciples in Acts, as the strong parallels between [Luke and Acts] demonstrate." Crowe quoted in Keener, *Acts*, 958 n. 1071.

<sup>414</sup> Calvin quoted in Oden, *Classic Christianity*, 343

<sup>415</sup> Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 773. "The outpouring of the Spirit on the day of Pentecost was a unique event in salvation-history, and Luke presents it as such. Within the context of Luke-Acts, the disciples' life and ministry spans a period of transition from the time of the old covenant relationship between God and Israel, to the time of the new covenant relationship between Christ and his Church. Loder, *An Examination of the Classical Pentecostal Doctrine of the Baptism in the Holy Spirit*, 82. "According to Classical Pentecostals, it is only when this passage is viewed alongside the other accounts of Spirit-baptism in Acts, that the "normative" pattern for Christian experience emerges." (84).

<sup>416</sup> Dunn, *Baptism in the Holy Spirit*, 178

experience of believers after Pentecost.<sup>417</sup> Their life was essentially pre-Christian.<sup>418</sup> He puts it this way:

“Only if Jesus were to live, die, rise and ascend again and again, could the experience of the apostles be described as normative for later Christianity, since their experience was determined by their relation to the historical ministry of Jesus.”<sup>419</sup>

This is again not taking into account the age we live in. We also live in a time between two kingdoms, with the Kingdom of God breaking into history and slowly unfolding the reign of Jesus over the centuries. We don’t live in a time period with two distinct ages, we live with one foot in each, partaking of the age to come. Therefore our situation is different to the disciples’ pre-Pentecost, but it’s identical to their situation after it.

If the disciples, or at least the wider group, are not paradigmatic; and if receiving the Spirit is experiential as Acts clearly displays it to be, then it implies that the Spirit is not for every believer throughout history. No one argues for this, but it is the logical corollary of both premises.

Even if their distinct role in redemption history precludes us from using them as a model, we can look at the second generation of believers in Acts and use them as a model for ourselves.<sup>420</sup>

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<sup>417</sup> “The chronological sequence of events in the lives of the apostles is unique and unrepeatable.” Dunn, *Baptism in the Holy Spirit*, 178. Dunn doesn’t point it out, but by ‘apostles’ he doesn’t just mean the Eleven, but all of the pre-Pentecost followers of Jesus. “With Pentecost the transition phase [between dispensations] came to an end; the old stage of salvation-history was wholly past and the new stage wholly in operation. Henceforth entry into the blessing of the new dispensation is immediate, whereas for the apostles it was ‘staggered’.” (182).

<sup>418</sup> Atkinson, *Baptism in the Spirit*, 11

<sup>419</sup> Dunn, *Baptism in the Holy Spirit*, 182. Storms argues similarly “It is unwise to argue that their experience is a pattern for ours when we realize that their experience could not have been otherwise than it was. In other words, it was *impossible* for them to be baptized in the Spirit when they believed, simply because they believed long before Spirit-baptism was even possible.” Storms, ‘Baptism of the Holy Spirit – Part II’.

<sup>420</sup> Virgo, ‘Leading People into the Baptism of the Holy Spirit’, 1

## 4. John Exegesis

"Above all, John ties the gift of the Spirit to the death and exaltation of the Son."<sup>421</sup>

### 4.1 John 7.37-39

*On the last day of the feast, the great day, Jesus stood up and cried out, "If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, 'Out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.'" Now this he said about the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were to receive, for as yet the Spirit had not been given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.*

Jesus has just been speaking of his departure, the bestowal of the Spirit is explicitly linked to his departure, especially in John 14-16.<sup>422</sup> He doesn't make that specific connection here, but makes a free offer of the Spirit to all.

#### Feast of Tabernacles

The water metaphor Jesus uses is very appropriate for the Feast of Tabernacles with its water pouring rite.<sup>423</sup> The festival involves water being taken from the pool of Siloam, carried to the Temple, and processed around the altar. Water is offered along with the daily wine, poured out before the Lord.<sup>424</sup>

In Jewish thought the feast is related to the provision of water in the desert during the Exodus and the pouring out of the Spirit in the last days.<sup>425</sup> Practically it was a harvest festival taking place just before the rainy season, involving imploring God to send the rain.<sup>426</sup> It was also associated with joy.<sup>427</sup>

John says Jesus was speaking on the 'great day', this is most likely the eighth day, the day after the feast proper when there was a special celebration involving the dismantling of the booths, sacrifices and singing. This is notable because the water pouring only happens during the seven days, "The water and light of Tabernacles rites pass into memory, year after year; his claim to provide living water and light for the world is continuously valid."<sup>428</sup>

The water rite symbolised fertility and fruitfulness for the land from rain. Later traditions connect the eighth day, "with great joy in the light of God's faithful provision of rain, and also interpret the

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<sup>421</sup> Carson, *The Gospel according to John*, 98

<sup>422</sup> Carson, *The Gospel according to John*, 321

<sup>423</sup> Carson, *The Gospel according to John*, 321. This was established as a custom in the Maccabean period. Keener, *The Gospel of John*, 722

<sup>424</sup> Carson, *The Gospel according to John*, 321-322. The Temple choir sings the Hallel (Psalms 113-118); when they reach Psalm 118 every male pilgrim shakes twigs, raises citrus fruit and cries "gives thanks to the Lord" three times. These are signs of the harvest, and a remainder of the Exodus.

<sup>425</sup> Carson, *The Gospel according to John*, 322. "Pouring at the feast of Tabernacles refers symbolically to the messianic age in which a stream from the sacred rock would flow over the whole earth." Köstenberger expands on this highlighting the link to the joyful restoration of Israel and the ingathering of the nations, "Jesus here presents himself as God's agent to make these end-time events a reality." Köstenberger, *John*, 240.

<sup>426</sup> Köstenberger, *John*, 240

<sup>427</sup> Keener, *The Gospel of John*, 723

<sup>428</sup> Carson, *The Gospel according to John*, 321. "Just when the events of the feast, and their attendant symbolism, were beginning to sink into people's memories, Jesus' words promised a continuous supply of water and light, perhaps also alluding to the supply of water from the rock in the wilderness." Köstenberger, *John*, 240.

day as a festive anticipation of God's promises to pour out spiritual 'rains' in the messianic age."<sup>429</sup> The connection would not have been lost on Jesus' audience, they would instantly connect his offer with the expected eschatological outpouring of the Spirit.<sup>430</sup> The water pouring of the festival was supposed to be a foretaste of the eschatological rivers of living water in Ezekiel 47.1-9 and Zechariah 13.1.<sup>431</sup> Jesus is announcing that he is the fulfilment of all that the Feast anticipated.

There's a clear link with Jesus words to Isaiah 55,<sup>432</sup> he is the one who can provide the waters that Isaiah calls people to drink from.<sup>433</sup> Jesus is making a clear, universal call, alluding to the start of the new age of the Spirit and the availability of life-changing kingdom 'water' to all how simply thirst for it.<sup>434</sup>

### Streams of Living Water

The Greek can either mean that the streams are flowing from within<sup>435</sup> the believer or from within Christ. Both readings see Christ as supplying the drink and quenching thirst, but it isn't easy to determine which the correct one is.<sup>436</sup> Carson sees them as very similar, the second view fitting John's high Christology well,<sup>437</sup> Keener argues for the second view on the basis of Jesus being the supplier of the Spirit.<sup>438</sup> Carson argues for the first view on the basis of John 4.13-14, where Jesus speaks to the Samaritan women and says that the water he provides creates a spring of water within the one who drinks it.<sup>439</sup> The source of the Spirit is still Christ, but this indicates a rich abundance of the Spirit's life and power within the believer's life.<sup>440</sup>

Living water is running water.<sup>441</sup> A stream is dynamic, it isn't a repository. Surely the language also implies something deeply experiential.<sup>442</sup> Being told you have rivers of living water flowing from you, and expecting to take that on faith produces serious cognitive dissonance. This should shape how we

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<sup>429</sup> Carson, *The Gospel according to John*, 322

<sup>430</sup> Keener, *The Gospel of John*, 724. John's explanation wouldn't have been required for the original audience. C.f. Revelation 22.1, 17.

<sup>431</sup> Carson, *The Gospel according to John*, 322. The water miracle in the wilderness (Exodus 17.1-7; Numbers 20.8-13; Psalm 78.16-20) is in turn a foretaste of the water rite of the feast of tabernacles.

<sup>432</sup> Carson, *The Gospel according to John*, 322

<sup>433</sup> Carson, *The Gospel according to John*, 323

<sup>434</sup> "The public invitation from Jesus to all of the people of Israel assembled in expectation of the fulfilment of the eschatological promises for living water to flow from the temple could be considered the apex of the development of pneumatological expectation in the *pneuma* passages." Quinn, *Expectation and Fulfillment of the Gift of the Holy Spirit in the Gospel of John*, 146

<sup>435</sup> The phrase is literally 'within his belly', Köstenberger, *John*, 241.

<sup>436</sup> Carson, *The Gospel according to John*, 323

<sup>437</sup> Carson, *The Gospel according to John*, 323

<sup>438</sup> Keener, *The Gospel of John*, 729. Keener does move on to suggest that the point is largely a grammatical curio, it's theologically moot (730).

<sup>439</sup> Köstenberger adds to this linguistically on the basis that the phrase *touto de eipen* 'and he said this' refers to the words of Jesus in John, and thus 'from within him' refers to 'whoever believes in me'. He highlights other similar language in John at 1.12, 6.39, 15.2 and 17.2. Köstenberger, *John*, 240-241 n. 59.

<sup>440</sup> Carson, *The Gospel according to John*, 324-325. "Human beings are dead and desiccated without the Spirit, but the Spirit revivifies, just as water invigorates a thirsty traveller." Schreiner, *The King in his Beauty*, 529. Basil comments, "Just as when a sunbeam falls on bright and transparent bodies they themselves become brilliant too, and shed forth a fresh brightness from themselves, so souls wherein the Spirit dwells, illuminated by the Spirit, themselves become spiritual and send forth that grace to others." Quoted in Oden, *Classic Christianity*, 624.

<sup>441</sup> Carson, *The Gospel according to John*, 327

<sup>442</sup> Garner, *The Promise of the Spirit*, 15

view receiving the Spirit, being told you have when you don't know if you have requires Orwellian doublethink.

There is probably an allusion here to Ezekiel 47.1-2, the river flows from the eschatological temple to bring life wherever it goes.<sup>443</sup> Jesus then becomes the new temple from which life flows to all the world,<sup>444</sup> or he gifts those streams of life to individual believers in order to form the church as the eschatological temple of God. Carson understands Jesus to be describing "the eschatological blessing of the Spirit on the believer's life."<sup>445</sup>

### **As the Scriptures said**

It is particularly a reference to Isaiah 58.11, but there is a background of the promises of the Spirit throughout the Old Testament.<sup>446</sup> There is probably also an allusion to the water from the rock episodes, in Nehemiah 9.20 these are tied to the provision of the Spirit. The gift of the Law and the Spirit are both symbolised in Jewish tradition by the provision of the manna and the water.<sup>447</sup>

### **The Spirit had not yet been given**

This literally means 'the Spirit was not yet', this cannot mean that he isn't in existence as he's already been seen operating in John's gospel (e.g. John 1 & 3). It's speaking of him not having yet been given 'to the full' for believers.<sup>448</sup>

This is linked, as often in John, to Jesus' glorification. This is a 'Johannine euphemism' for the cluster of events surrounding the crucifixion,<sup>449</sup> and it is reasonable to assume this includes the resurrection and the ascension on the basis of the way Jesus speaks in John 14-16.

### **Summary**

- Jesus is the one who can provide the food and water without money or price offered in Isaiah 55.
- Jesus is offering the expected eschatological outpouring of the Spirit, and therefore proclaiming himself the Messiah.
- Jesus offers to create a source of life giving water within the believer
- This water is dynamic and experiential in nature.
- Jesus' gift of the Spirit creates the eschatological temple, the church, from which life flows out to a parched and thirsty world.
- His requirement for receiving is 'coming to him', i.e. faith, and 'thirst' i.e. desire to receive.
- They couldn't receive at the festival because the Spirit hadn't yet been poured out. Jesus did this after ascending to the right hand of the Father. Therefore we can all receive this gift.

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<sup>443</sup> Carson, *The Gospel according to John*, 327

<sup>444</sup> Keener, *The Gospel of John*, 730

<sup>445</sup> Carson, *The Gospel according to John*, 328

<sup>446</sup> Carson references Isaiah 12.3, 44.3, 49.10; Ezekiel 30.25-27; Joel 3.18; Amos 9.11-15 and Zechariah 13.1. He also draws attention to links between the festival and Nehemiah 8.5-18 and 9.15-20. Carson, *The Gospel according to John*, 326

<sup>447</sup> Carson, *The Gospel according to John*, 327

<sup>448</sup> Carson, *The Gospel according to John*, 329. "The Spirit of the dawning kingdom comes as the result – indeed, the entailment – of the Son's completed work, and up to that point the Holy Spirit was *not* given in the full, Christian sense of the term."

<sup>449</sup> Köstenberger, *John*, 241

- What is being offered is better than the Old Testament experience of the covenant people. There is an immediacy and availability to it that had long been promised and has now arrived.

## 4.2 John 14-16

Jesus is speaking with his disciples in the upper room preparing them for his departure, but he spends much of that time preparing them for life in the age of the Spirit.<sup>450</sup>

### **John 14.16-18**

*And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper, to be with you forever, even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, for he dwells with you and will be in you. I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you.*

### **Parakletos**

This word, 'Helper' in the ESV is the verbal adjective of *parakaleo*, literally 'to call alongside' and therefore 'to encourage' or 'to exhort'.<sup>451</sup> The word comforter worked well in the 17<sup>th</sup> century when it had the force of 'to encourage, strengthen or aid'.<sup>452</sup> Keener feels its force as 'advocate' is important not to miss, seeing it is primarily a forensic function prosecuting opponents. He bases his view on Jesus words in John 16.7-11.<sup>453</sup> Schreiner helpfully comments that the various *paraclete* texts in John 14-16 indicate a number of different definitions are fitting. He cites counsellor, helper, advocate and teacher.<sup>454</sup>

The Holy Spirit is 'another *paraclete*', Jesus is one as well.<sup>455</sup> The Spirit's presence with the disciples will replace Jesus' own encouraging and strengthening presence with them while on earth.<sup>456</sup>

He is the Spirit of truth because he communicates the truth,<sup>457</sup> and he will remain with them forever.<sup>458</sup> This indicates permanent residence, indicating assurance for believers because the Spirit's life is inviolable.<sup>459</sup>

Köstenberger says that "Jesus identification with the Spirit is so strong that he can say that *he himself* will return to his followers in the person of the Spirit."<sup>460</sup> He tells them that 'you know him', because it will be like Jesus being with them, and that 'I will come you'. This word 'know' is more than an intellectual knowledge of something, it speaks of "a personal experimental acquaintance."<sup>461</sup>

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<sup>450</sup> Köstenberger, *John*, 435

<sup>451</sup> Carson, *The Gospel according to John*, 499. And therefore literally 'one who is called alongside'. In secular Greek it's primarily a legal advocate, someone who helps someone else in court, but its usage is not restricted that way.

<sup>452</sup> Carson, *The Gospel according to John*, 499. Similarly when translated 'counsellor' this would be a 'legal counsellor' as opposed to a therapist! "The Spirit comes to believers and forms them into stronger believers ... who in turn become more obedient to the life of the Spirit." Keener, *The Gospel of John*, 952.

<sup>453</sup> Keener, *The Gospel of John*, 961

<sup>454</sup> Schreiner, *New Testament Theology*, 471

<sup>455</sup> Carson, *The Gospel according to John*, 499

<sup>456</sup> Köstenberger, *John*, 436

<sup>457</sup> Carson, *The Gospel according to John*, 500. Or 'bears witness to it'.

<sup>458</sup> Augustine, he is "appearing no more as a transient visitor, but as perpetual Comforter and as an eternal inhabitant." Quoted in Oden, *Classic Christianity*, 546.

<sup>459</sup> Schreiner, *The King in his Beauty*, 530

<sup>460</sup> Köstenberger, *John*, 434

<sup>461</sup> Garner, *The Promise of the Spirit*, 30

It therefore cannot be a non-experiential event when the Spirit is given to his followers.<sup>462</sup> He speaks as though men who know him intimately and have been at his side for years will respond saying 'Jesus is back!' when the Spirit is given to them. "When the Spirit comes to dwell in believers, it is as if Jesus himself takes up residence in them."<sup>463</sup> They cannot do this unless being given the Spirit is a noticeable and describable experience in its own right.

#### **John 14.25-26**

*"These things I have spoken to you while I am still with you. But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you.*

The Spirit does not bring qualitatively new revelation, but neither did Jesus.<sup>464</sup> "One of the Spirit's principal tasks, after Jesus is glorified, it to remind the disciples of Jesus' teaching and thus, in the new situation after the resurrection, to help them grasp its significance and thus to teach them what it meant."<sup>465</sup>

The Spirit is sent by Jesus and the Father to continue Jesus' mission, by empowering the disciples to continue Jesus' mission.<sup>466</sup>

#### **John 15.26**

*"But when the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth, who proceeds from the Father, he will bear witness about me.*

John uses a wide array of different descriptions of the Father and the Son sending the Spirit. The Spirit's mission clearly comes from both, and John is evidently comfortable with a range of language.<sup>467</sup> The context has Jesus focussing on the disciples response to persecution, Jesus here tells them that the Holy Spirit will join with them in testifying Jesus to the world.<sup>468</sup> It's the Spirit's mission too.<sup>469</sup>

Jesus is arguing that in persecution Christian's bear witness because of the Spirit, who does so alongside them. Theologically this could either be because the Spirit is empowering for mission; or because the Spirit gives us assurance of our status, leading to confidence to continue under persecution.

#### **John 16.7-15**

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<sup>462</sup> "The Spirit is to be experienced; otherwise the promise (in the ensuing verses) of relief from the sense of abandonment is empty."<sup>462</sup> Carson, *The Gospel according to John*, 500.

<sup>463</sup> Köstenberger, *John*, 436

<sup>464</sup> Köstenberger, *John*, 442; "The Spirit's ministry in this respect was not to bring qualitatively new revelation, but to complete, to fill out, the revelation brought by Jesus himself." Carson, *The Gospel according to John*, 505

<sup>465</sup> Carson, *The Gospel according to John*, 505

<sup>466</sup> Köstenberger, *John*, 442. "Hence, the Father is never sent; he is sender of both Son and the Spirit, The Spirit is never sender, he is sent by both the Father and the Son. Only Jesus is both sent one and sender; sent by the Father, he sends both the Spirit and the disciples."

<sup>467</sup> Carson, *The Gospel according to John*, 528. John is speaking of mission here, not ontology, however Carson does defend the creeds including the *filioque* clause from John's gospel. He argues that it is presupposed in chapter 15 rather than taught. (529)

<sup>468</sup> Carson, *The Gospel according to John*, 528-529. Köstenberger, *John*, 468.

<sup>469</sup> Moore, *Straight to the Heart of Acts*, 33

*Nevertheless, I tell you the truth: it is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you. But if I go, I will send him to you. And when he comes, he will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment: concerning sin, because they do not believe in me; concerning righteousness, because I go to the Father, and you will see me no longer; concerning judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged. "I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth, for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak, and he will declare to you the things that are to come. He will glorify me, for he will take what is mine and declare it to you. All that the Father has is mine; therefore I said that he will take what is mine and declare it to you.*

Jesus leaves and sends the Spirit in his stead. The thought is primarily eschatological, the disciples' thought world would have been full of promises from the Old Testament that the coming of the Spirit is the sign and characterisation of the age of the kingdom of God.<sup>470</sup> It is an eschatological necessity that Jesus is first exalted, in order for him to send the Spirit to thus characterise and expand the incursion of the kingdom of God.<sup>471</sup> The King must be enthroned to then expand his rule.

Jesus emphatically insists that it is better to be alive now, after the coming of the Spirit, than it is to be on earth with him.<sup>472</sup> Based on his words in chapter 14, we should assume that this is because each individual gets to have Jesus within them, as though he were experientially present, all of the time. "Only though the internal presence of the Spirit will the disciples truly understand Jesus."<sup>473</sup>

In verse 8 there is this tricky suggestion that the Spirit comes to 'convict'. Carson understands it to be the Spirit specifically shaming the world, convincing it of its own guilt, and thus calling it to repentance.<sup>474</sup> To convict of righteousness is to, like Jesus, expose darkness by shining light.<sup>475</sup> The Spirit shows up the emptiness of the world's pretensions.

Presumably the Spirit does this through the preaching of the gospel; the countercultural lives of believers; the 'fuller' life that believers seem to enjoy; supernatural incursions into the natural world in signs and wonders; and in direct prophetic encounters that highlight the sin of the world and the goodness of the gospel.

In verse 12 Jesus also continues to tell them, like in chapter 14, that the Spirit will teach them further. The Spirit 'not speaking on his own authority' implies that he will unpack the revelation of the Son that they have already received.<sup>476</sup> The Spirit opens their eyes to enable them to read the

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<sup>470</sup> Carson, *The Gospel according to John*, 533. "But this saving reign of God cannot be fully inaugurated until Jesus has died, risen from the dead, and been exalted to the Father's right hand, returned to the glory he enjoyed with the Father before the world began." (533-534)

<sup>471</sup> Köstenberger, *John*, 470

<sup>472</sup> Carson, *The Gospel according to John*, 534

<sup>473</sup> Köstenberger, *John*, 471

<sup>474</sup> Carson, *The Gospel according to John*, 535-537. The verbs semantic domain includes putting to shame, treating with contempt, cross-examining, accusing, bringing to the test, proving, and refuting. (534)

<sup>475</sup> Carson, *The Gospel according to John*, 538

<sup>476</sup> Köstenberger, *John*, 474. "The Spirit provides ... the filling out of revelation nodally present in Jesus," who is God's distinctive self-disclosure. As John Calvin put it, "For as soon as the Spirit is severed from Christ's Word the door is open to all sorts of craziness and impostures." (Quoted in Köstenberger, *John*, 474). Jesus is the only locus of truth, the Spirit is our guide to it. Carson, *The Gospel according to John*, 540

Scripture, and to understand what they have already been taught.<sup>477</sup> The Spirit further fortifies their assurance by convincing believers that Jesus is the Christ.<sup>478</sup>

### Summary

- The Spirit is the one who comforts, exhorts, encourages, strengthens, teaches and aids us.
- Those who have received the Spirit can have assurance, his residence is permanent. He convinces believers of who Jesus is and their position with him.
- Receiving the Spirit is like having Jesus with you all of the time as your intimate personal friend. It is better to know Jesus by the Spirit than to physically walk side by side with Jesus.
- Receiving the Spirit is experiential, those who knew Jesus intimately would feel as though he had returned when they received the Spirit.
- The Spirit leads us into truth by reminding us of Jesus' teaching, and helping us to grasp what it means. The Spirit acts directly, but never contrary to scripture.
- The Spirit empowers the disciples to partake in the mission of the Trinity.
- The Spirit will provide the confidence and assurance to continue the mission despite hardship and persecution
- The Spirit is the primary sign of the coming kingdom of God encroaching into the world.
- Jesus must first be enthroned as king in order to pour out the sign of his kingship on his kingdom. The Spirit's coming requires the glorification of Jesus.
- The Spirit shows up the emptiness of the world's pretensions.

### 4.3 John 20.21-23

*Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you." 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."*

The typical Pentecostal position would be that John 20 is the disciples being regenerated post-resurrection, and therefore the Baptism in the Spirit that they received 50 days later at Pentecost was secondary to, and distinct from, their conversion.<sup>479</sup>

#### Could this be Pentecost?

There is a strong stream within contemporary scholarship<sup>480</sup> identifying this event as the Johannine Pentecost. Therefore there is not a distinct receipt of the Spirit that is separate from conversion. He

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<sup>477</sup> Carson, *The Gospel according to John*, 539

<sup>478</sup> Schreiner, *The King in his Beauty*, 530. The Spirit's central aim is to bring glory to Jesus. Carson, *The Gospel according to John*, 541

<sup>479</sup> Dunn, *Baptism in the Holy Spirit*, 173. "For the Pentecostal the Fourth Gospel is especially important since it shows him clearly that the disciples were regenerate before Pentecost and had received the Spirit before Pentecost. In particular, the impartation of the Spirit on the evening of resurrection Sunday ... seems to indicate beyond reasonable doubt that the baptism in the Spirit fifty days later was at least a second and distinct work in the lives of the disciples."

<sup>480</sup> C.f. Bennema, 'The Giving of the Spirit in John's Gospel'. We won't tackle the broad view because its easily refuted – e.g. from Bennema: "A major problem with this view is the underlying idea that most proponents believe that John's eschatology is entirely present or realized, i.e., an eschatology in which all future hopes are anticipated or realized in the present. This implies a view that sees all Spirit-promises realized within the chronological horizon of John's Gospel, which often leads to a construction in which John's theology has swamped/ disregarded chronology, i.e., the ascension and Pentecost are drawn into or fall together with Easter. However, although the death, resurrection and ascension of Jesus are moulded into one theological unity (Jesus' glorification), this has not swamped, ignored or suppressed John's chronology; the chronological

would argue that this means the Pentecostal case fails.<sup>481</sup> This is argued on the basis that John is not a narrative history of the same sort as Luke, “John wishes to demonstrate the unity of the decisive events in the climax of Jesus’ ministry,”<sup>482</sup> being his death, resurrection, ascension and gifting of the Spirit.<sup>483</sup>

Max Turner<sup>484</sup> suggests that there are two ‘givings’ of the Spirit, here and Acts 2, both of which line up with the expectation of the ‘baptism’ in the Spirit. Turner would use this to argue for ongoing experiential Christianity, but is very close to Dunn on his understanding of Spirit reception. Carson points out that this is strange thinking as Jesus only returns to the Father once and in John the giving of the Spirit and Jesus’ return to the Father are inextricably linked.<sup>485</sup>

Dunn would respond that John ties it to Jesus’ glorification in John 7, which means the theological unit of his redemptive acts in his death, resurrection and ascension all taken together as a unitary conceptual whole.<sup>486</sup> He claims that this view is clear in John 7, but doesn’t demonstrate this in my opinion.<sup>487</sup> John 14-16 is our clue, when Jesus explicitly speaks of his need to ‘go away’ before the *Paraclete* is sent. Dunn understands these promises to speak of a ‘later bestowal of the Spirit.’<sup>488</sup> It doesn’t seem warranted to assume Jesus is speaking about different ‘givings’ of the Spirit either, that’s convoluted and needs a textual reason beyond the imposition of an external framework to it.

Carson argues that this cannot be John’s version of Pentecost because this either needs Luke to be wrong or for John to be being very theological in his construction of his narrative.<sup>489</sup> Carson himself argues that this is a symbolic promise by Jesus of the Spirit to be received later.<sup>490</sup> This viewpoint was condemned as heresy at the church council of Constantinople in 553, and Keener chides Carson

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separateness of the various events in John 20 is retained (20:1, 19, 26). Another problem with this interpretation is that there is an especially conspicuous absence of any of the distinctively *Paraclete* activities in the narrative material which follows 20:22. Finally, the ascension, as Jesus’ total removal from this world to heaven, has not happened yet, and hence, the condition for the coming of the *Paraclete* (16:7) has not yet been met. Moreover, the *Paraclete*, perceived as Jesus’ replacement, is not required as long as Jesus is present.” (203).

<sup>481</sup> Dunn, *Baptism in the Holy Spirit*, 176. He’s wrong on this too, it only fails if baptism in the Spirit is regeneration. His case that it is fails if this isn’t Pentecost, however.

<sup>482</sup> Dunn, *Baptism in the Holy Spirit*, 173

<sup>483</sup> The problem for Dunn is specifically, “the assumption that John and Luke-Acts are more or less narrative histories of the same sort, so uniform in their manner of presenting facts and events that they can immediately be dovetailed into each other in a straightforward chronological fashion ... the first five books of the New Testament are not a flat plain of homogeneous historicity. Theological mountains (and molehills) break that flatness, and it is a mistake to think that when we climb one of these mountains we are moving forward historically at the same pace as when we traverse the level plain.” Dunn, *Baptism in the Holy Spirit*, 173

<sup>484</sup> E.g. Max Turner, c.f. Keener, *Acts*, 791-792

<sup>485</sup> Carson, *The Gospel according to John*, 650. He points out that for those who argue for two ‘givings’ it always seems pretty arbitrary which functions of the reception of the Spirit are given to the disciples at which point.

<sup>486</sup> Dunn, *Baptism in the Holy Spirit*, 174. This is a very natural reading for Dunn, when the giving of the Spirit means redemption applied to the individual, this has to become about Pentecost. Any giving of the Spirit outside of that context doesn’t fit his *schema*.

<sup>487</sup> Dunn, *Baptism in the Holy Spirit*, 175. Lightfoot would understand it the same way. Lightfoot, *St. John’s Gospel*, 333.

<sup>488</sup> Dunn, *Baptism in the Holy Spirit*, 177. Which would be “following Jesus’ final return to the Father after his various appearances to the disciples. John’s account could then dovetail chronologically into the Acts narrative: John would know of two bestowals of the Spirit, though recording only one, and the promised baptism in the Spirit could easily be referred to the unrecorded Pentecost.”

<sup>489</sup> Carson, *The Gospel according to John*, 651

<sup>490</sup> Carson, *The Gospel according to John*, 651

for reviving this view.<sup>491</sup> Carson contends that there is no reason for thinking 'receive' has to be fulfilled immediately, pointing out numerous other occasions in John where Jesus declares things that haven't happened literally as Jesus says them.<sup>492</sup>

There isn't enough demonstration in the text that receiving the Spirit made any difference to them, they still meet behind doors in verse 26, they are still afraid in verse 19, and Thomas doesn't witness the Spirit amongst them and believe, he believes because he sees the risen Christ for himself. The disciples return to their old employment in chapter 21, they are still reconciling themselves with Jesus again, and engaging in one-upmanship.<sup>493</sup> It would be puzzling behaviour if this is post-Pentecost,<sup>494</sup> it's very different from the accounts in Acts. Carson argues that if this is the Johannine Pentecost it's very disappointing, and the expectation of John 14-16 seems to be vastly inflated. John even stipulates that this is Easter day, why would he if he knew it really happened 40 days later at Pentecost?<sup>495</sup> Most fundamentally he said he would go before he sent the Spirit and he hasn't gone yet.<sup>496</sup> If it is a Pentecost retelling then there is a high cost, Thomas is excluded from the gift and when he does come to faith there is no mention of the Spirit.<sup>497</sup> Carson describes John 20 as "symbolic of the endowment that is still to come."<sup>498</sup>

Keener feels that the argument that John doesn't show results is made too much of, and misses the point. He contends that John didn't intend to communicate a lesser impartation,<sup>499</sup> with John taking the fulfilment of the promises relating to the *Paraclete* as implied.<sup>500</sup> Bennema would go further seeing all of the gifts of the Spirit flowing from the cross, not the ascension.<sup>501</sup> Köstenberger highlights that he misses that the promise of John 14.18 cannot be satisfied by resurrection appearances, it requires "the permanent replacement of his presence with the Spirit."<sup>502</sup> This cannot be true if Jesus is still physically present in front of them.

Against the argument that Jesus hasn't yet been glorified he argues that John is making a theological point, Jesus has been lifted up sufficiently on the cross for the Spirit to be given proleptically and symbolically in John 19.30.<sup>503</sup> John perceives the cross and exaltation of Jesus as a theologically single event despite there being a gap of 40 days between them, Luke views the event chronologically.<sup>504</sup> He argues that suggesting Jesus has to be absent to send the Spirit, and that the Spirit is a replacement for Jesus reads too much into the wording. After all Jesus is now present by

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<sup>491</sup> Keener, *The Gospel of John*, 1197. It was the view of Theodore of Mopsuestia. It has not received widespread modern support, but can find other supporters in Guthrie, Packer and Witherington. C.f. Bennema, 'The Giving of the Spirit in John's Gospel', 201.

<sup>492</sup> Carson, *The Gospel according to John*, 653. He points to Jesus saying "now has come" in 12.20-23, 12.31, 13.31, 17.15; and "glorify me" in 17.5 and 13.31.

<sup>493</sup> Carson, *The Gospel according to John*, 653

<sup>494</sup> Köstenberger, *John*, 574-575

<sup>495</sup> Carson, *The Gospel according to John*, 653

<sup>496</sup> Keener, *Acts*, 791

<sup>497</sup> Carson, *The Gospel according to John*, 654

<sup>498</sup> Carson, *The Gospel according to John*, 653

<sup>499</sup> Keener, *The Gospel of John*, 1197

<sup>500</sup> Keener, *Acts*, 791

<sup>501</sup> Bennema, 'The Giving of the Spirit in John's Gospel', 198

<sup>502</sup> Köstenberger, *John*, 434

<sup>503</sup> Keener, *The Gospel of John*, 1198

<sup>504</sup> Keener, *The Gospel of John*, 1198. Although Keener writes elsewhere that Luke had a specific theological purpose as well. "Luke reports the Pentecost experience not merely as a matter of historical interest but because for him it set the normative pattern for the church." Keener, *Acts*, 793.

the resurrection, and we still see him appear after Pentecost, for example in Acts 9.<sup>505</sup> I think Keener misrepresents Jesus here, and Acts 9 notwithstanding it is better to describe the exalted Christ as present by his Spirit instead of 'by the resurrection'.

Keener thinks Carson's arguments around the dissonance with the chapter 21 are stronger, but comments: "It does not, however, negate the fact that in this short encounter ... nearly every promise associated with the Spirit's coming appears at least proleptically."<sup>506</sup> It fulfils a function in the account theologically analogous to that of Pentecost in Acts.<sup>507</sup> Knowing he wouldn't write a sequel, he theologically compresses the next 40 days into Easter, not as a literary convenience but with the theological intention of viewing them as one 'event'.<sup>508</sup>

Keener repeatedly states that John viewed the event as proleptic.<sup>509</sup> He doesn't clearly spell out what he means by this, but the term literally is the representation of a thing as existing before it actually does or did so, especially as a narrative device.<sup>510</sup> If John 20 is proleptic either John is compressing chronology for theological import, or if he is reporting events then Jesus is speaking as though something has happened which hasn't yet. The second option is different semantically to Carson's view, but not different in substance.

Dunn does admit that his reading of John 20 isn't decisive,<sup>511</sup> but for the case for subsequent Spirit reception you have to prove that the disciples are paradigmatic for all believers. I actually think you have to prove that they aren't a usable paradigm, but I pick up this thread a little later looking at the hermeneutics of the question.

There is also a wider question of when the disciples did come to saving faith. Dunn believes it would be impossible for them to have had faith prior to the resurrection, so this experience must be that happening to them.<sup>512</sup> If they had faith earlier, even if this is Pentecost it doesn't support his argument conflating regeneration and the receipt of the Spirit. He also misses that it's quite possible to have some form of saving faith prior to the resurrection.

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<sup>505</sup> Keener, *Acts*, 792

<sup>506</sup> Keener, *The Gospel of John*, 1198

<sup>507</sup> "On the level of Johannine theology, however, this event ties together diverse elements of Jesus' promise of the Spirit, fulfilling a function theologically analogous to Pentecost in Acts: the promised Spirit has come, so the church must live in the empowerment provided." Keener, *The Gospel of John*, 1199, Keener, *Acts*, 792.

<sup>508</sup> "Knowing his Gospel would have no sequel" John 'theologically compressed' "the appearances, ascension, and Pentecost into Easter. Yet for him, this is not simply a matter of literary convenience ... John weaves these events into 'the hour' with explicit theological intentions." Burge quoted in Keener, *The Gospel of John*, 1200. John is trying to make the point that the resurrection implies and brings the Spirit. Keener, *Acts*, 793. The primary link between John and Luke's accounts is their mutual affirmation that Jesus imparted and sent the Spirit shortly after the resurrection. It is possible, he thinks, that they experienced some level of foretaste that was dramatically fulfilled later (793).

<sup>509</sup> Keener, *Acts*, 790. Dunn states that the proleptic reading is "as though Jesus was saying, 'When you hear the sound of the wind ... then you will receive the Spirit.' This is an unsupported speculation which does too little justice to the text." Confusingly this doesn't seem to be Keener view, and is a little nearer to Carson's.

<sup>510</sup> *Oxford English Dictionary*. Or "the representation or assumption of a future act or development as if presently existing or accomplished." *Merriam-Webster Dictionary*

<sup>511</sup> He goes as far as saying, "John may well have considered that the baptism in the Spirit was a second and distinct work of the Spirit in the spiritual experience of the first disciples." Dunn, *Baptism in the Holy Spirit*, 178. "In short, John certainly shows that it may not be possible to equate Spirit-baptism with regeneration, but only in the case of the Apostles." (182)

<sup>512</sup> Dunn, *Baptism in the Holy Spirit*, 179

To argue otherwise is to condemn all of the Old Testament saints and John the Baptist out of hand. While the disciples experience is not synonymous with that of Abraham, Moses or Isaiah, they all managed to have faith in the future grace that they would receive through events that they saw only as shadows.

It's reasonable to use Acts 2 as a reference point, and it would quickly have become one for all of the church. Canonical biblical theology has to lead us to reject any suggestion that John 20 is Pentecost, as that plainly happens 50 days later.<sup>513</sup> John is writing in a timeframe that it would be reasonable to expect all of his readers to share this reference point,<sup>514</sup> and he was himself present at Pentecost.<sup>515</sup> If it's meant to be a historical description, there needs to be an explanation for why John describes the events differently to Luke, in a period when both accounts would be known.<sup>516</sup>

Carson describes it as an acted parable pointing forward to Pentecost, showing that the story doesn't end with John's book.<sup>517</sup> Köstenberger broadly agrees describing it as "a symbolic foreshadowing,"<sup>518</sup> as does Schreiner.<sup>519</sup> This makes it more like John's version of the great commission, demonstrating the importance of their Pentecostal experience in order to accomplish this.<sup>520</sup> Keener does point out the strong link from verse 21 into verse 22 of mission and commission, as well as empowering by the receipt of the Spirit.<sup>521</sup>

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<sup>513</sup> Schreiner, *New Testament Theology*, 465-466

<sup>514</sup> Carson, *The Gospel according to John*, 654

<sup>515</sup> Schreiner, *New Testament Theology*, 466. "If we accept Acts as historically reliable, then John knew about Pentecost because he experienced it."

<sup>516</sup> Köstenberger, *John*, 574. John was present at Pentecost, after all. You would expect either an explanation, or a more evident symbolic layering. There are too many details changed without clear theological reasons why he would do so.

<sup>517</sup> Carson, *The Gospel according to John*, 655. He compares it to Jesus washing the disciples' feet.

<sup>518</sup> Köstenberger, *John*, 471. "Otherwise it would be hard to see how John would not be found to stand in actual conflict with Luke's Pentecost narrative in Acts 2, not to mention his own disclaimers earlier in the narrative that the Spirit would be given only subsequent to Jesus' glorification, which entailed his return to the Father." (574).

<sup>519</sup> Schreiner, *New Testament Theology*, 466. Grudem calls it an "acted out prophecy" which puts him somewhere between Carson and Keener, though nearer Carson. Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 769 n.13.

<sup>520</sup> Strangely John Hosier adopts a position similar to the classic reformed or that of James Dunn, arguing that Jesus' should be taken at his word. This therefore is a reception of the Spirit, he doesn't say it's Pentecost, but instead 'genuine activity' of the Spirit in the life of the disciples. He wants to continue to affirm the activity of the Spirit in the lives of all believers prior to their baptism in the Holy Spirit. This is a very odd interpretation, and he doesn't interact with anyone apart from Carson. Hosier, *Christ's Radiant Church*, 102. He misses that his interpretation cuts against his position on the subsequence of receiving the Spirit. Also his desire to affirm the activity of the Spirit in the lives of all believers is laudable, but this would be affirmed by all parties however you interpret John 20.

<sup>521</sup> Keener, *The Gospel of John*, 1205. He argues that "the experience depicted here for the disciples functions proleptically for the whole church." He links this to John 7.37. He moves on, "'Receiving' the Spirit here also refers to the beginning of an indwelling ... and hence implies a fuller inspiration that that reported among the biblical prophets." (1206). C.f. Bennema, 'The Giving of the Spirit in John's Gospel', 210.

## “Breathed”

Carson contends that the text doesn’t say ‘breathed on them’, just ‘breathed’ or ‘exhaled’, there is no structure or object around the verb.<sup>522</sup> Keener feels this is simplistic,<sup>523</sup> Köstenberger agrees.<sup>524</sup> Carson understands it to mean that Jesus ‘expelled a long breath’.<sup>525</sup> It’s the words ‘receive the Spirit’ which have led to the interpretation that he breathes on the disciples.<sup>526</sup> This does seem to undermine Carson’s argument a little, wouldn’t an acted parable involve actions? However whichever position is taken doesn’t seem to impact massively on interpretation.<sup>527</sup>

The acts of breathing hints at Genesis 2.7 and at Ezekiel 37.9.<sup>528</sup> John is perhaps alluding to the formation of a new creation in the new Adam by his Act of breathing on the disciples.<sup>529</sup> Dunn interprets this to mean the moment of regeneration, seeing no other possibility.<sup>530</sup> Keener sees an allusion to the wind of John 3.8, so an image of regeneration.<sup>531</sup>

I think Carson’s explanation of the event is significantly more likely, though it isn’t clear cut. However, whether this event is the regeneration of the disciples or not, it’s absolutely the last occasion on which they can have received saving faith in Christ. It is definitely prior to them receiving the Pentecost promises of John 7 and John 14-16. Acts 2.33 seems to have Peter linking Pentecost with the gift of John 14-16 as well.<sup>532</sup>

## Great Commission

As previously mentioned I think it’s best to see this as John’s ‘version’ of the Great Commission,<sup>533</sup> paralleling Matthew 28.18-20, Luke 24.48-49 and Mark 16.15-18.<sup>534</sup> Köstenberger comments that the focus of the whole unit is the sending statement which climaxes in Jesus as the sent Son.<sup>535</sup> By the commissioning of Jesus and the subsequent empowering of the Spirit at Pentecost, “the disciples are drawn into the unity and mission of Father and Son.”<sup>536</sup>

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<sup>522</sup> Carson, *The Gospel according to John*, 651-652

<sup>523</sup> Keener, *The Gospel of John*, 1197

<sup>524</sup> Köstenberger, *John*, 575. Elsewhere he states that breathing is a symbolic promise of the impending gift of the Spirit. Köstenberger, ‘John’, 506.

<sup>525</sup> Carson’s view is the minority one among scholars, though dominates in major modern commentaries, c.f. Storms, ‘Baptism of the Holy Spirit – Part II’.

<sup>526</sup> Carson, *The Gospel according to John*, 652

<sup>527</sup> Quinn, *Expectation and Fulfillment of the Gift of the Holy Spirit in the Gospel of John*, 145

<sup>528</sup> Carson, *The Gospel according to John*, 651

<sup>529</sup> Keener, *Acts*, 790

<sup>530</sup> Dunn, *Baptism in the Holy Spirit*, 180

<sup>531</sup> Keener, *The Gospel of John*, 1204

<sup>532</sup> Bock, *Acts*, 133. “Jesus resurrection-ascension has led to all of this activity involving the Spirit.”

<sup>533</sup> We examined three prominent views of the chapter, those associated with Carson, Keener and Dunn. There are a wide array of others. The vast majority of scholars appear to view it as the Johannine Pentecost, which is neat but, as we’ve seen, unsatisfying. Very briefly it could also be 1) empowerment for apostolic ministry and so unique to the apostles, 2) Power to preach the gospel (associated with Schweizer), 3) gift of the embryonic Paraclete who would in the future become the Paraclete of John 14-16 (associated with Porsch), 4) a gift that secures and sustains the belief and relationship the disciples already had with Jesus (associated with Bennema). Bennema, ‘The Giving of the Spirit in John’s Gospel’, 200-208

<sup>534</sup> Storms, ‘Baptism of the Holy Spirit – Part II’, “this impartation of the Spirit is not related to their conversion but to their commission.”

<sup>535</sup> Köstenberger, *John*, 573

<sup>536</sup> Köstenberger, *John*, 573

He sees Jesus here as commissioning the disciples and in so doing constituting the new messianic community in anticipation of its actual formation on the event of the outpouring of the Spirit.<sup>537</sup> This is a missio-ecclesial occasion, a commissioning that forms the church and promises the power that will be required to make this a reality.

### Summary

- This is not Pentecost, it's a resurrection appearance
- This prefigures the disciples receiving the Spirit fully at Pentecost. It is a prophetic promise of Jesus that they will receive.
- It essentially parallels the statements in the "Great Commission" passages that Jesus will be with them until the end of the age, that they will receive power and that signs would accompany them.

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<sup>537</sup> Köstenberger, *John*, 575

## 5. Paul Exegesis

### 5.1 Galatians 3.2

*Let me ask you only this: Did you receive the Spirit by works of the law or by hearing with faith?*

We are looking at a section from the middle of Paul's argument, when he puts forward an argument from experience,<sup>538</sup> pointing them to the moment that they received the Spirit.<sup>539</sup> For Paul's argument to work, the evidence of the Spirit's entry into their lives must have been undeniably clear.<sup>540</sup> Verse 5 suggests that this included outward manifestations.<sup>541</sup>

It could be remembered and recalled as a well-known event, which verifies the authenticity of Paul's message on that occasion. His whole argument hinges on their personal experience.<sup>542</sup> They are being taken back to the very root of their spiritual experience, and being reminded that it started with a gift. It must also have been publically visible for this argument to work for the whole church.<sup>543</sup> Something that they all or nearly all have experienced,<sup>544</sup> indicating it is initiatory in nature.

His argument could be paraphrased:

“You don't need to supplement your faith with law. Why not? Look at what you have experienced. Remember when you received the Spirit? How did that happen? It was a complete gift. What else could you possibly need!?”

It is therefore not necessary to take on a new racial or cultural identity in order to experience the Spirit.<sup>545</sup> His whole argument requires that reception he reminds them of to have been 'dynamically experienced.'<sup>546</sup>

We can easily skim over this passage, but Galatians 3 requires as much of an explanation as Acts 19 for the question to make sense.<sup>547</sup> Receiving the Spirit cannot simply be regeneration, even in Paul's thought!

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<sup>538</sup> Longenecker, *Galatians*, 101. “He is convinced that if they would but recall their own experience of having received God's Spirit at the time when they accepted Paul's proclamation of the gospel, then no further argument from him would be necessary and no enticement from the Judaisers would be possible.”

<sup>539</sup> “Paul's question move from the experience of the preaching of the cross of Christ ... to the experience of the Spirit ... the two are linked: the cross opens the door for the Spirit, and the experience of the Spirit is the result of faith in the message of the cross of Christ.” Hansen, *Galatians*, 79

<sup>540</sup> Hansen, *Galatians*, 79

<sup>541</sup> Hansen, *Galatians*, 79. Ambrosiaster saw Paul as encouraging them that speaking in tongues should be seen as a reminder that the Holy Spirit is with them. Quoted in Edwards, *Ancient Christian commentary on Scripture: Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians*, 34

<sup>542</sup> Longenecker, *Galatians*, 102, “His reference to their reception of the Spirit is stated in such an absolute manner as to signal a shared familiarity of that fact on the part of both him and them.”

<sup>543</sup> Eaton, *Baptism with the Spirit*, 45.

<sup>544</sup> Moo says that Paul assumes all Christians must have received the Spirit, but this misses that it is an argument from experience, the argument requires that they know that they have. Moo suggests they knew because they had seen miracles. Moo, *Galatians*, 182. Stott also says he assumes that all received, I think its much more likely that Paul simply saw that they had. Stott, *The Message of Galatians*, 71.

<sup>545</sup> Hansen, *Galatians*, 80-81

<sup>546</sup> Fee, *God's Empowering Presence*, 383

<sup>547</sup> Newman, *What we are about to receive*, 6. Everything can be narrowed down to their reception of the Spirit. That is the crux of the matter for Paul. Fee, *God's Empowering Presence*, 382.

Identity is the key issue in Galatians, how do we know that we are part of Abraham's offspring and therefore God's people? Paul's overarching answer is that you are joined by grace received through faith in Christ, and by nothing else. What this section of his argument shows us is the key role of the Spirit as the "singular 'identity mark' of those who belong to Christ."<sup>548</sup> The thing that uniquely distinguishes those who have been joined with Christ by the grace of God, received through faith, is their experience of the Spirit moving among them individually and corporately. The Galatians are genuine believers because they had received the Spirit.<sup>549</sup>

Dunn argues that *enarzomai* "cannot refer to anything other than the moment of becoming a Christian;" that the parallelism between the gift of the Spirit and justification means that they are the same, and that the means is faith; that life comes from the Spirit; and that the gift of the Spirit is what puts us in Christ.<sup>550</sup> I would contend that the parallelism might indicate that they happened at the same time, but it doesn't require that they are the same thing.

A strict Calvinist reading can help see that this isn't referring to the receipt of new life in Christ, as "we are not born again through faith but rather unto faith". So something received by faith, the gift of the new birth, cannot itself be the new birth.<sup>551</sup>

We should also notice the highly personal nature of the language in Galatians 4, referring to an actual experience by these Galatian Christians. Not one by which they were made sons, but one which assured them of their sonship as in Romans 8.<sup>552</sup>

Stott says that Galatians 3 undermines the doctrine of baptism in the Spirit as the experience here is initiatory.<sup>553</sup> He's right that it's initiatory, but misses that large numbers of proponents of baptism in the Spirit teach that this is the expected norm, even if it isn't the universal experience. Blomberg is happy to agree that Paul is referring to personal experience, but sees this as referring to reception of the gospel.<sup>554</sup> This is plausible only if you accept Dunn's thesis that gospel reception must be accompanied by dramatic experience, but Blomberg doesn't.

As Fee puts it:

"here is the demonstration that the experience of the Spirit in Pauline churches was very much as that described and understood by Luke – as visibly and experientially accompanied by phenomena that gave certain evidence of the presence of the Spirit of God."<sup>555</sup>

## Summary

- Receiving the Spirit is an initiatory experience that was dramatic and can be easily remembered.

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<sup>548</sup> Fee, *God's Empowering Presence*, 383

<sup>549</sup> Schreiner, *New Testament Theology*, 478. Though Schreiner would read this to mean that not having the Spirit means that you are not a believer on the basis of Romans 9.

<sup>550</sup> Dunn, *Baptism in the Holy Spirit*, 108

<sup>551</sup> Garner, *The Promise of the Spirit*, 23-24. Garner quotes John Murray, who wouldn't agree with his conclusion, "It should be specially noted that even faith that Jesus is the Christ is the effect of regeneration... We are not born again by faith or repentance of conversion; we repent and believe because we have been regenerated."

<sup>552</sup> Garner, *The Promise of the Spirit*, 24

<sup>553</sup> Stott, *The Message of Galatians*, 75

<sup>554</sup> Blomberg, *Pentecost to Patmos*, 127

<sup>555</sup> Fee, *God's Empowering Presence*, 384

- The Spirit is the singular identity mark of the covenant people of God, the children of Abraham

## 5.2 1 Corinthians

### 1 Corinthians 3.16

*Do you not know that you are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in you?*

Paul's question is 'do you not know who you are?' the answer being that they are God's 'temple' – *naos* – referring to the sanctuary specifically.<sup>556</sup> The Corinthian believers are the section of temple where the deity dwells, the holy of holies.<sup>557</sup> This is explicitly Solomon's temple,<sup>558</sup> so the believers are representative of the most magnificent edifice to the glory of God ever constructed. Which is fitting, as they are the promised eschatological temple.

"They became that new temple by the fact that 'God's Spirit lives in you'."<sup>559</sup> It is only the presence of the Spirit which denotes God's people. The Church is the corporate place of God's dwelling,<sup>560</sup> when it is gathered together there should be an expectation of the presence and power of Christ.<sup>561</sup> The Spirit dwells corporately in the community.<sup>562</sup> Which would imply that you should be able to experience that the Spirit is present by just being among the people, this should be obvious. The church is primarily a people of the Spirit,<sup>563</sup> especially as they gather to worship.<sup>564</sup>

Paul's tone seems to imply that it is palpably obvious that they are God's temple and God's Spirit dwells in them. It's visible when they meet together, which is what makes the behaviour he is decrying all the more shocking. For Paul's argument here to make sense, God's presence within the church must be well known to them.<sup>565</sup>

Garland sees this visible expression as their unity, which is created by the Spirit.<sup>566</sup> This doesn't seem to be enough to cover the weight that Paul gives it, whatever people are witnessing should give a "God is amongst you!" style of response. The Spirit's activity should serve as a demonstration of God's presence.<sup>567</sup>

### Summary

- The church as the assembled people of God is the explicit dwelling place of God by his Spirit
- Anyone among the people of God should be able to tell this

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<sup>556</sup> Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 146

<sup>557</sup> Witherington, *Conflict and Community in Corinth*, 134

<sup>558</sup> Ciampa & Rosner, '1 Corinthians', 703. They argue on the basis of the foundation being described by Paul as being made of gold, silver and precious stones.

<sup>559</sup> Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 147

<sup>560</sup> Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 119-120

<sup>561</sup> Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 147

<sup>562</sup> Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 316; Fee, *God's Empowering Presence*, 113

<sup>563</sup> Fee, *God's Empowering Presence*, 115

<sup>564</sup> Fee, *God's Empowering Presence*, 116

<sup>565</sup> Barrett, *A Commentary of the First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 90

<sup>566</sup> Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 120

<sup>567</sup> Fee, *God's Empowering Presence*, 114

## 1 Corinthians 6.11-19

*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. "All things are lawful for me," but not all things are helpful. "All things are lawful for me," but I will not be dominated by anything. "Food is meant for the stomach and the stomach for food"--and God will destroy both one and the other. The body is not meant for sexual immorality, but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body. And God raised the Lord and will also raise us up by his power. Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? Shall I then take the members of Christ and make them members of a prostitute? Never! Or do you not know that he who is joined to a prostitute becomes one body with her? For, as it is written, "The two will become one flesh." But he who is joined to the Lord becomes one spirit with him. Flee from sexual immorality. Every other sin a person commits is outside the body, but the sexually immoral person sins against his own body. Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body.*

Conversion is "effected by God through the work of Christ and the Spirit."<sup>568</sup> The Spirit is, "the means by whereby God in the new age effects the work of Christ in the believer's life."<sup>569</sup> Here the Spirit is the agent, applying salvation bought by Christ to the believer. He is the one doing the application of redemption.<sup>570</sup> There is an implicit Trinitarianism in the description of salvation.<sup>571</sup>

This is different to Baptism in the Holy Spirit, which isn't a statement of agency. There instead the Spirit is the element of immersion, and Jesus is the agent.

There is an emphasis here on the experience of that new reality in the believer's life, which is provided by the Spirit. Bruce ties this together with 12.13,<sup>572</sup> but the language is explicitly different here, and the context is too. Here Paul is speaking of the need for holiness, in chapter 12 he is speaking of the need for unity. His answers to those questions are different.

In verse 17 Paul describes the way that the Spirit acts to join us to Christ, producing union through the application of redemption.<sup>573</sup> It is a union initiated and effected by the Spirit.<sup>574</sup> We shouldn't allow a focus on the 'receipt' of the Spirit in dramatic power to let us miss that the Spirit is active in a believer's life prior to and during the whole salvation process.

In verse 19, Paul takes the Temple imagery used corporately in 3.16 and makes it individual.<sup>575</sup> The Church is God's Temple by the Spirit, the body is the Spirit's Temple, the place where it dwells. It is 'housed' there. This is not intended as a statement of Christian anthropology, but rather imagery to affirm the significance of the body both against Gnostic spiritualism and physical sin.<sup>576</sup> The

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<sup>568</sup> Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 245 It involves a, "spiritual transformation made possible through Christ and effected by the Spirit" (247).

<sup>569</sup> Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 247. Garland understands this is being a reference to Baptism, seeing that as "the occasion when the Spirit creatively works in the individual." Quoting Beasley-Murray, Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 216

<sup>570</sup> Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 455

<sup>571</sup> Witherington, *Conflict and Community in Corinth*, 167

<sup>572</sup> Bruce, *1 and 2 Corinthians*, 62

<sup>573</sup> Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 260. "Through the one Spirit the believer's 'spirit' has been joined indissolubly with Christ ... the believer is united to the Lord and thereby has become one S/spirit with him."

<sup>574</sup> Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 235

<sup>575</sup> Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 264

<sup>576</sup> Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 264

implication is that the Holy Spirit is the owner of the body.<sup>577</sup> The Spirit is a gift, the result of which is that now the Corinthians are not their own persons.<sup>578</sup>

The Spirit stamps each individual as belonging to God. I think it's reasonable to infer from Paul's comments a reference to the sealing by the Spirit he later speaks of in 2 Corinthians and Ephesians. It's legitimate to see the Spirit not just as inhabiting a corporate setting, but also dwelling in each believer as an individual.<sup>579</sup> Paul uses this individual application due to the individual lifestyle question at issue in this chapter.<sup>580</sup>

### Summary

- The Spirit is active in the life of the believer prior to receiving the Spirit.
- The reality of the Spirit in the believer's life is powerful and experiential.
- The Holy Spirit dwells not just in the corporate body, but in the individual believer as well.

## 5.3 1 Corinthians 12.13

*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.*

### Context of the question

1 Corinthians 12.13 has been used as the primary proof text against any sort of post-conversion experience that aligns with Jesus' promise that believers be baptised in the Holy Spirit.<sup>581</sup>

The logic runs that here we have the phrase baptism in the Spirit in a context where it is clearly talking about all believers, so therefore whatever baptism in the Spirit is it cannot be something that some have and some have not yet had. Therefore, we need to interpret other passages in the light of this one.

In this way 1 Corinthians 12.13 is made into a hermeneutical grid for reading the post-conversion experiences in Acts. Because this passage appears to equate baptism in the Spirit with conversion, it must mean conversion in other instances, and we need to understand the Acts phenomena in the light of this.

While this leaves us with different options for what to do with Acts 2, 8, 10 and 19, it doesn't leave us with the option that they describe a subsequent experience that is the promised receipt of the Spirit from Acts 1 or the Gospels.

### Interpretive options

There are broadly three categories of interpretative approach to the passage:

- 1) This is baptism in the Spirit. Therefore, that must equal regeneration.<sup>582</sup>

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<sup>577</sup> Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 264

<sup>578</sup> Witherington, *Conflict and Community in Corinth*, 169. "The Holy Spirit stamps their bodies as belonging to God and set aside for God's use, guarantees their common destiny with God and makes their bodies a sacred place of God's presence." Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 238. Garland is characteristically vague on how this happens.

<sup>579</sup> Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 316. Blomberg, *Pentecost to Patmos*, 176.

<sup>580</sup> Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 474

<sup>581</sup> E.g. Blomberg, *Jesus and the Gospels*, 217.

<sup>582</sup> "Given that Paul can affirm that every Corinthian Christian has the Spirit, in spite of the rampant immaturity present in their congregation, this is one of the strongest texts in the New Testament in support of the conviction that every believer has been baptised in the Spirit." Blomberg, *Pentecost to Patmos*, 189.

- 2) This is not 'baptism in the Spirit' as we encounter it in Acts and elsewhere, even though similar terms are used.
- 3) This is not addressed to all Christians, or if it is it isn't reasonable to apply it to all Christians today.

A fourth option logically exists but is hard to find people arguing:

- 4) This is baptism in the Spirit, therefore experiential Spirit baptism is required for salvation or for inclusion within the body of believers. This is the logical corollary of James Dunn's position on Spirit baptism.

### **Option 1 – This is baptism in the Spirit and addressed to all Christians**

This is exegetically simple when approaching this passage, though leaves some questions to be asked; e.g. why the reference to the Jew/Gentile question, and why does Paul choose this particular term for regeneration, though they are not without answer. This would mean that Baptism in the Spirit cannot be an experience post conversion as it makes us members of Christ.<sup>583</sup>

The two major problems it causes are:

Firstly, it isn't contextually obvious from the passage that each individual's regeneration would be the reason for their inclusion within Paul's metaphor of the body of Christ, which is his answer to the hierarchy the church in Corinth is establishing based on their perception of the quality of different gifts. This is a reasonable, but not watertight, example of applying our systematic theology to the passage to illuminate what is going on.

Secondly, it gives massive interpretive issues when approaching Acts in particular, but also for most of the experiential descriptions found in the New Testament (e.g. Galatians 3). This approach requires that you decide Acts is never prescriptive for the contemporary church, and that the charismatic experience of the early church is only there as descriptive historical information. It is not something that we should, would or could expect to see as active within the church after the closing of the canon.

The primary issue with this is that there is no internal textual warrant for making 1 Corinthians 12.13 our hermeneutical keystone, making it the interpretive filter for the rest of the Bible. I would argue that the significant evidence to the contrary in the rest of the New Testament should give us serious pause before doing so.

### **Option 2 – This is not baptism in the Spirit**

Lloyd-Jones argued that phraseology is used very fluidly in the New Testament,<sup>584</sup> not everything we call 'Baptism in the Spirit' is described using that phrasing, and not everything using that phrasing is by necessity speaking of the same thing. He understood this to be speaking of being 'baptised in Christ' based on the context and his understanding of the grammar.<sup>585</sup>

However, language, grammar, and use of phrase make it hard in my opinion to argue that the Corinthian church wouldn't have been confused by a metaphor switch. It stretches credulity to think that there is more than one idea with the same name, and this this wouldn't have been a source of major debate.

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<sup>583</sup> Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 797

<sup>584</sup> Eaton, *Baptism with the Spirit*, 161

<sup>585</sup> Eaton, *Baptism with the Spirit*, 164

Ervin sees the two parallel phrases as pointing to different things, the first is regeneration and the second is Spirit-reception.<sup>586</sup> As we'll see that doesn't seem to be where the language points us.

### **Option 3 – This is Baptism in the Spirit but is not addressed to all Christians**

It's reasonable to assume that everyone in the New Testament churches would have received the Spirit, so Paul is not directly addressing our context. When he says 'all' he doesn't necessarily mean everyone today, even though he clearly did mean 'everyone in Corinth'.

The other option is that Paul's mention of categories of people, "Jew or Greek, slave or free," in his parenthesis provides a clue to the context. The comment seems a little out of place, it hasn't been an issue particularly addressed in the former section. Either this is a standard creedal statement that Paul quotes, knowing the church would be familiar with it; or he's indicating what he means by 'all'. It may be that Paul is simply using the word 'all' colloquially to mean 'all without distinction' as opposed to all without exception. We would have no reason for thinking this if he didn't then illustrate his point with these examples that they would know well.

He's arguing not that everyone is saved so therefore we're all the same, but that everyone has had similarly dramatic experiences of empowering by the Holy Spirit, whoever they might be, so trying to establish a hierarchy of the gifts that this experience has garnered for them is ridiculous.

It's a similar argument to Galatians 3, though with different intent. The idea of a believer who hadn't received the Spirit is most likely alien to Paul's experience and the Corinthian church's experience, so trying to force the word 'all' to mean that such a believer can never exist is to make the passage answer a question that Paul isn't asking.

However, a little epistemic humility may be wise, because this isn't an opinion that has found wide traction in the church. Saying that, it seems to be the simplest solution to understanding what Paul is talking about.

### **Argument of the Passage**

Paul's primary concern here is that the body is one, even though it has many members.<sup>587</sup> Fee sees the error Paul is addressing as assuming that unity is equal to uniformity,<sup>588</sup> with Paul then moving on to explain with his body analogy how unity is found in diversity. In verse 12 he uses their common experience of the Spirit as the grounding for their unity.<sup>589</sup> As Fee puts it, "the reception of the Spirit is the *sine qua non* of Christian life."<sup>590</sup>

Fee would see this Spirit reception as regeneration, but points out that this isn't the major issue at play here, "Paul's present concern is not to delineate how an individual becomes a believer, but to explain how they, though many, are one body."<sup>591</sup> "The purpose of our common experience of the Spirit is that we be formed into one body."<sup>592</sup>

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<sup>586</sup> Atkinson, *Baptism in the Spirit*, 95

<sup>587</sup> Fee, *God's Empowering Presence*, 176

<sup>588</sup> Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 602

<sup>589</sup> Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 603

<sup>590</sup> Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 603

<sup>591</sup> Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 603

<sup>592</sup> Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 606

Paul's question is, "How did you become one body?" which implies he has a local referent and is speaking ecclesiological as much as he might be speaking soteriological. His answer is "by your common, lavish experience of the Spirit".

This is so much the case that Paul can suggest the ethnic boundaries of Jew and Gentile are removed by this common experience. "Their common life in the Spirit had eliminated the significance of the old distinctions, hence they became one body."<sup>593</sup> This is in line with Paul's argument in Galatians, especially the start of chapter 3, that the Spirit unites the church by granting common experience that points to Christ, underlines the gospel and Christ's ultimate elimination of distinctions of status in his radical acceptance.

Thiselton sees the baptism or 'drenching' terminology as being used because there is an emphasis on the completeness and equality of the status of all who have been grafted into Christ. He might render it as, "you all shared the same life-giving divine, saving action."<sup>594</sup> This seems to be reading into the text, Carson renders the sentence colloquially as, "we were all drenched."<sup>595</sup> I might render it, "we have all had the same experience."

There is an internal and external reference in the sentence, with a union to the body of the church (external) and an individual drinking of the Spirit (internal).<sup>596</sup> Barrett argues that this is the universal body of the global Church, not the local body of believers.<sup>597</sup> We should remember that Paul is writing to a local body of believers, and therefore to them, whether or not there was a wider understanding in view, he is speaking of the local body of Christ that gathers to worship together. Perhaps it is a local expression of a global truth. Christ only has one body and you would find the same body wherever Christians gather together to worship. However this one body of Christ is only ever seen and experienced in local gatherings of local bodies. It is a local body of believers that you are added to, and the issues Paul was addressing around differing gifts and their equal importance is a local church issue. On a global scale his argument loses the full force of its point: the Spirit has fallen on all of you together, so treat each other as he treats you.

The language of drinking perhaps points to a link with John 7.37-39. Bruce sees this as being the same outpouring of the Spirit indicated with different language due to the presence in each of an initiatory aorist.<sup>598</sup> This may be indicative, but isn't particularly illuminating. There is no reason for making this sentence the lens for reading Jesus' great declaration in John 7, either.

## Language

The phrase *en eni pneumatī* can be translated as either 'locative' or 'instrumental'. Locative translations are the most common, seeing the Spirit as the sphere into which the Corinthians have been immersed. Translations would commonly be "in the one Spirit", "in one Spirit" or "in a single Spirit".<sup>599</sup>

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<sup>593</sup> Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 606

<sup>594</sup> Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 1001

<sup>595</sup> Quoted in Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 591

<sup>596</sup> Witherington, *Conflict and Community in Corinth*, 258

<sup>597</sup> Barrett, *A Commentary of the First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 288

<sup>598</sup> Bruce, *1 and 2 Corinthians*, 121

<sup>599</sup> Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 997

Instrumental translations speak instead of agency, it is the Spirit who is doing the baptising. It would then be translated “by one Spirit”. Thiselton would favour this translation,<sup>600</sup> as would Martyn Lloyd-Jones,<sup>601</sup> but the majority of scholars and translators disagree.<sup>602</sup>

The word *en* can mean with, by, in or for, the grammar itself doesn’t settle this. Thiselton admits that the second half of the sentence seems to favour the translation ‘in’.<sup>603</sup> If we agree with Fee that this is a Semitic parallel,<sup>604</sup> then that would seem to indicate both uses should be ‘in’, or we need a strong argument as to why they should be separate experiences. Thiselton does not follow the Pentecostal argument at this point. It seems to me that Thiselton’s sacramental Anglicanism makes him want to associate this with water baptism in some sense, leading to it being a paralleling baptism performed by the Spirit.<sup>605</sup>

Fee argues that the Greek construction ‘Baptism in the ...’ always implies the element rather than the agent.<sup>606</sup> Water is the most common word to follow, we are baptised by being immersed in water (locative) not being immersed by the water (instrumental). He would see Baptism in the Holy Spirit the same way.<sup>607</sup> Whatever we understand it to be this fits with Jesus’ promise that *he* would baptise us with the Holy Spirit. He is the agent, not the Spirit.

Martyn Lloyd-Jones’ argument rests on an instrumental reading, as he needs this to be different to baptism in the Spirit as we see it in Acts. But as we’ve seen, Thiselton agrees on the text but not on the theology. It isn’t a particularly strong argument linguistically.

Baptise and drink imply immersion and imbibing. An experience that saturates inside and out. Pawson points to the Pentecost for a parallel, when the disciples were both ‘baptised’ and ‘filled’.<sup>608</sup>

## Interpretation

The use of the term ‘baptism’ is initiatory, there is a basic assumption that Spirit reception is at the beginning of Christian experience.<sup>609</sup> Dunn boldly states that there is ‘no alternative’ to his view that receiving the Spirit is what made the Corinthians Christians.<sup>610</sup> According to Fee there’s no warrant for seeing Pentecostal Spirit baptism in this passage, or for a two stage ‘receiving’ and ‘drinking’ as

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<sup>600</sup> Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 997

<sup>601</sup> Eaton, *Baptism with the Spirit*, 164

<sup>602</sup> E.g. Bruce, *1 and 2 Corinthians*, 120

<sup>603</sup> Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 997

<sup>604</sup> C.f. Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 604 and below.

<sup>605</sup> Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 997

<sup>606</sup> C.f. Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 605 - 606

<sup>607</sup> Dunn argues “In the New Testament *en* with *baptizein* never designates the one who performs the baptism; on the contrary, it always indicates the element in which the baptisand is immersed ... in each of the six other passages which speak of Spirit-baptism ... the Spirit is the element used in the Messiah’s baptism in contrast to the water used in John’s baptism.” Dunn, *Baptism in the Holy Spirit*, 128. Atkinson expands on how Paul could have said ‘by’ if he’s wished to: “with a passive verb, *en* plus the dative (or a prepositionless dative) in this context normally signifies an instrument; *hupo* (“by”) plus the genitive signifies an agent.” Atkinson, *Baptism in the Spirit*, 98. Carson agrees, “the combination of Greek phrases nicely stresses exactly the point that Paul is trying to make: *all* Christians have been baptized in *one* Spirit; *all* Christians have been baptized into *one* body.” Carson, *Showing the Spirit*, 47.

<sup>608</sup> Pawson, *Jesus Baptises in One Holy Spirit*, 102

<sup>609</sup> Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 604

<sup>610</sup> Dunn, *Baptism in the Holy Spirit*, 129

this introduces an outside vested interest beyond Paul's concerns.<sup>611</sup> As we've seen, this is too fast a dismissal, especially as we should be expecting the Spirit to be received as part of Christian initiation.

The two terms in verse 12 are in a Semitic parallel, they mean the same thing. Trying to stretch the sentence to find two different receptions of the Spirit is a misunderstanding.<sup>612</sup> Ervin's claim that the two parallel passages are pointing to different events in the *Ordo Salutis* is hard to sustain. It does appear to be a Hebraic parallel and in every other occasion in Scripture we would read the two phrases as synonymous. As the focus is on a common experience, Fee feels Paul must be referencing conversion.<sup>613</sup> He must be pointing to an experience they all shared, that is certain.

Fee also comments on the use of the 'immersive' metaphor of baptism for conversion, describing it as, "a much greater experiential and visibly manifest reception of the Spirit than many have tended to experience in subsequent church history."<sup>614</sup> Which should give us some doubt over identifying this immersion into the Spirit as conversion. Especially when Acts seems to imply a set of experiences and not indicate such a neat process. The experiential reference and immersion metaphor does imply an experience that is shared. If not water baptism, and it's clearly not because of the reference to the Spirit,<sup>615</sup> then this must be another experience. While this could perhaps be a conversion if our own experiences don't seem to fit Paul's description at all, we should be wary about immediately assuming that's what's going on.

Garland defines the experience as being 'baptised into the sphere of the Spirit' but doesn't explain what this means. There is a tacit assumption that it must be referring to conversion without a wrestling with the text.<sup>616</sup> He points to Galatians 3.2-3 to indicate that the Spirit marks the beginning of the Christian life,<sup>617</sup> which is odd because that isn't what Galatians says, at least not in the way that he means it.

Thiselton strongly states the case, "any theology that might imply that this one baptism in 13a in which believers were baptised by one Spirit might mark off some post conversion experience or status enjoyed only by some Christians attacks and undermines Paul's entire argument and emphasis."<sup>618</sup> I would argue that, on the contrary, it emphasises and underlines Paul's argument. He points to a shared experience that the Corinthians have had.

Thiselton paints the Baptism in the Holy Spirit as the Corinthian heresy.<sup>619</sup> Paul's use of the 'one' Spirit that 'all' have experienced, "constitutes a direct onslaught against categorisation or elitism within the church."<sup>620</sup> I agree, but the experience of receiving the Spirit is the leveller that removes those categories of Jew/Gentile, gifted/not-gifted but providing all with direct experiential knowledge of their unique and united status in Christ, before the Father, by the power of the Spirit.

Paul uses experiential language, which means he cannot be speaking of regeneration unless you also have Dunn's understanding of regeneration as a powerful charismatic experience. Thiselton quotes Dunn to his defence, "these verses are a crushing rejoinder to Pentecostalist ideas about the

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<sup>611</sup> Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 604

<sup>612</sup> Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 604

<sup>613</sup> Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 605

<sup>614</sup> Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 605

<sup>615</sup> Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 604

<sup>616</sup> Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 591

<sup>617</sup> Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 591

<sup>618</sup> Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 997 - 998

<sup>619</sup> Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 998

<sup>620</sup> Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 998

reception of the Spirit. The reception of the Spirit is the beginning of the Christian life.”<sup>621</sup> Which seems to support his case wholesale, except that their respective ideas of what justification *is* are miles apart. To consistently follow Dunn’s thesis is to reject Pentecostal ideas about the timing of the experience, but not its inherent nature.

Lloyd-Jones bases his understanding on his translation of the phrase as ‘by’ one Spirit, he reads it to be saying that the Spirit is the agent baptising us into Christ.<sup>622</sup> This is the opposite of his understanding of baptism in the Spirit, that Jesus baptises us with the Spirit.

His argument is, based on a translation that’s plausible but not widely supported. We have to decide what the sentence means based on context and theology, and then read that into the translation option. I agree with Fee and Dunn that ‘in’ seems like a more likely translation than ‘by’. Lloyd-Jones is keen to keep the experiential nature of baptism in the Spirit, and is concerned that this verse appears to imply the opposite, so therefore it must mean something else. He might paraphrase the sentence as, “by means of the personal agency of one Spirit we all were placed in one body.”<sup>623</sup> However the linguistics don’t really support this. We are baptised by Jesus into the Spirit.

Pawson argues that Paul is describing the ‘normal’ situation, they all were baptised in the Spirit.<sup>624</sup> He comments that ‘we’ must be limited to Paul and those he addresses, he could have happily used the same construction for water baptism and we would not assume that this was something that happened automatically to us on regeneration.<sup>625</sup> The common situation today is instead the abnormal one. To suggest to Paul or the Corinthians that anyone was a Christian and hadn’t experienced this would have utterly astonished them.<sup>626</sup>

Packer argues that this cannot be true because they were described as theological babes in 1 Corinthians 3.1, so to assume they have had this experience must be wrong.<sup>627</sup> What Packer misses is that the experience is supposed to be basic Christianity, so of course ‘theological babes’ would have received it. Based on my reading of Acts, above, I think it’s hard to dispute Pawson’s argument. We would need a very good reason why they wouldn’t all have received, and there isn’t an obvious one forthcoming.

I think that the context leads us to read it as talking about Baptism in the Spirit. Paul’s argument is about unity and founded on a shared experience they have ‘all’ had. It overstretches Paul’s argument to assume therefore all believers everywhere must have had this, though it would be reasonable to assume Paul would expect that.

When Paul uses the word ‘all’ he is addressing the Corinthian church, and even then would not know everyone within it. It’s reasonable to assume that they would have had new believers, or those just beginning their walk of discipleship among them when they heard Paul’s letter read.

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<sup>621</sup> Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 1000

<sup>622</sup> Eaton, *Baptism with the Spirit*, 164

<sup>623</sup> Eaton, *Baptism with the Spirit*, 166. Lloyd-Jones is quoting Wuest.

<sup>624</sup> Pawson, *Jesus Baptises in One Holy Spirit*, 94. “He knew that all believers had heard a gospel which held out to them not only new life in Christ by birth of the Spirit, but also power to serve Christ by baptism in the Spirit.” Garner, *The Promise of the Spirit*, 21

<sup>625</sup> Pawson, *Jesus Baptises in One Holy Spirit*, 106

<sup>626</sup> Hosier, *Christ’s Radiant Church*, 92

<sup>627</sup> Packer, *Keep in Step with the Spirit*, 203. Storms says that it “appears inconsistent with the idea that all the Corinthians had entered into a higher, more spiritual phase of the Christian life.” Storms, ‘Baptism of the Holy Spirit – Part I’.

We must then, using his parenthetical comment about Jews and Greeks as a clue, read the word ‘all’ to mean all without distinction, not all without exception. This also prevents the accusation that those who haven’t received the Spirit are not part of the body of Christ.<sup>628</sup> Storms says this can’t be true because “Paul’s emphasis in 1 Cor. 12 is their *common* experience of the Holy Spirit, not what one group has that another does not.”<sup>629</sup> Which is exactly my point, receiving the Spirit is what unified the Corinthians, what should unify modern Christians and is basic to Christian experience. It’s the modern Christian experience that is out of step with this, not charismatic theology.<sup>630</sup>

Witherington argues that it cannot be this, and that all must mean every Christian. He does so on the basis that, “there are no Christians without the Spirit. At conversion the Christian is united to the body by the Spirit and is given the Spirit to drink.”<sup>631</sup> Packer says that this can’t be right as we can’t all be part of one body if only some have received the Spirit,<sup>632</sup> but Baptism in the Holy Spirit is the sign of our unity, not the substance of it.

Paul is explaining how the many become one,<sup>633</sup> with his answer being that unity is found in their “common lavish experience of the Spirit.”<sup>634</sup> Fee argues that Paul is basing this on a shared experiential reality. While he sees this as Christian initiation, the argument doesn’t work if we see this as conversion, as this would be non-experiential or non-visible to others. They must all both know that they have received and that the others in the body have also received. All of their gifts demonstrably come from the same source. Like Galatians 3.2, he points them to an event that they can easily recall. Here, unlike Galatians, they must be able to see each other’s experiences so as to know that they are united.

Paul wouldn’t be familiar with exceptions, would lead them to receive as he see his practice is in Acts 19. Paul doesn’t say that baptism in the Spirit makes us members of the body of Christ, he says that both things have happened. Baptism in the Spirit is basic Christianity, part of Christian initiation, but distinct from regeneration. It is an experience of assurance that leads us to know we are united with Christ, not what unites us with Christ in the first place. As Pawson puts it:

“Their initiatory experiences were all of one and the same Spirit. They were therefore united from the very beginning and shared a single source for all their different gifts.”<sup>635</sup>

Cyprian commented on the early church that, “After Pentecost the Spirit was found constantly to be forming actual living communities of grace and testimony. All those united to Christ by faith are united with the called out community by the Spirit.”<sup>636</sup>

That’s the flow of 1 Corinthians 12.13, those united to Christ are then united with the community by the demonstration of the Spirit’s action within their lives. Jesus’ gift of the Spirit doesn’t unite you to

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<sup>628</sup> As levelled by e.g. Storms, ‘Baptism of the Holy Spirit – Part I’

<sup>629</sup> Storms, ‘Baptism of the Holy Spirit – Part I’

<sup>630</sup> C.f. Fee, arguing the same as Storms says, “Paul’s present concern is not to delineate how an individual becomes a believer, but to explain how the many of them, diverse as they are, are in fact one body. The answer: The Spirit, whom all alike have received.” Fee, *God’s Empowering Presence*, 178. Which is precisely my point.

<sup>631</sup> Witherington, *Conflict and Community in Corinth*, 258

<sup>632</sup> Packer, *Keep in Step with the Spirit*, 203

<sup>633</sup> Fee, *God’s Empowering Presence*, 176

<sup>634</sup> Fee, *God’s Empowering Presence*, 176

<sup>635</sup> Pawson, *Jesus Baptises in One Holy Spirit*, 103. “The objective of Spirit baptism is to integrate an individual into the body of Christ, to make them a member of the Church.” (103-104).

<sup>636</sup> Quoted in Oden, *Classic Christianity*, 543

Christ, the Spirit has already done that to us. The gift demonstrates and provides the practical basis for the unity of Christ's body. That's the only way the diversity that Paul begins to explore in the rest of 1 Corinthians 12 is possible, different members of the body are one because of their demonstrable Spirit reception.

Paul appeals to them for union on the grounds of their common experience of receiving the Spirit, "releasing them into functional membership within one body of Christ."<sup>637</sup> To be a member of the body is to be playing a part in the body.<sup>638</sup> Membership is functional, not ontological. They are members by the Spirit because they are empowered to find and complete their role, not because the Spirit adds them to a roll.

Thiselton says that we should make 1 Corinthians 12.13 our interpretive keystone because Acts is a narrative, and Paul raises interpretive problems for a simple reading. We need a 'sophisticated' or 'pragmatic' hermeneutic.<sup>639</sup> He continually states that this is the only passage to speak of 'Baptism in the Spirit' within the Bible, so we should read other texts in the light of this one. This evidently isn't true, but he rejects Acts as 'idealised narrative.'<sup>640</sup>

This makes it very hard to read Acts and find anything to apply to our lives, and it certainly casts out the idea that Acts is a model for the contemporary church. I'm fairly sure one of Luke's intentions was to remind the church in his day, within decades of the events, what the primitive church looked like and to encourage them to return to its pattern.<sup>641</sup>

In order to make Baptism in the Holy Spirit non-experiential you would have to view the six other occasions of the term, and all the associated other terms, through the lens of this one sentence.<sup>642</sup>

## Conclusions

In 1 Corinthians 12.13 Paul is speaking of the dramatic experience of receiving the Spirit that would typically be expected to form part of Christian initiation. This is the foundation of union amidst diversity with any local Christian church; a shared experience of intimacy that shows that whoever you are you are joined with Christ only as a gift, and loved by the Father as though you were the Son.

## 5.4 2 Corinthians

### 2 Corinthians 1.21-22

*And it is God who establishes us with you in Christ, and has anointed us, and who has also put his seal on us and given us his Spirit in our hearts as a guarantee.*

This comes at the end of an argument about Paul's integrity. His integrity is confirmed by the Spirit, who they also have experienced in the same way he has.<sup>643</sup> The Spirit is the proof of Paul's apostleship because he bore fruit through Paul in the form of the Corinthian church.<sup>644</sup> Paul states

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<sup>637</sup> Pawson, *Jesus Baptises in One Holy Spirit*, 106

<sup>638</sup> Pawson, *Jesus Baptises in One Holy Spirit*, 104. "Baptism in Spirit creates this body because it releases the gifts in individuals, enabling them to fulfil a function that benefits the rest of the body." This understanding undoes any sense of regeneration being the keystone for membership, its active service empowered by the singular experience and disparate gifting of the Spirit.

<sup>639</sup> Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 999

<sup>640</sup> Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 999

<sup>641</sup> Keener, *Acts*, 793

<sup>642</sup> Eaton, *Baptism with the Spirit*, 231

<sup>643</sup> Fee, *God's Empowering Presence*, 288-290

<sup>644</sup> Fee, *God's Empowering Presence*, 293

three closely connected salvific actions,<sup>645</sup> all of which make up God's ongoing action towards his people guaranteeing their Christward focus.<sup>646</sup> It is the third of these actions which is of particular interest to our inquiry.

Paul uses two words which are key to us, *arrabōn* and *sphragizō*. *Arrabōn* is the guarantee or deposit, a legal term used in commerce for the first and lesser payment guaranteeing full settlement.<sup>647</sup> It is a guaranteed security,<sup>648</sup> a first instalment that gives a legal claim or it could be a pledge that differed in kind to the payment but rendered it obligatory.<sup>649</sup> Linguistically it could be either.<sup>650</sup> Harris argues that it is both, the deposit is the guarantee, its "a pledge-guarantee, making final payment an obligation, and a part payment, bringing the creditor a portion of the final payment."<sup>651</sup>

It is a guarantee here of us moving towards Christ. The gospel word to us is confirmed by the giving of the Spirit.<sup>652</sup> The point Paul is making is that if the Spirit of God among them is from Paul's ministry, then they should not reject Paul.<sup>653</sup>

*Sphragizō* is the seal, also a commercial term, typically a wax mark of ownership or a guarantee of authenticity.<sup>654</sup> It is used to denote that something belongs to someone. The word's semantic domain contains ideas of ownership, authentication and security.<sup>655</sup> Therefore a seal can say that I own an item, that I guarantee that the goods are what they say they are and/or that I pledge to protect the goods personally to prevent tampering in transit. Theologically we can see all of these elements; God has branded believers as his, God has attested the reality of their status in Christ, and God has guaranteed their protection in transit, "as his permanent and inviolable possession."<sup>656</sup>

The seal is the Spirit himself,<sup>657</sup> God has marked believers as his ultimate treasured possession, and it has an eschatological sense as on the day of redemption God will take possession of those he has sealed as his.<sup>658</sup> This underlines what Barnett sees as the two-stage eschatological structure implicit

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<sup>645</sup> There is a range here, some terms imply a one-off, others an initiation, others a continuing focus. Salvation is all of these. Martin thinks it is "a comprehensive statement of the entire rite of initiation into the new life in Christ, involving conversion, faith, baptism and the reception of the Spirit. Martin, *2 Corinthians*, 28

<sup>646</sup> Barnett, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 111. Paul makes a play on words in verse 21, *eis Christon chrisas*, 'God Christed us Christward'. Fee, *God's Empowering Presence*, 291. Meaning by this that he made us Christ's people. By being joined to the anointed one, we have been anointed as well. (292) It is a grace that "confers privilege which makes the Christian a partaker of Christ himself." Martin, *2 Corinthians*, 27

<sup>647</sup> Barnett, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 112

<sup>648</sup> Martin, *2 Corinthians*, 27

<sup>649</sup> Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 207

<sup>650</sup> Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 207

<sup>651</sup> Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 207 n. 94

<sup>652</sup> Barnett, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 111. "Both terms [referring also to 'seal'] are semi-technical ones in Paul's theology and provide a strong guarantee that 'he who began a good work in [us] will carry it to completion until the day of Christ Jesus' (Phil. 1.16)" Blomberg, *Pentecost to Patmos*, 213.

<sup>653</sup> Barnett, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 111 - 112

<sup>654</sup> Barnett, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 112

<sup>655</sup> Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 207

<sup>656</sup> Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 207

<sup>657</sup> Fee, *God's Empowering Presence*, 293. This is clearer in Ephesians 1.13 and 4.30.

<sup>658</sup> Barnett, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 112. Matera describes the gift as, "the first instalment of redemption." Matera, *II Corinthians*, 56. Furnish says that the believer is, "marked and claimed as God's own ... for the day of redemption." Furnish, *II Corinthians*, 137

in sealing. The Spirit is both the deposit and what is to come.<sup>659</sup> God underwrites the ongoing relationship of believers with Christ.<sup>660</sup> In other words, knowing the Spirit provides full assurance of what is to come.

The Corinthians thought that they had got it all, that the *charismata* signified the fulfilment of their salvation;<sup>661</sup> Paul's point is the life-giving power of the New Age is present and active in this one, but this isn't everything there is to have.<sup>662</sup> Even those who argue that this is a non-experiential deposit see it as an assuring work in the hearts of believers.<sup>663</sup> Bruce points to Ephesians 1 to understand the seal as God reserving an individual for himself against the day of judgment, and that therefore it includes an assurance of inheritance.<sup>664</sup>

The emphasis is on the final location of the gift given, in the hearts of the Corinthians.<sup>665</sup> Thrall points to circumcision to form the background of the idea of sealing,<sup>666</sup> arguing that it doesn't mean that believers are the property of God, but instead that Gentiles are also members of Israel. This seems to be a case of foregrounding the background. It means both, and the Spirit is the signifier of Gentile membership in Israel, but that doesn't preclude understanding the gift as given to the hearts of believers for assurance.

### Summary

- The Spirit is a guarantee: it makes final receipt of salvation a certainty and is a part payment of our inheritance in the age to come.
- The Spirit is a seal: demonstrating our ownership and our authenticity.
- Knowing the Spirit provides assurance of what is to come, but not everything that is to come.

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<sup>659</sup> Barnett, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 112 – 113. What is given is a part of the whole. Fee, *God's Empowering Presence*, 293

<sup>660</sup> Barnett, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 113

<sup>661</sup> Furnish, *II Corinthians*, 150

<sup>662</sup> Furnish, *II Corinthians*, 149

<sup>663</sup> Barnett, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 113. "As the confirmation of the promise is continuous, so, too, is the believers' experience of the Spirit. God actively underwrites their continuing relationship Christward as they continuously experience the eschatological blessings of the Spirit within their lives, in consequence of hearing the proclamation of the Son of God." Contra, Witherington denies that sealing includes the eschatological sense of a guarantee of perseverance and salvation; instead, "by the Spirit, who is a foretaste and down payment of what God has promised to give believers, the Corinthians Christians have been claimed as God's property. They belong to God." Witherington, *Conflict and Community in Corinth*, 364

<sup>664</sup> Bruce, *1 and 2 Corinthians*, 182

<sup>665</sup> Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 208. Even so, Harris sees the setting as evocative of baptism. (210) Witherington would disagree. (Witherington, *Conflict and Community in Corinth*, 364) Tertullian and Theophilus of Antioch made this link, particularly because of the rite of chrism and its link with the word for "anointing". Furnish, *II Corinthians*, 137 It seems to need a really sacramental understanding of baptism to see it in focus here. Those that argue for it largely assume it, because what else could the coming of the Spirit be associated with? E.g. Furnish, *II Corinthians*, 148.

<sup>666</sup> Thrall, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, volume 1, 156. Contra Harris, 207. She therefore draws a link to baptism.

## 2 Corinthians 5.5

*He who has prepared us for this very thing is God, who has given us the Spirit as a guarantee.*

Paul is using the same word *arrabōn*, guarantee or deposit, as he did in 2 Corinthians 1.22. Harris understands “what he has prepared us for” to be the receipt of an immortal body at the Parousia.<sup>667</sup> The Spirit ‘represents’ the inbreaking power of the new eon.<sup>668</sup> The continuity between the two ages (this one, and the one to come) is pneumatological.<sup>669</sup> Barnett understands this eschatologically to mean that the time of God’s favour is now, but the time of the coming age has not yet physically arrived.<sup>670</sup>

This must be true in that the deposit of the Spirit is the key sign of the new age of the Spirit; however I think Paul means something more specific than a broader point of systematics about realised eschatology. He must be referring to their experience of the Spirit’s life changing power,<sup>671</sup> a present possession which promises more to come.<sup>672</sup> Our new life is guaranteed by the Spirit’s role in our lives.<sup>673</sup> But, of course, how can you receive it as proof if you can’t experience it? How else would you know that you have received the Spirit?

### Summary

- For the Spirit to function as a guarantee of what is to come, we must know we have that guarantee. The gift of the Spirit must be experiential.

## 2 Corinthians 11.4

*For if someone comes and proclaims another Jesus than the one we proclaimed, or if you receive a different spirit from the one you received, or if you accept a different gospel from the one you accepted, you put up with it readily enough.*

The threefold pattern ‘preached ... received ... accepted’ points to the moment when Paul established the church at Corinth.<sup>674</sup> The Gospel includes the whole package, including receipt of the Spirit.<sup>675</sup> There is parallelism in Paul’s writing here, not to suggest that all three actions are the same, but that they are intrinsically linked as part of a package. As Fee puts it:

“For Paul, authentic Christian life is the combined result of Jesus, who is “preached”, and the Spirit who is “received”. This combination alone makes up the genuine reception of the gospel.”<sup>676</sup>

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<sup>667</sup> Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 392 - 393

<sup>668</sup> Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 393

<sup>669</sup> Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 393

<sup>670</sup> Barnett, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 266

<sup>671</sup> “Anthropologically, Paul’s reference to the Holy Spirit as a ‘deposit’ appeals to the Corinthians’ experience of the Spirit as a radical, life-changing power ... nonetheless, it is incomplete, pointing forward to the infinitely greater experience of the Spirit ... payment in full.” Barnett, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 266

<sup>672</sup> Martin, *2 Corinthians*, 108. The Spirit is the proof that God will meet both the dead in Christ and those who are alive at the Parousia.” (116).

<sup>673</sup> Blomberg, *Pentecost to Patmos*, 217-218

<sup>674</sup> Barnett, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 504

<sup>675</sup> Barnett, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 505. Fee comments that the Spirit realises the benefits of Christ in the life of the believer. Fee, *God’s Empowering Presence*, 34.

<sup>676</sup> Fee, *God’s Empowering Presence*, 344

The phrase ‘another Spirit’ is probably ironic, as the Judaizers were preaching Torah-observance and you cannot receive the Spirit through law (Galatians 3).<sup>677</sup> He means that they weren’t preaching the pure gospel.<sup>678</sup> Paul’s opponents left little or no room for the Spirit.<sup>679</sup>

Martin sees the ‘spirit they received’ not as the Holy Spirit but the “effects of Christian living seen in their outward deportment.”<sup>680</sup> This seems to contradict the comments made elsewhere to the Corinthians. We’ve seen that Paul is writing about an experienced reality of power. He’s not far off, but it’s that their attitude is out of sync with the experiences of the Holy Spirit they’ve received, the gospel they’ve believed and the Jesus that they follow.

### Summary

- Receiving the Spirit is part of Christian initiation and a key part of the gospel ‘package’.

## 5.5 Romans 8.9-17

*You, however, are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him. But if Christ is in you, although the body is dead because of sin, the Spirit is life because of righteousness. If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit who dwells in you. So then, brothers, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh. 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. For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, "Abba! Father!" The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs--heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him.*

This passage seems to destroy the argument I’ve been putting forward, because it clearly states in verse 9, “Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him.” Dunn claims that this is the ‘most embarrassing verse in the New Testament’ for a proponent of subsequent Spirit reception, shooting the Pentecostal case firmly in the foot.<sup>681</sup> It seems to clearly state that anyone without the Spirit is not a Christian, it is the most plain and natural reading. This works for Dunn, or for the ‘traditional’ viewpoint, but not for anyone who is trying to argue that the Spirit is received separately from regeneration.

However verses 14-15 would lead us to think that Paul is talking about an experience. This might lead us toward James Dunn’s theses, it’s certainly the section of the New Testament that fits it best. The traditional reading is a bit awkward because of the experiential nature of Paul’s language, and while he could be talking about the tone and tenor of the Christian life, it doesn’t seem to fit with many Christian’s personal experience.

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<sup>677</sup> Barnett, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 506. In the way Paul speaks we see that Jesus, gospel and Spirit are intimately entwined, we cannot have a different one of one of them without having a different one of them all. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 743 – 744.

<sup>678</sup> Fee, *God’s Empowering Presence*, 344-345

<sup>679</sup> Furnish, *II Corinthians*, 502

<sup>680</sup> Martin, *2 Corinthians*, 336. Martin understands Paul to be saying that their attitude portrays a different spirit to the one he taught them.

<sup>681</sup> Dunn, *Baptism in the Holy Spirit*, 148

The experience of assurance he's describing does seem to fit well with what Paul says in Ephesians 1.13-14 or 2 Corinthians 1.21-22, where the Spirit is the seal and guarantee of the Christian's future hope. Paul seems to be talking about the same sort of subsequent experience of the Spirit's power that we find in Acts. In light of that we can at least cast some doubt on the traditional reading.

If we ignore Dunn's proposal because of the problems it finds in Acts, and assume that we should find common ground between Acts and what Paul writes to the Romans, the alternative is to read this as an account of Baptism in the Holy Spirit, which fits very neatly with verses 14-15, but not so neatly in verse 9.

I find light is shed on Romans 8 by Galatians 4.6. This is describing a similar experience of assurance and sonship, and is immediately following Paul's argument in Galatians 3 that the sign of being part of the community is our experience of the Spirit's power. Using similar language here, it's reasonable to infer Paul is also speaking of those dramatic, visible, experiences of the Spirit he was pointing them to in Galatians.

What then do we do with verse 9? Our options are:

1. The traditional viewpoint. All Christians have received the Spirit. This is not experiential, and we know we do because we've been told we do.<sup>682</sup> This works well in verse 9 but poorly in 15-16.
2. Dunn's thesis. Baptism in the Spirit is conversion and should be dramatically experienced. Romans 8 is the natural home of this idea,<sup>683</sup> but as we've seen it doesn't fit well with the narratives in Acts, especially Acts 8 and Acts 19.
3. Paul is referring to the Spirit's sealing work of assurance. So only those who have experienced it know that they are Christ's. This is neat but doesn't handle Paul's negative assertion that those who haven't experienced it are not Christ's.<sup>684</sup>
4. The Roman church, along with all other believers at the time, experienced baptism in the Spirit as part of Christian initiation,<sup>685</sup> so Paul can speak rhetorically as though all have

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<sup>682</sup> There are lots of different ways of constructing this, e.g. Schreiner would argue for being 'in' the Spirit referring to a realm in contrast to the realm of the flesh. It's a change in dominion.<sup>682</sup> Schreiner, *Romans*, 413. Schreiner would therefore argue that, "those lacking the Spirit of Christ do not belong to Christ ... they are unbelievers and still in the realm of the flesh." Moule would argue that it means you can look like a believer without being one. Moule, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 214. Whereas Dodd simply sees it as a convoluted way of saying that this is true of all Christians. Dodd, *The Epistle of Paul to the Romans*, 122. Or most simply Bruce, Bruce is of the opinion that all Christians must have the Spirit, "Since it is the Spirit alone who brings people into living relation with Christ, there can be no such relation with Christ apart from the Spirit. Bruce, *The Letter of Paul to the Romans*, 154. Or Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 489-490. Cranfield points to evidence of sanctification as the sign of this. Cranfield, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 388. This view would be echoed by Schaeffer, "It is simply not possible to have accepted Christ as Saviour and not be indwelt by the Holy Spirit." Schaeffer, *The Finished Work of Christ*, 194.

<sup>683</sup> Dunn disagrees with the consensus that all are indwelt by the Spirit, firstly because he would be conscious that there are hearers of the letter who are still inquirers, (Dunn, *Romans 1-8*, 428) secondly because "only those whose lives demonstrate by character and conduct that the Spirit is directing them can claim to be under Christ's lordship." (429). For him possession of the Spirit is what constitutes a Christian (444).

<sup>684</sup> Newman points out that Paul constructs this the opposite way round to how many modern believers would. He doesn't infer the Spirit from Christ, which is the starting point of many of the commentators. He infers Christ from the Spirit. Newman understands this to be speaking of Baptism in the Holy Spirit, the experience that allows us to experience Jesus' own relationship with the Father. Newman, *What we are about to receive*, 6. Paul's swapping of terms from Spirit to Christ in verse 10 shows us that he felt they are inseparable in terms of the saving benefits communicated to believers. Schreiner, *Romans*, 414.

<sup>685</sup> Even e.g. Dodd, who would disagree with my inference, is comfortable saying, "The universal assumption of primitive Christianity ... that when a man came to Christ he received a supernatural gift of divine power; and

received, not meaning everyone for all time.<sup>686</sup> This works rhetorically, and I think it's true, but requires a further explanation of Paul's words. Perhaps Paul is speaking to provide assurance rather than a warning; and perhaps to the community more so than individuals.<sup>687</sup>

5. The context is the defeat of the flesh in sanctification, so 'belong to Christ' could be referring to the quality of the believer's new life in the Spirit rather than their judicial status before God.<sup>688</sup> This would mean that Spirit baptism is a vital component in the Christian life in order to see any measure of victory over sin.<sup>689</sup> Rather than 'but' or 'if' it's more 'since'.<sup>690</sup> Paul is assuming the reality of the Christian experience of his readers.

I find position 4 to be persuasive, particularly Jewett's suggestion that this is written to a community who demonstrably see Christ at work among them, so Paul is reassuring the Romans of their individual and corporate assurance based on their dynamic experiences of God's power. This would then work similarly to 1 Corinthians 12.13. However I think he struggles to give an adequate account of how we should read verse 9.

Position 5 is more persuasive, and can construct verse 9 in a more plausible way grammatically. Dunn points out that the grammar doesn't require that all believers are automatically indwelt by the Spirit, and that the usual assumption is based on a prior theological commitment to what it means to 'belong' to Christ. He doesn't understand this to be salvation, but rather a life directed by Christ.<sup>691</sup>

From a traditional viewpoint, Schreiner argues against James Dunn that this does not signify that some believers may not have the Spirit, "Paul summons the readers to consider whether the Spirit indwells them, wanting them to draw the conclusion that he does."<sup>692</sup> Schreiner is probably right rhetorically, but Paul's point only really works if they know that the Spirit does indwell them. This must be experiential, and seems to open the door to the possibility that one might not 'have' the Spirit.

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this assumption must have corresponded with general experience." Dodd, *The Epistle of Paul to the Romans*, 123. Or Schreiner, "The experience of the Spirit in the earliest Christian communities was dynamic and vital." Schreiner, *Romans*, 426

<sup>686</sup> Jewett understands Paul to be assuming, "that all of the believers in Rome, in contrast [to the flesh] are ... in Spirit, implying an undeniably charismatic description of the community." Jewett, *Romans*, 489

<sup>687</sup> Jewett points out that the address is second person plural, so Paul is speaking to the community as a whole, not simply individuals. God's Spirit is among, within or in the midst of the congregation of the Roman church. He then draws a parallel to 1 Corinthians 12. Jewett, *Romans*, 489. This, "reflects a collective type of charismatic mysticism in which God's Spirit was thought to enter and energise the community as well as each member." This was then worked out via charismatic gifting, and the celebratory character of shared meals between those from a vast array of different backgrounds. (489-491). Jewett would also see a corporate dimension to being 'led by the Spirit' (496).

<sup>688</sup> Fitzmyer takes this tack, understanding it to mean those Christians who are "empowered to 'live for God' through the vitalizing influence of his Spirit." Fitzmyer, *Romans*, 490. He doesn't spell this out, but implies therefore that you can be a Christian without having this influence.

<sup>689</sup> E.g. Kane, "The implications of this is that v. 9 need not be taken as implying that Spirit-baptism is a requisite for salvation or that non-Pentecostals are somehow disenfranchised. Instead, Paul's intent may simply have been to reference Spirit-baptism as a vital component in the Christian's struggle against the sinful nature." Kane, *Spirit of Christ*, 94

<sup>690</sup> Dunn, *Romans 1-8*, 430; Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 490

<sup>691</sup> Dunn, *Romans 1-8*, 428 - 429

<sup>692</sup> Schreiner, *Romans*, 413. He seems to have misunderstood Dunn, Dunn agrees with him. What they disagree with is who the believers are, e.g. "the crux of conversion is the gift and reception of the Holy Spirit, who thereafter dwells within the Christian as the Spirit of Christ, giving the experience of 'Christ in me' ... the thing which determines whether a man is a Christian is not his profession of faith in Christ but the presence of the Spirit." Dunn, *Baptism in the Holy Spirit*, 149

Dunn reconstructs verse 9 to read “However you are not ... as I assume the Spirit of God dwells in you.”<sup>693</sup> Which is plausible, though an unusual reading. It’s an interesting point, given everything we might see elsewhere in the New Testament about the experiential nature of being indwelt by the Spirit, if that’s what Paul is referring to, how would he know that they were from a distance? This isn’t a church he has yet visited so he hasn’t been among them to witness it. If the question in Acts 19 makes sense, it must be possible, though unlikely, that they weren’t. Presumably Paul would have heard stories and reports of the church to make his assumption reasonable.

Pawson suggests that the way we often read the verse doesn’t do justice to the grammar. He points out the repetition,<sup>694</sup> actual wording,<sup>695</sup> articles<sup>696</sup> and tense<sup>697</sup> before reconstructing the sentence as: “But you are not in flesh, but in Spirit, if Spirit of God truly goes on residing in you; but if anyone does not go on having Spirit of Christ, this one is not of him.”<sup>698</sup> This means that Paul is speaking about whether someone has continuing life in the Spirit, rather than a binary ‘in/out’ as it’s often read.<sup>699</sup> I find this to be the most persuasive reconstruction.

In verse 14 Paul argues that those who are controlled or led by the Spirit are the children of God,<sup>700</sup> in other words ethical behaviour that flows from being is the mark of the Christian.<sup>701</sup>

Paul clearly does assume that the Spirit of ‘the one who raised Jesus from the dead’ dwells in believers.<sup>702</sup> The issue traditionalists have is that they rarely directly address *why* Paul assumes that. Their theological framework would answer for them: because the Spirit indwells all those who are regenerate. This isn’t the only option, based on Acts it’s reasonable to assume that Paul’s assumption is based on the universal experience of the church.

Paul then picks up the theme of assurance, Christ he argues must be amongst you because of the Spirit you see at work in your gatherings.<sup>703</sup> Here for Paul, assurance has a “double foundation” of the resurrection of Christ and the experience of the Spirit.<sup>704</sup> Paul elsewhere would also add the progress we have made so far in our Christian journey as part of the foundation of our assurance.<sup>705</sup>

As Moo puts it:

“Paul stresses that our awareness of God as Father comes not from rational consideration nor from external testimony alone but from a truth deeply felt and intensely experienced ... what Paul says here calls into question whether one can have a genuine experience of God’s Spirit of adoption without its affecting the emotions.”<sup>706</sup>

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<sup>693</sup> Dunn, *Romans 1-8*, 443

<sup>694</sup> The parallelism between the phrase ‘If the Spirit dwells...’ and ‘if anyone does not’.

<sup>695</sup> It isn’t ‘he does not belong to Christ’, but ‘he is not of *him*’. ‘Him’ could well be the Spirit.

<sup>696</sup> The word ‘Spirit’ doesn’t have a definite article so may not be referring to the person of the Holy Spirit.

<sup>697</sup> The phrase is in the present tense and so is referring to the Romans present condition. This would normally be understood to be continuous.

<sup>698</sup> Pawson, *Jesus Baptises in One Holy Spirit*, 97

<sup>699</sup> Pawson, *Jesus Baptises in One Holy Spirit*, 98

<sup>700</sup> Schreiner, *Romans*, 424

<sup>701</sup> C.f. James 2, Galatians 5.

<sup>702</sup> Schreiner, *Romans*, 415

<sup>703</sup> Jewett, *Romans*, 491. Jewett calls this a “democratisation of mysticism”

<sup>704</sup> Dunn, *Romans 1-8*, 432

<sup>705</sup> Christian assurance is threefold: deductive – Christ has been raised so it’s true; inductive – I can see the way he is shaping my life and character; and direct – I can experience and know that it’s true because the Spirit speaks to my heart. All are necessary, but the latter is the most powerful.

<sup>706</sup> Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 502. Moo felt it likely that this is reference to an ecstatic acclamation, but one we make of conscious understanding, e.g. tongues (502 n.34).

As Lloyd-Jones put it, “no greater words than these have ever been written.”<sup>707</sup> This is the heart of Christian spirituality. Notice that life in the Spirit seems to be loud!<sup>708</sup>

### Summary

- Receiving the Spirit is an expectation for Christian life
- To belong to the life of Christ, you need the Spirit.
- The dynamically experienced Spirit both personally and in community provides assurance of our sonship.

## 5.6 Ephesians 1.13-14

*In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory.*

We find Paul returning again to the key terms we met in 2 Corinthians 1.21-22, seal and guarantee.

### Sealed with the promised Holy Spirit

The term seal implies a guarantee of quality or authenticity, or an ownership of property,<sup>709</sup> or a legal document.<sup>710</sup> It's the same term used in 2 Corinthians 1 discussed earlier in the paper,<sup>711</sup> and it would seem reasonable that the word is being used the same way in Ephesians as well. It indicates to those sealed that they belong to God and are under his protection.<sup>712</sup>

Thielman argues for the traditional 'conservative' perspective, understanding the sealing metaphor to be focused on conversion.<sup>713</sup> This would be to both protect the believer from the future wrath of God—it seems odd that the seal would be necessary for this if the believer has been totally identified with Christ—and as a down-payment on our future inheritance.<sup>714</sup>

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<sup>707</sup> Eaton, *Baptism with the Spirit*, 131

<sup>708</sup> Pawson, *Jesus Baptises in One Holy Spirit*, 99

<sup>709</sup> O'Brien, *The Letter to the Ephesians*, 120.

<sup>710</sup> Thielman, *Ephesians*, 80

<sup>711</sup> Thielman, *Ephesians*, 80-81. “Authenticity seems to be uppermost in Paul’s mind when he uses the image in 2 Corinthians 1.22, and he follows it, as here, with a reference to God’s Spirit in the hearts of Paul and his co-workers as a ‘down payment’ ... The presence of God’s Spirit with them, Paul says, authenticates his ministry among the Corinthians in the face of charges ... that the fluctuations in his travel plans proved he was vacillating and unreliable.”

<sup>712</sup> Best, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Ephesians*, 151. The Spirit, and the Spirit alone, marks off the people of God as his own possession in the present eschatological age. Fee, *God’s Empowering Presence*, 670

<sup>713</sup> Thielman, *Ephesians*, 77. “When they heard and believed the gospel ... God sealed them by means of the Holy Spirit.”

<sup>714</sup> Thielman, *Ephesians*, 77. He sees ‘hearing’, ‘believing’ and ‘sealing’ as three distinct events, but argues that they all happen simultaneously for the believer (79). While Paul’s language indicates that these three events were expected to be temporally connected, at least in the experience of the Ephesian believers, the phrasing seems to indicate that they are logically sequential, not simultaneous. Thielman suggests that there is a stronger orientation towards the future in his use in Ephesians, pointing to an idea in contemporary Judaism of marking out those to be saved from wrath. (81)

Lincoln cites Dunn associating the seal with the reception of the Spirit during conversion-initiation; marking out believers as those who will be protected from the wrath to come.<sup>715</sup> O'Brien agrees, seeing it as a seal until God takes possession of us on the day of redemption.<sup>716</sup> Therefore providing assurance of the consummation of these promised realities.<sup>717</sup>

Stott argues that this seal is internal and not visible.<sup>718</sup> He misses that to serve a purpose a seal has to be seen by someone *other* than the one they belong to. God isn't forgetful, he knows which people are his. A seal would need to be something that is visible to, for example, the enemy, the individual or the church. The second two seem as likely as the first, and either would at minimum require something experiential.

The Spirit himself is the seal, to be sealed is to receive to the Spirit,<sup>719</sup> which is an idea we can trace at least as far as St. Augustine.<sup>720</sup> We are sealed with the Spirit rather than by the Spirit.<sup>721</sup> The grammar could be read either way, like in other instances, but this seems to be the scholarly consensus, even though the opposite would support the typical conservative evangelical view more closely. This is understood by the commentators quoted to mean regeneration,<sup>722</sup> but if we establish from elsewhere that receiving the Spirit is not regeneration, then it demonstrates that Paul is still speaking about that same experience here.

### **A guarantee of our inheritance**

Paul then uses the second term, 'guarantee'. This is a term in Greek legal custom,<sup>723</sup> describing the amount of money that someone who wanted a service performed paid to the person who would provide the service. The other way around it could also serve as a commitment from the service provider that they would follow through on the contract.<sup>724</sup> Best says it's like receiving a 'first

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<sup>715</sup> Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 39. He points out that the reception of the Spirit was a "distinguishable event for the early Christians" due to the attached phenomena. (40) The implication is that it wouldn't be so distinguishable for us, but we're left guessing as to the rationale behind that assumption.

<sup>716</sup> O'Brien, *The Letter to the Ephesians*, 120. C.f. Thomas Goodwin, who describes it as "a promise of the Holy Ghost to come and fill your hearts with joy unspeakable and glorious, to seal you up to the day of redemption." Quoted in Garner, *The Promise of the Spirit*, 26.

<sup>717</sup> Beale, *A New Testament Biblical Theology*, 582. The "metaphors revolve around the idea that the Spirit is the present evidence of future realities, especially resurrection, and therefore provides assurance of the consummation of these realities."

<sup>718</sup> Stott, *The Message of Ephesians*, 49

<sup>719</sup> O'Brien, *The Letter to the Ephesians*, 120. Ambrose commented that the very presence of the Spirit in the daily life of the believer is the seal. Oden, *Classic Christianity*, 632.

<sup>720</sup> Augustine, *De Trinitate*, XV.35-36. He pointed to Acts 11.15 as his evidence for this.

<sup>721</sup> Best, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Ephesians*, 151. "The Spirit can be regarded as either the tool which leaves the mark of the seal on the object being sealed or the mark which is left. It is here almost certainly the latter." Blomberg highlights that the phrase "employs an appositional genitive – the gift "which is" the Spirit himself." Blomberg, *Pentecost to Patmos*, 28.

<sup>722</sup> As an unusual counterpoint, Barth reads this sacramentally, seeing the seal as most likely baptism. He does suggest that it could also be interpreted as receiving the Spirit with accompanying sign gifts. Barth, *Ephesians*, 135-143. Dunn would see the 'sacrament' as the laying on of hands instead. Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 39.

<sup>723</sup> In contemporary Greek it's used to speak of an engagement ring. Blomberg, *Pentecost to Patmos*, 309 n.120

<sup>724</sup> Thielman, *Ephesians*, 81, "a guarantee that the full amount would be paid once the service was rendered."

instalment' of something that is due to you.<sup>725</sup> Receiving the Spirit now is a promise of receiving Christ later in the age to come.<sup>726</sup>

Thielman sees this down-payment as the presence of God to guarantee for us that the redemption that has been accomplished will be applied to us.<sup>727</sup> He understands our inheritance to be the salvation waiting for us on the day of vindication.<sup>728</sup> Barth interprets this in a more corporate fashion, but still sees it as primarily "eschatological preservation."<sup>729</sup>

While this must be true, is glorious, and perhaps is indicated by the context of the preceding section, is this really *all* that our inheritance is? Doesn't the status granted to us by God sovereignly predestining us to be incorporated with Christ, welcomed into the Trinity and appointed co-heirs with Jesus speak of more than being safe from wrath?

Thielman therefore interprets the gift of the Spirit as "a sign that he will fulfil his commitment to his people in the future and give them their inheritance."<sup>730</sup> It shows that the promise is reliable. What Thielman misses is that for this to be true, you have to know you've been sealed.<sup>731</sup> O'Brien describes the inheritance we await as the glory of the life to come, which we can taste a small fraction of in this life.<sup>732</sup> The inheritance is first communion with Christ, so it would follow that the seal is first communion with Christ as well. This would imply that any other functions of receiving the Spirit, missional impetus, power for service, supernatural gifting, flow first from experiencing the reality of our union with Jesus. In other words, the seal is assurance, a guarantee of the inheritance we will receive.<sup>733</sup>

Barth argues that it's more than assurance and insists on a missional angle, saying that sealing "makes God's chosen men troubadours before God for the joy of the whole world."<sup>734</sup> He doesn't point beyond Ephesians for this, but while I can see how you might argue this from Acts, from the context of Ephesians 1 and the semantic domain of the words 'seal' and 'guarantee' it is hard to

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<sup>725</sup> Best, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Ephesians*, 151. "The first instalment is the Spirit, not a portion of the Spirit of which the remainder will be given later, but the whole Spirit. Sealed with the Spirit, Christians have begun to participate in their inheritance of salvation and have a legal claim to inherit it fully."

<sup>726</sup> Best, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Ephesians*, 152

<sup>727</sup> Thielman, *Ephesians*, 77

<sup>728</sup> Thielman, *Ephesians*, 80

<sup>729</sup> Barth, *Ephesians*, 143

<sup>730</sup> Thielman, *Ephesians*, 82. "Both metaphors guarantee that when God's Spirit indwells a person at conversion, he promises to continue to work in that individual all the way to the stage of glorification ... then believers will receive their full spiritual inheritance." Blomberg, *Pentecost to Patmos*, 309 n.120. Our inheritance is both something that we have already entered into and experienced; and something still to be consummated in the future. Fee, *God's Empowering Presence*, 671.

<sup>731</sup> Being told you have been sealed is no different from being given the promise it's supposed to be authenticating; therefore the sealing must be experiential. He says that the assurance must be tangible for the same reason, but doesn't discuss what form this takes. (c.f. Thielman, *Ephesians*, 83)

<sup>732</sup> O'Brien, *The Letter to the Ephesians*, 121. "Because of the ministry of the Spirit to their hearts and lives, they can begin to enjoy this everlasting possession *now*. The Spirit received is the first instalment and guarantee of the inheritance in the age to come that awaits God's sons and daughters."

<sup>733</sup> Flavel, *Works vol. 6*, 401. Flavel understood this as a set of experiences to be sought, times of 'eminent communion' to further experience 'extraordinary outlets of peace, joy, and comfort.' He suggests suffering, temptation and immediately prior to death as some of the key life experiences leading to these moments of sealing. (404-406).

<sup>734</sup> Barth, *Ephesians*, 141. "Sealing is the designation, appointment, and equipment of the saints for a public ministry – a ministry which includes the power to understand, to endure, to pray, to sing, and to live in hope." (143)

move decisively beyond assurance. Theologically however it's important to recognise that the missional zeal that seems to accompany some with their Spirit reception is founded in a deep knowledge of Christ and who we are in him. The Spirit grants us boldness and impetus for Jesus' mission by granting us powerful and abiding assurance.

Interpreting Ephesians 1 and its reference to the 'seal' as being the same experience Luke calls 'receiving', being 'filled with' or 'baptised with' the Spirit has a historical pedigree. For example Irenaeus (2<sup>nd</sup> century) saw Ephesians 1 in the light of Acts 8 and the experience of receiving the Spirit via the laying on of hands.<sup>735</sup> Theodoret (5<sup>th</sup> Century) associated it with miracles as evidence of a much greater grace to come.<sup>736</sup>

Therefore, as Eaton puts it, the seal of the Spirit:

"is an experiential foretaste of what will be fully received in the eschatological future; receiving the Spirit in such a way authenticates, ratifies and marks out one's salvation."<sup>737</sup>

Terms are used fluidly in the New Testament, the seal of Ephesians 1 is the sense of sonship of Galatians 4. The guarantee of 2 Corinthians 1 is the firstfruits of Romans 8.<sup>738</sup>

### Summary

- We are sealed to give us assurance. This is visible to the individual, and we should expect it to be visible to the church as well. It must therefore be experiential, and accompanied by some sort of visible 'sign'.
- It is the Spirit himself we are sealed with, by Jesus, as a gift.
- The Spirit is a gift to grant us a foretaste of what is to come.
- This assurance motivates us to mission and service and is accompanied by power.

## 5.7 Titus 3.5-6

*he saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit, whom he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Saviour,*

Paul is speaking about the transformation of character,<sup>739</sup> which requires the power of the Holy Spirit.<sup>740</sup>

Washing is a metaphorical term, this doesn't have to be referring to baptism.<sup>741</sup> According to Mounce, Paul is arguing that their salvation is an established fact, so this is a once-for-all renewal,<sup>742</sup>

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<sup>735</sup> Eaton, *Baptism with the Spirit*, 19

<sup>736</sup> Edwards, *Ancient Christian commentary on Scripture: Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians*, 112. "He shows how great are our expectations. This grace is already being given, through which miracles are worked: the dead were raised, lepers cleansed and demons driven out. All of these and similar things have the status of a pledge, so it will become obvious that the faithful will enjoy in the future a much greater grace."

<sup>737</sup> Eaton, *Baptism with the Spirit*, 235

<sup>738</sup> Eaton, *Baptism with the Spirit*, 229

<sup>739</sup> Fee, *God's Empowering Presence*, 783

<sup>740</sup> Moore, *Straight to the Heart of 1 Thessalonians to Titus*, 149

<sup>741</sup> Towner, *The letters to Timothy and Titus*, 781; Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 448. Contra Marshall, *Pastoral Epistles*, 320-321

<sup>742</sup> Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 449

occurring at regeneration by the agency of the Holy Spirit.<sup>743</sup> There are two actions here: regeneration and renewal. The grammar isn't decisive as to whether these are both operations of the Spirit, or whether there are two separate operations and only renewal is by the Spirit.<sup>744</sup> The grammar does signify a past event.<sup>745</sup>

Towner argues for both of them being 'of the Spirit' on the basis of the conceptual similarity between renewal and rebirth, and on the basis of there being only the one preposition in the Greek.<sup>746</sup> His first point cannot bear as much weight as the second, whether or not regeneration and renewal are conceptually similar depends on your theological convictions as to whether these are technical terms with specific meanings, and if so what they are.

Marshall does argue for reading them as two separate actions on the basis of the syntax tying the Holy Spirit specifically to the second action, renewal.<sup>747</sup> He describes them as two different things that the Holy Spirit does. For him this is the 'renewal' of baptism, he rejects that washing is a metaphorical term, and regeneration through faith.<sup>748</sup>

Towner points to the background of the passage being the Spirit promise in Ezekiel 36.25-27.<sup>749</sup> I think this adds weight to the 2 stage understanding of the sentence, though. It calls to mind the background of Pentecost, the Spirit being given to the people of God. That background only links with regeneration if you come to the text with the idea that it is synonymous with Spirit reception.

Paul directly invokes Joel's promise of the Spirit with his use of the word 'poured out' (*ekcheō*), there is also a reference to Ezekiel 36.27.<sup>750</sup> In Ezekiel the readers imagine themselves first as recipients of God's wrath, and only then as recipients of God's cleansing, of new hearts and of the indwelling Spirit. Paul's reference to Ezekiel in Titus 2 highlights this here, there is a dramatic reversal of expectations. "God himself has brought his people from wrath to blessing, from immorality to godliness, by the provision of the Spirit."<sup>751</sup> It is God who pours out the Spirit on us.<sup>752</sup>

There are two key things we learn here for our study. Firstly that Paul in his epistles uses Pentecost language, and speaks to needing the Spirit for the Christian life with that language. This combats many of the caricatures that are drawn dividing between his and Luke's theology. Secondly we see the lavish nature of the Spirit's outpouring. It is for all, for changed lives, and is received in an abundant way.<sup>753</sup>

## Summary

- Transformation of character requires the power of the Holy Spirit.

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<sup>743</sup> Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 448

<sup>744</sup> Towner, *The letters to Timothy and Titus*, 783

<sup>745</sup> Knight, *Pastoral Epistles*, 341. Though Knight understands this past event to be salvation. He would explain salvation as happening because Christ pours the Holy Spirit in the lives of Christians.

<sup>746</sup> Towner, *The letters to Timothy and Titus*, 783

<sup>747</sup> Marshall, *Pastoral Epistles*, 317

<sup>748</sup> Marshall, *Pastoral Epistles*, 320-321

<sup>749</sup> Knight, *Pastoral Epistles*, 344; Towner, *The letters to Timothy and Titus*, 784. Knight understands Ezekiel 36 as speaking of an 'inner transformation' wrought by renewal and regeneration. Theologically though I would guess he would have to.

<sup>750</sup> Towner, '1-2 Timothy and Titus', 916.

<sup>751</sup> Towner, '1-2 Timothy and Titus', 917

<sup>752</sup> Fee, *God's Empowering Presence*, 783. Note that here it is not explicitly Jesus that does so. The *filioque* is established through Acts 2.33 and John 14.26.

<sup>753</sup> Fee, *God's Empowering Presence*, 784

- Paul also uses the language of Pentecost.
- Receiving the Spirit is lavish, freely available and provides abundant power to change and become more like Jesus.

## 6. Theological Issues

Some would warn that a systematic approach to this subject is doomed to fail due to the diverse language and experiences the New Testament portrays.<sup>754</sup> I have little sympathy with this approach. Those saying so are almost always doing systematic theology themselves though, and you cannot form an opinion on this subject without engaging in systematic theology. The only alternative is to not synthesise the Bible's witness on this, or any, subject. This would leave the Church with little to say.

Below I attempt to answer many of the theological questions before us when examining this issue. However in an attempt to avoid repetition, I am resting on the exegesis established in the previous sections. The below is simply a synthesis of those conclusions.

### 6.1 Subsequence

The most divisive and decisive question when exploring "Baptism in the Holy Spirit" is whether it happens simultaneously with or subsequently to regeneration. As we saw both examining the variety of views and exploring the narratives in Acts this is often the distinctive point between different views.

Before we can attempt to answer the question I need to point out that another one sits in front of it: what do we mean by subsequent? We could mean *chronologically* subsequent, when we would simply mean receiving the Spirit is an event that happens an amount of time after receiving Jesus, if I can put regeneration in those terms. There is a temporal gap. We could also mean *logically* subsequent, when we would mean that it always happens to an individual after they have been regenerated, but on some occasions there may be no discernible gap of time, the events may be packaged together. Scholars rarely define their terms this precisely, so typically you need to infer their meaning.

The traditional Pentecostal understanding would be that not only is Spirit baptism chronologically subsequent, but the expectation would be for a long wait involving much searching and prayer. As we saw in Acts though this narrative fits the disciples experience at Pentecost but not anyone else's. After Pentecost no one is ever told to wait again.<sup>755</sup> Although that may be overstating it, Paul is told to wait in Acts 9, and perhaps the Samaritans in Acts 8 as well, though I would not be so certain. However Paul only waits a handful of days, and the disciples themselves only waited 10. Even when the disciples are told to wait, they are waiting because Jesus wasn't 'ready', not because they in some way weren't.<sup>756</sup> For both Paul and the Samaritans it may be because they waited for the endorsement of the wider church before entering the experienced life of the gospel.

As I argued when exploring Acts the expected norm for Luke was Peter's offer in Acts 2.38: "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." While we should not conflate his offer of the gospel with his subsequent offer of the Spirit, there is an expectation that they would be received at the same time. In fact a Christian who experienced a large gap before receiving the Spirit would be seen as an aberration.

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<sup>754</sup> Hosier, *Christ's Radiant Church*, 89, 91

<sup>755</sup> Virgo, *The Spirit-Filled Church*, 37

<sup>756</sup> Moore, *Straight to the Heart of Acts*, 206 n.4

Therefore it would be wrong to assume that a large gap of time is expected. In fact the experience of the Gentiles in Acts 10 would lead us to think that it is possible, if not usual, for receiving the Spirit to be chronologically simultaneous with regeneration.<sup>757</sup> While this does not seem to be the norm, a very small gap of time, moments perhaps, would seem to be more typical.

All of this leads me to conclude that Spirit baptism is logically subsequent to regeneration in all cases, but on occasion, one might point to the experience of George Whitefield as a famous example, it can be chronologically simultaneous. Chronological subsequence is probably the norm as this seems to be the nearest to a pattern we can find in Acts, but there is so much variance we cannot be dogmatic. However long gaps of more than a few days are utterly foreign to the Bible's narrative.

When commenting on the unusually powerful nature of George Whitefield's conversion experience and subsequent actions, which Lloyd-Jones considered Baptism in the Holy Spirit, Dallimore comments that "most Christians seem to need an experience *subsequent to conversion* in which grace effects a new and deeper consecration."<sup>758</sup> While Dallimore would certainly not agree with my thesis here, I suspect he would agree with the experience itself as he saw this as common in the lives of Christians, subsequent to their conversion. Subsequence can only be removed if there is no experiential element at all.<sup>759</sup> If we are willing to seek an experience then by definition this must be at least logically subsequent to intellectual assent.

However we too readily allow gaps between Christian's union with Christ and them receiving the sign of it.<sup>760</sup> The ideal picture is all of this happening at once. This should provide motivation to ensure that we offer the Spirit when we offer Christ, because it is unusual to receive without this being offered. That is certainly the pattern of preaching that we see in Acts.

Hopefully we can see that there are exegetical grounds for the doctrine of receiving the Spirit experientially and logically post conversion.<sup>761</sup>

## 6.2 Ordo Salutis

There's no reason to assume that believers after Pentecost have to wait to a point 'after' conversion-initiation to be baptised in the Spirit. Acts 2.38-39 implies that you can receive the Spirit without

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<sup>757</sup> There is subsequence in Acts 2.4, 8.10-17, 9.17 and 19.6. The only simultaneous occasion is in Acts 10.44. "To argue that up to 80 percent of the initial reception passages are exceptions renders the word 'exception' meaningless." Keener, *Acts*, 1524. "The Theology that it's a later blessing doesn't fit with Cornelius' story or the Ephesians or Paul himself. The concept of second blessing doesn't fit with the evidence of Acts. Like a general saying 'go fight and if you do well I'll give you a gun'" Virgo, 'Leading People into the Baptism of the Holy Spirit', 2.

<sup>758</sup> Dallimore, *George Whitefield*, 85. Emphasis mine.

<sup>759</sup> Eaton, *Baptism with the Spirit*, 242

<sup>760</sup> Waiting for many years to go by would be a 'grotesque anomaly.' Eaton, *Baptism with the Spirit*, 246.

<sup>761</sup> Contra e.g. Thiselton, *Hermeneutics of Doctrine*, 437. Thiselton suggests that all Pentecostalism, (in which he includes churches from the charismatic renewal/neo-Pentecostalism but not from the third wave) is a cultural accommodation to post-modern mind-sets (which is interesting as few people had a 'post-modern' mind-set in the 1960s). He describes it as a doctrine based on experience, novelty and a desire to change worship style, not in exegesis, theology or the tradition of the Fathers. Regarding his last point, for a history of views on receiving the Spirit in the early church see e.g. McDonnell & Montague, *Christian Initiation and Baptism in the Holy Spirit* or Williams, 'The Holy Spirit in the Early Church'. For a simple overview of how the doctrine faded out of use and then has been picked up again, see Pawson, *Jesus Baptises in One Holy Spirit*, 139-170.

delay.<sup>762</sup> However Turner uses this valid point against ‘tarrying’ to argue against subsequence. Perhaps his Pentecostal background conflates them, but as we’ve seen subsequence does not have to mean a significant length of time later, just that receiving the Spirit is an experience that requires the assent of a believer.

Receiving the Spirit is implied every time Luke mentions conversion-initiation, just like baptism in water.<sup>763</sup> It would be normal in the early church to expect the event to happen immediately subsequent to expressing faith in Christ, or after being baptised in water.

We find a variety of timing in Acts,<sup>764</sup> but believers without the Spirit are presented as an anomaly that required an “immediate corrective response from the church.”<sup>765</sup> This is the normal start to Christian living, it should be an initial rather than a subsequent experience.<sup>766</sup> For all that it can be subsequent, there’s no New Testament reason for desiring that it is.

It is reasonable, considering the way receiving the Spirit is part of the wider ‘salvation event’ that Jesus undertook for us, to consider it to be part of salvation.<sup>767</sup> It should certainly sit within our *Ordo Salutis* subsequent to regeneration and prior to sanctification. Because the experience provides assurance it is also linked closely with hope of glorification.

This isn’t to say that it ‘saves’ in that it regenerates, but it is as much necessary for salvation as water baptism is. It is an expected part of discipleship and should happen to every believer as part of their walk with Jesus into the age to come.

Scripture is comfortable talking about being ‘saved’ as involving believing, being baptised, and receiving the Spirit, as a complete package.<sup>768</sup> We’re saved, not just from the penalty of our sins, but also from the power of it gradually as we become more like Jesus, and eventually from its pollution when we are glorified.<sup>769</sup> Receiving the Spirit is the beginning of that process of sanctification, it is power to achieve holiness. It does not bring sudden maturity!<sup>770</sup>

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<sup>762</sup> Turner, *Power from on High*, 358. Baptism in the Spirit is “tightly integrated into Paul’s understanding of justification by faith, and ... a lengthy time-gap between justification and the sealing of the Spirit is not envisaged, and would seem to be most unnatural.” Eaton, *Baptism with the Spirit*, 245.

<sup>763</sup> Turner, *Power from on High*, 359. “Conversion, baptism and the reception of the Spirit of prophecy formed a single ‘conversion-initiation’ unit of closely related *theologoumena*.” (397)

<sup>764</sup> Atkinson, *Baptism in the Spirit*, 67

<sup>765</sup> Atkinson, *Baptism in the Spirit*, 68. “Luke knew of no *long-term ongoing* Christianity without reception of the Spirit.” (89)

<sup>766</sup> Pawson, *Jesus Baptises in One Holy Spirit*, 112-124

<sup>767</sup> “For Paul, authentic Christian life is the combined result of Jesus, who is “preached”, and the Spirit who is “received”. This combination alone makes up the genuine reception of the gospel. Fee, *God’s Empowering Presence*, 344. “Spirit reception was in Luke’s eyes a part of full Christian initiation after Pentecost.” Atkinson, *Baptism in the Spirit*, 64. “There is a divorce in some Pentecostal thought between Christian beginnings and Spirit reception that is not in Luke.” (65)

<sup>768</sup> Pawson, *Jesus Baptises in One Holy Spirit*, 126-128. “If Jesus is to be Lord of our lives, whatever he demands (water baptism) and whatever he offers (Spirit baptism) is essential for anyone who calls him ‘Lord’.” (130). C.f. Turner, *Power from on High*, 435.

<sup>769</sup> Pawson, *Jesus Baptises in One Holy Spirit*, 130. “Baptism in the Spirit is the proof of justification, the prerequisite of sanctification and the promise of glorification.” (135)

<sup>770</sup> Pawson, *Jesus Baptises in One Holy Spirit*, 132-133

## 6.3 An Experience

We should hardly need to argue this point, everywhere we've found mention of the event in Scripture it describes an experience, a felt reality.<sup>771</sup> There is a huge contrast between the New Testament and the current experience of much of western Christianity.<sup>772</sup>

Eaton suggests that the experiential nature of the Spirit reception in the New Testament gives us 3 broad options:

- 1) Accept Dunn's thesis that only those who have dramatic personal experiences are Christians.
- 2) Hold that experience is an expected part of the Christian life, and believe in some experiential and practical form of Spirit reception.
- 3) Reject the New Testament's picture of Christianity.<sup>773</sup>

Therefore the 'broad evangelical' position that it most Christians will have received the Spirit without knowing it isn't tenable.

As Lloyd-Jones powerfully put it, "You can't have the love of God shed abroad in your heart (Romans 5.5) without knowing it."<sup>774</sup> It is by its nature a self-evident event. The recipient and others are fully aware.<sup>775</sup>

## 6.4 Initial Evidence

The classic Pentecostal position is that the initial evidence of receiving the Spirit is speaking in tongues. As we've seen looking through Acts the evidence is a little more disparate than that.<sup>776</sup>

Pawson describes the evidence of the experience as 'unexpected speech', including tongues, praise and prophecy.<sup>777</sup> Malcom Kyte would point to power to witness as missing from his framework, but that power to witness comes through the charismata or ecstatic exuberance.<sup>778</sup> Charismatic phenomena must remain tied to a missiological framework. Pawson's three examples are by far the most common we can find mention of in scripture.

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<sup>771</sup> "It seems clear that the reception of the Spirit in the New Testament was something experienced, evidenced and often immediately perceived rather than merely inferred." Newman, *What we are about to receive*, 4. Both Paul's explicit words and his allusions to the work of the Spirit everywhere presuppose the Spirit as an empowering, experienced reality in the life of the church and the believer." Fee, *God's Empowering Presence*, 897.

<sup>772</sup> Newman, *What we are about to receive*, 3

<sup>773</sup> Eaton, *Baptism with the Spirit*, 233

<sup>774</sup> Garner, *The Promise of the Spirit*, 22

<sup>775</sup> Pawson, *Jesus Baptises in One Holy Spirit*, 121

<sup>776</sup> Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 784. Grudem points to Jesus in Luke 4.1 receiving strength for temptation, Elizabeth in Luke 1.41-45 receiving a word of blessing, Zechariah prophesying in Luke 1.67-69, powerful preaching in Acts 4.31, wisdom, maturity and sound judgment in Acts 6.3, preaching and testimony while on trial in Acts 4.8, a vision of heaven in Acts 7.55, and faith and maturity in Acts 11.24.

<sup>777</sup> Pawson, *Jesus Baptises in One Holy Spirit*, 122. "The scripture puts the emphasis on simultaneous evidence, which is always verbal, a fulfilment of the prediction (in Joel) that all would 'prophesy'." (123)

<sup>778</sup> Kyte, 'Different views', 7. Wagner points to other evidences than tongues including intimacy, joy, falling over, healing, casting out demons, prophecy and missionary zeal. Wagner, *The Book of Acts*, 160. John Flavel described the outcome of what he would have called 'sealing with the Spirit' as lavish praise, experience of assurance, sanctification and power for ministry. Flavel, *Works vol. 6*, 407-408.

Newman feels that it's dangerous to ask Pauline questions of Luke, he is describing "what could be observed of the presence of the Spirit,"<sup>779</sup> not trying to answer what manifestation is distinctive of receiving the Spirit. Though the variety of experiences Luke describes<sup>780</sup> should help us narrow it down.

It would be wrong of us to insist on one particular expression or manifestation as the only valid evidence.<sup>781</sup> We mustn't miss that there always was evidence in Acts, and that it was visible, ecstatic and loud.

It can be tempting to take any evidence as the receipt of the Spirit, but it shouldn't be relegated to a 'warm feeling'. This is a power encounter that builds a witnessing community.<sup>782</sup> We should be looking for evidence. We shouldn't adopt a position where "I've asked, so therefore I've received."<sup>783</sup> In the New Testament there was always some form of evidence. Peter can then use this as evidence that the Gentiles have also been included in Acts 10-11, and Paul can use it as the marker of the body of Christ in 1 Corinthians 12 and Galatians 3.

## 6.5 Purpose

Any description of the gift of the Spirit as being for one thing (e.g. mission, power etc) is reductionist.<sup>784</sup> But hopefully as we've seen the primary purpose<sup>785</sup> of receiving the Spirit is assurance<sup>786</sup> of who we are in Christ, as the sign and seal of induction into the people of God.<sup>787</sup>

There are also the following secondary purposes, but we shouldn't expect all of these to accompany each individual:<sup>788</sup>

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<sup>779</sup> Newman, *What we are about to receive*, 5

<sup>780</sup> Atkinson, *Baptism in the Spirit*, 135

<sup>781</sup> "It is far more likely that Luke uses tongues as a narrative evidence for reception of the Spirit than that he implies that tongues must *always* accompany reception of the Spirit." Keener, *Acts*, 1528.

<sup>782</sup> Hosier, *Christ's Radiant Church*, 98

<sup>783</sup> Hosier, *Christ's Radiant Church*, 101

<sup>784</sup> Turner, *Power from on High*, 431

<sup>785</sup> Or the 'controlling metaphor' to steal a page from atonement theology.

<sup>786</sup> Pawson, *Jesus Baptises in One Holy Spirit*, 131; Oden, *Classic Christianity*, 633. Quotes Teresa of Avila, "God implants himself in the interior of that soul so that one need not doubt that God has been in her and she has been in God." Schreiner points to 1 John 3.24 as evidence that the primary work of the Spirit in the life of the individual believer is to provide assurance. Schreiner, *New Testament Theology*, 474. He calls it "an internal work of the Spirit by which he communicates to the heart that one is truly a child of God. In that sense, the Spirit's work is mysterious and inaccessible to others, for the believer has an internal confirmation of the Spirit that he or she belongs to God. It is a supernatural and ineffable work that transcends ordinary human discourse or experience." C.f. 1 Corinthians 14.1.

<sup>787</sup> Schreiner, *New Testament Theology*, 454. Pointing to Acts 10 he comments further that "the presence of the Spirit, not baptism, is the decisive mark that one belongs to the church" (455).

<sup>788</sup> E.g. Luke does not suggest that all converts were immediately impelled by the Spirit to mission, instead in Acts 2 he first focuses on fellowship and community life. Turner, *Power from on High*, 359.

- Zeal for the mission of God,<sup>789</sup> primarily rooted in a new understanding of our identity found in assurance from the Spirit.<sup>790</sup>
- Power for the mission of God<sup>791</sup> which is what we find happens at Pentecost.<sup>792</sup>
- Power to live the Spirit-filled life, to pursue Jesus and to be a disciple, and as such the power of both transformation and salvation.<sup>793</sup>
- Signs of the Kingdom's inbreaking, e.g. healing, sacrificial care for other humans<sup>794</sup>
- The building of the people of God, e.g. union and gifts for use in worship, especially prophecy.

The assurance it grants is an understanding and declaration of God's Fatherhood,<sup>795</sup> an inward emotion that can be expressed outwardly. That receiving the Spirit is primarily an experience of assurance is based on John 14-16;<sup>796</sup> 2 Corinthians 1.21-22, 5.5; and Ephesians 1.13-14. When using them as a lens we also find descriptions of this experience in Romans 8 and Galatians 3-4.

## 6.6 Sign of the people

"It cannot be doubted that, for Luke, the Spirit is *the identity-marker of the New People of God*"<sup>797</sup> We saw this particularly in the narrative of Cornelius' and the other Gentiles' conversions in Acts 10. It is their reception of the Spirit that leads Peter to be absolutely clear that these are his brothers and sisters and therefore that it was permissible to eat with them, and crucially that he should baptise them as Christians.

We also saw this in the way Paul speaks, for example in Galatians 3<sup>798</sup> where it is a foundational experience he can point them all back too, but most particularly in 1 Corinthians 12 where this is the

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<sup>789</sup> St Hilary described receiving the Spirit as turning the timid, quarrelsome and confused into the illumined, united, courageous and determined. Oden, *Classic Christianity*, 547. Turner points out that it can't be about being empowered for mission as most mission in Acts is done by especially endowed individuals. Atkinson, *Baptism in the Spirit*, 60. This seems to miss e.g. Syrian Antioch. Atkinson would point to the declarations of all of the gathered 120 in Acts 2 as proof against this (62). "if Acts 2.38 is programmatic for the ideal timing of Spirit reception in Christian conversion, Acts 1.8 is equally programmatic for the role of the Spirit in a believer's life." (81) However Atkinson misses that there is more than just a missiological background to Acts 1 – see my exegesis on that passage.

<sup>790</sup> "When a Christian is baptized in the Spirit it is in order that he may have a direct assurance from the Holy Spirit Himself regarding his salvation, but this is not merely for his own personal satisfaction, but rather that being so gloriously assured, he may boldly share it with others." Garner, *The Promise of the Spirit*, 36

<sup>791</sup> Moore, *Straight to the Heart of Acts*, 22. "The Spirit is still devoted to the mission of Isaiah 61, and he rushes to fill anyone else who is devoted to it too." (32-33).

<sup>792</sup> Moore, *Straight to the Heart of Acts*, 32

<sup>793</sup> "The gift of the Spirit is the principal divine power maintaining, developing and extending Israel's salvation/transformation, and that without the gift of the charismatic Spirit of prophecy the sort of 'salvation' [Luke] had in mind would simply evaporate from Israel like the departure of the cloud of God's glory and presence." Turner, *Power from on High*, 427. The Spirit shapes the new awareness of God and the consequent way of life to such an extent that the gift of the Spirit is 'soteriologically necessary.' (437)

<sup>794</sup> "The Spirit in Acts is a dramatic end-time gift to speak and live out God's message and therefore invites Jesus' followers to model sacrificial caring for one another, worship, and joyful sharing of their experience of Christ with others." Keener, *Acts*, 783

<sup>795</sup> Hosier, *Christ's Radiant Church*, 100

<sup>796</sup> Schreiner, *The King in his Beauty*, 530. "The Spirit grants assurance to believers that Jesus is really the Christ, and that they belong to the people of God." (539)

<sup>797</sup> Zwiep, 'Luke's Understanding of Baptism in the Holy Spirit: An Evangelical Perspective', 133

<sup>798</sup> "The Spirit alone functions as the seal of divine ownership, the unmistakable evidence that one has entered into the life of the new aeon." Fee, *God's Empowering Presence*, 383. "The Spirit alone distinguishes God's

experience that demonstrates that they are 'in' and therefore unites all different kinds of people with all different kinds of gifting, but nevertheless all baptised with the same Spirit.

In essence the Spirit replaces the sign of circumcision as the marker of who is in the people of God. Water baptism serves as an external mark of this, we baptise those in water that Jesus has already baptised in the Spirit. I don't want to overstate this point, we should baptise all who have genuine faith, and history and culture mean that some of these may not have received the Spirit. However, when we have the opportunity we should always offer the Spirit to those who are following Jesus with an expectation that this dramatic experience, the assurance and gifting that it brings, and the subsequent experiences to follow, are the hallmarks of genuine Christianity.

There is a corporate element to this as well, Zwiep comments:

"Although it cannot be denied that for Luke salvation includes salvation of the individual, the dominant way of describing the effects of the coming of Jesus and the Spirit is first and foremost in collective or corporate terms."<sup>799</sup>

He argues that the Spirit then is given primarily to groups of people. He probably overstates this, as we do see individual reception in Acts, but the majority of the time it does happen in groups and the relevant New Testament epistles are addressed to groups. Our 'evangelical' heritage makes us miss the corporate dimension of Spirit reception, the experience creates the church.

## 6.7 Baptism: Language and Metaphor

Lloyd-Jones recognised that language is used very interchangeably in the New Testament. Both meaning we can be free with our terms, and that we shouldn't narrowly be looking for instances of the phrase 'baptism in the Holy Spirit' and then assuming they are the only occasions relevant to the discussion.<sup>800</sup> Turner calls the New Testament's language on the subject 'flexible and fluid',<sup>801</sup> though elsewhere he argues that each term has a specific meaning that is not interchangeable.<sup>802</sup>

The language of baptism, filled, promise, gift and receiving can all be found in the first two chapters of Acts, and are all variant terminology for one reality,<sup>803</sup> multiple expressions for one experience.<sup>804</sup>

Some use this to suggest that Paul and Luke are talking about different things with their language.<sup>805</sup> This doesn't seem to fit, as we've seen that Paul was talking about the same reality as Paul. The

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people in the new covenant." (383). "The Spirit, and the Spirit alone, marks off the people of God as his own possession in the present eschatological age." (670).

<sup>799</sup> Zwiep, 'Luke's Understanding of Baptism in the Holy Spirit: An Evangelical Perspective', 134. He accuses Pentecostals and Evangelicals of hyper-individualism (136), ignoring the individualising impulse we find in Paul.

<sup>800</sup> Eaton, *Baptism with the Spirit*, 161

<sup>801</sup> Atkinson, *Baptism in the Spirit*, 32

<sup>802</sup> Turner, 'Spirit Endowment in Luke/Acts'

<sup>803</sup> Keener, *Acts*, 987

<sup>804</sup> Hosier, *Christ's Radiant Church*, 88

<sup>805</sup> But I don't think Paul and Luke use this phrase to refer to the same thing. For Paul, it is virtually identical to regeneration or new birth (conversion). For Luke, it is essentially the same as being filled with the Spirit and refers to that first introductory experience of this fullness." Piper, 'Be filled with the Spirit'. Piper argues that Paul would use the phrase 'filled with the Spirit' to refer to Luke's 'Baptism with the Spirit'. Grudem suggests that it is unlikely that they would use language so differently when they have travelled together so much. Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 769 n.12

language they use isn't technical,<sup>806</sup> and there are a variety of terms carrying a wealth of metaphor that they use to describe it, but they are talking about the same things.

The word baptise carries a metaphorical range of being drenched, drowned or overwhelmed.<sup>807</sup> But we've seen plenty of examples of the same event when Luke spoke of being 'filled' or 'receiving'. Filled seems more to have a metaphorical range of imbibing, drinking, being changed on the inside,<sup>808</sup> while receiving is about donating a gift.<sup>809</sup>

So, with that much fluidity what language do we use? Hosier feels that backing off the term 'Baptise' is dangerous as it could easily lead us to back off the experience.<sup>810</sup> He also argues that the 'overwhelming' metaphor of the word 'Baptism' is a good fit for the experience.<sup>811</sup> What we've seen in recent decades is many backing away from the language, and then backing away from the experience.

That isn't a reason to keep the phrase, but it isn't a reason to ditch it either. New Testament use is fluid so ours can be. Scholastic Christian culture doesn't always help us, but the wider culture's discourse also expects word use to be neat and static. Baptism works as an initiatory word, with 'filling' for subsequent experience, but let us not kid ourselves that this is the New Testament's usage.

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<sup>806</sup> Blomberg argues that 'Baptism in the Holy Spirit' is always a technical term for regeneration. However he is comfortable with the word 'filling' as used by Luke to describe subsequent experiences to salvation. Blomberg, *Jesus and the Gospels*, 217-218. He doesn't touch on the word 'receive', which is just as frequently used. Unfortunately it is far too neat a scheme to encompass the sheer variance of language used in the New Testament. It's far more likely that it isn't a technical term, but a descriptive one, describing the nature of the event. E.g. Heath, 'Baptism in the Holy Spirit Redux'.

<sup>807</sup> "In the NT period then, baptizein could be used both literally (to mean dip, sink or immerse) and metaphorically (to mean 'sink', 'deluge with', overwhelm or overpower)." Turner, 'Spirit Endowment in Luke/Acts', 51. On John the Baptist's use of the language in Luke 3, but that the future encounter with God's Holy Spirit-and-fire will be like an angry sea engulfing and sinking a boat, or like a massive surge of flood water suddenly sweeping down on a man as he attempts to cross the river, and overwhelming him. It will be immense, majestic and devastating." Williams comments, "Primarily it is a matter of being immersed in the presence and power of God. Even as baptism in water means immersion in water- -the whole person being submerged in and surrounded by water- -so does baptism in the Holy Spirit mean immersion in the reality of God's dynamic presence. The language of the Spirit's being "poured out," "falling upon," "coming upon" are various descriptions of the Spirit's external coming; "filled" points to the internal dimension- -a being filled within; "baptism in the Holy Spirit" highlights the central fact of being enveloped by, surrounded with, immersed in the presence and power of God" Williams, *A Theological Pilgrimage*.

<sup>808</sup> Pawson, *Jesus Baptises in One Holy Spirit*, 102. Baptised is immersion and outside, filling is imbibing and inside. Two metaphors to equal total saturation. Points to the parallel baptise/drink in 1 Corinthians 12.13.

<sup>809</sup> "Thus, 'receive the Holy Spirit' is a donation metaphor, which depicts the gift of a new relationship with the Spirit rather than the Spirit having become a property of someone." Bennema, 'The Giving of the Spirit in John's Gospel', 212.

<sup>810</sup> Hosier, 'Did you receive the Spirit?'

<sup>811</sup> Hosier, *Christ's Radiant Church*, 97

## 7. Pastoral Issues

There are also a number of issues facing the enquiry which are more practical in nature. The biggest one being the accusation that this creates a dissonance amongst believers instead of union. Beyond that I will also explore about how you practically receive the Spirit, and what implications this has for the rest of the Christian life.

### 7.1 Dissonance

Grudem's entire argument against Baptism in the Spirit is founded on his concern that it divides the church into two camps or classes.<sup>812</sup> All of his exegesis flows from the assumption that it does and the strongly stated assertion that if something does it must be incorrect. However much proponents might protest or restructure their statements, he says that this division is implicit even in the question "Have you been baptised in the Spirit?"<sup>813</sup> The primary issue here is that Paul felt perfectly comfortable asking this question in Acts 19.<sup>814</sup> The New Testament is also frequently comfortable with drawing distinctions, between Jew and Gentile being the most obvious, who are clearly portrayed as different but equal.<sup>815</sup>

He sees this as being such a problem because it leads to a "them and us" mentality,<sup>816</sup> and even offering the experience is seen as a statement of spiritual superiority.<sup>817</sup> Which, if it were true, flies in the face of New Testament Christianity,<sup>818</sup> so the charge isn't simply that some people's feelings might be hurt, it gets right to the core of what the New Testament says the local church is supposed to be.

Thiselton strongly states the same case:

"any theology that might imply that this one baptism in 13a in which believers were baptised by one Spirit might mark off some post conversion experience or status enjoyed only by some Christians attacks and undermines Paul's entire argument and emphasis [in 1 Corinthians 12]."<sup>819</sup>

I think Thiselton is wrong exegetically, as explained in the section on 1 Corinthians 12.13, but he makes an assumption that the Baptism in the Holy Spirit produces a status only enjoyed by some Christians. This is an understandable assumption because of the impoverished nature of much of Western Christian spirituality, but it isn't a Biblical one. As we've seen, there is no idea in the Bible of Christians who have not received this experience, it's a modern aberration that should not lead our

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<sup>812</sup> Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 775

<sup>813</sup> Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 777

<sup>814</sup> Grudem would argue that this is because Paul is drawing a dividing line around Christianity, as he contends that the Ephesian disciples were not genuine believers. See the exegesis of Acts 19 for interaction.

<sup>815</sup> Grudem's own theology has often been characterised (and sometimes caricatured) as doing this same divisive work between men and women. The irony is of course, not addressed.

<sup>816</sup> Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 777

<sup>817</sup> Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 777

<sup>818</sup> Zwiep, 'Luke's Understanding of Baptism in the Holy Spirit: An Evangelical Perspective', 139. "Luke's universalizing tendency sharply contrasts with the Pentecostal wall of division that separates Spirit-baptised believers from ordinary believers. The essence of Acts 2 seems to me to be rather the contrary: in Acts 2:17–18 the classic walls of division are explicitly broken down: sons and daughters are said to prophesy ... young men and old men shall dream dreams, and upon slaves, both men and women, the Spirit will be poured out. ... A two-stage initiation into a fuller Christian experience is simply not in view." (138).

<sup>819</sup> Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 997 - 998

thinking.<sup>820</sup> As Eaton puts it, “Any Christian who does not know such a blessing is an anomaly by New Testament standards.”<sup>821</sup>

Thiselton is primarily arguing against a view of Baptism in the Holy Spirit that makes holiness a prerequisite for the experience, he believes this to be the primary view of Pentecostalism.<sup>822</sup> As we’ve seen there are a wide array of views on the subject, and I agree with his critique of this view. He argues that 1 Corinthians 12.13 clashes with the idea that any of us need to reach a standard of holiness to gain a subsequent experience, as we’ve ‘all’ drunk of the Spirit.<sup>823</sup> This is reasonable, but he misses that Baptism in the Holy Spirit is available for all with no requirement for ‘holiness’, and that we are all always making progress in the gospel. The suggestion that no one can be ahead because that wouldn’t be egalitarian enough seems to make a mockery of the way sanctification works, or Paul’s suggestion in 1 Corinthians 4.16 and 11.1 that the Corinthians imitate him as he in turn imitates Christ. He is clearly ‘ahead’ of them in maturity while still making progress himself.

Also, this is not supposed to create “an exclusive elite of ‘spiritual persons’ at a particular point of time.”<sup>824</sup> This is basic Christianity, available to all and expected to be experienced by all. The suggestion is not that somehow you are more forgiven, or more loved, or more ‘Christian’, but that you are more aware of how forgiven, loved and dependent on Christ you are.<sup>825</sup> It is an experience primarily of assurance, though admittedly assurance accompanied by power.

To parody Dunn’s own position on the New Perspective on Paul, you could describe receiving the Spirit as ‘not how you get in, but how you stay in’. Perhaps more accurately we could call it, ‘not how you get in, but the best way to know you’re in’. It’s the boundary marker he is so keen to find everywhere in Paul’s thought.

Baptism in the Spirit is being presented entirely incorrectly if it’s at all exclusive, at its core it’s an invitational doctrine, since it’s open to all and easy to receive. We should be mindful of Jesus offer in John 7.37, that *all* who are thirsty and come, and that all that they need to do is ‘drink’. There is no expectation of two communities, because the New Testament has no conception of believers without the Spirit. It’s a foundational experience in the Christian life.<sup>826</sup>

The argument of Galatians 3 is that Baptism in the Holy Spirit is the only way to avoid the two tier Christianity that Grudem and Thiselton<sup>827</sup> are strongly against, because it is not necessary to take on a new racial or cultural identity in order to experience the Spirit.<sup>828</sup>

For a counterpoint, Kyte follows the subsequent release view that argues that all have received the Spirit, he nonetheless feels the language of ‘haves’ and ‘have nots’ can be helpful because it challenges complacency. He references the famous Martyn Lloyd Jones quote, “Got it all? ... If you

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<sup>820</sup> Newman, *What We are About to Receive*, 6. “For Paul, the conclusive factor of Christian initiation was the Spirit. He expected everyone to know some manifestation of the Spirit in his or her life.”

<sup>821</sup> Eaton, *Baptism with the Spirit*, 247

<sup>822</sup> Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 999

<sup>823</sup> Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 998 – 999. He is particularly critiquing the views of William Seymour

<sup>824</sup> Bruce, *1 and 2 Corinthians*, 120

<sup>825</sup> Eaton, *Baptism with the Spirit*, 240

<sup>826</sup> Williams, *A Theological Pilgrimage*

<sup>827</sup> They are hardly the only prominent figures to hold this view, e.g. Warnock, ‘Disagreeing with Frank Viola on Baptism with the Holy Spirit’. Warnock amusingly comments, ‘Finally, he seems to imply that the doctrine of a subsequent experience of the Holy Spirit has to wrong because it leads to excesses and creates second class citizens. To me that is like arguing since Christianity can lead to the crusades it has to be wrong.’

<sup>828</sup> C.f. Hansen, *Galatians*, 80-81

have got it all why are you so unlike the New Testament Christians? God it all! Got it at your conversion! Well where it is, I ask?”<sup>829</sup> While I’m sure that ‘haves’ and ‘have nots’ is at all helpful language, receiving the Spirit is supposed to be an inclusive ecclesial event, I very much welcome the emphasis on the need to have a deeply experiential Christian life, and the encouragement to everyone that our experience is impoverished compared with what is available to us, wherever it might be at the moment.

Even the classic reformed tradition points in this direction, Flavel encouraged those who haven’t experienced ‘sealing with the Spirit’ to seek it by asking for it with faith,<sup>830</sup> there was no sense of two tier Christianity and there was a clear expectation that all would come to experience this in time.<sup>831</sup> He is particularly firm with those who are not seeking this, considering their actions to be disobedient.<sup>832</sup> Calvin’s theology only allows one gift of the Spirit, but he had an expectation of jubilant experiential assurance. Without that experience he would have questioned if you are a believer.<sup>833</sup> Eaton argues that his expectation accords with that of Whitefield, Wesley, or even James Dunn, more than most modern Calvinists.<sup>834</sup>

Salvation in the New Testament is not a jump from here to there, but a road to be travelled, hence why Christianity was first called ‘the Way’. Repentance, faith, water baptism and Spirit baptism are the first four steps on this path.<sup>835</sup> All of them are needed to start out well as a disciple.<sup>836</sup>

Saying that some have not received the Spirit, which is part of salvation, does not mean that they are not ‘in Christ’, or that they have not been regenerated, or that God’s loving disposition towards them is in any way different. It is easy to make it sound like this, and if I’ve done so I have misstepped. However, salvation in the New Testament is a declaration over us, and also a way for us to walk until we cross over death into new life,<sup>837</sup> as well as something which are earnestly waiting and hoping for.

Receiving the Spirit is part of that journey towards our destination, and is offered by Jesus to all. Those who are complacent need challenging, and those who are earnestly seeking need to be urged onward.

### **What about *this* person?**

This raises another question, what about Christians who deny that this experience exists, does that mean their Christian life is impoverished? This question is typically framed with a list of clearly worthy, mature, and usually notable, Christians who have been effective for Christ and who deny this experience.

What do we do with so many wonderful Christians who certainly rejected the theology and we can’t know that they had the experience. Our options are:

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<sup>829</sup> Kyte, ‘Different views’, 6

<sup>830</sup> Flavel, *Works* vol. 6, 409

<sup>831</sup> Flavel, *Works* vol. 6, 406

<sup>832</sup> Flavel, *Works* vol. 6, 409

<sup>833</sup> Eaton, *Baptism with the Spirit*, 53 - 55

<sup>834</sup> Eaton, *Baptism with the Spirit*, 55

<sup>835</sup> Pawson, *Jesus Baptises in One Holy Spirit*, 186

<sup>836</sup> Pawson, *Jesus Baptises in One Holy Spirit*, 187

<sup>837</sup> Think Bunyan’s *Pilgrim’s Progress*.

- a) They did have the experience, they just didn't have the theology to match up with it or perhaps no categories for what they experienced. We could only argue this if they had documented that kind of experience.
- b) We can see fruit of this kind of experience in their lives, and they can't have done this without it, but they didn't write about it or interpreted it very differently.
- c) They didn't have the experience, and so missed out because they didn't seek it or know how to receive it.
- d) They didn't have the experience because their theology quenched the spirit.

Most likely all of the above are true in some cases, and we shouldn't assume that they must have had Baptism in the Holy Spirit just because they were so effective, though it's increasingly likely. We can tell with some, for example I would feel confident describing the documented experiences of George Whitefield, Jonathan Edwards or Blaise Pascal in that way. For the majority of people I wouldn't want to try and guess, all I know is that Jesus offers the Spirit to everyone who would receive him. God is free to act as he chooses, and those genuinely seeking God will find him.<sup>838</sup>

## 7.2 Method of receipt

The vast majority of occasions in Acts have someone lay hands on someone else and pray.<sup>839</sup> This should be our normal pattern. There are enough occasions where it's either unclear<sup>840</sup> or definitely not the case that we shouldn't be dogmatic about it as a prerequisite though.

Jesus distributes the Spirit, having received it from the Father, therefore when we lay hands on people we are acting in affirmation of this, standing in intercession, and being used for divine impartation. It is categorically not transferal from one who has received to another.<sup>841</sup>

We must never line up conditions so that we turn a gift from Christ to those who are totally unqualified into a reward for the saintly.<sup>842</sup>

The only conditions Jesus gives in John 7.37 are simple enough: come to him, and drink. That means the only conditions we should specify are a desire to receive and a willingness to ask. Faith and Thirst. Experience would dictate that the content of that faith should include a settled sense that this is offered to you by Christ and that if you ask you will receive, however that's more of a sense of best practice than a requirement.

Feeling a need to be 'holy' stops people from receiving,<sup>843</sup> as it kills our willingness to ask. In other words teachings that don't tie receiving the Spirit to the gift<sup>844</sup> of God are self-defeating. As does fear, because it kills thirst.

As we've mentioned before believing that you've had it because you've prayed, if you haven't, is destructive. If people don't receive, we shouldn't kid ourselves and them into thinking they have. Deception is of the enemy, walking in the light requires that we face up to the awkward reality that

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<sup>838</sup> Pawson, *Jesus Baptises in One Holy Spirit*, 197-198. "His blessing means that he is gracious, not that we are accurate." (198-199).

<sup>839</sup> Keener, *Acts*, 1528

<sup>840</sup> Most notably in Acts 2.38-39 there is no explicit suggestion that hands were required for receipt. It probably isn't therefore an 'indispensable prerequisite.' Bruce, *The Book of the Acts*, 71.

<sup>841</sup> Pawson, *Jesus Baptises in One Holy Spirit*, 119

<sup>842</sup> Storms, 'Baptism of the Holy Spirit – Part I'

<sup>843</sup> Moore, *Straight to the Heart of Acts*, 206.

<sup>844</sup> The word *dōrea* in Acts 2.38, 8.20, 10.45 and 11.17 means a gift given freely. Moore, *Straight to the Heart of Acts*, 206 n.7.

sometimes people don't seem to receive, and to try and walk through that with them, continually offering Christ and the Spirit as freely available to any who would take them.

### 7.3 Ongoing Experience

Newman argues that a scheme of one or two experiences seems petty, New Testament experience is the new age.<sup>845</sup> While I think he's right in substance, we need to fight for the subsequent initiatory experience of the Spirit as Luke makes such a big deal of it. The step change between not having received the Spirit and receiving the Spirit is so important that we should continue to hold out for it as part of Christian initiation. Equally we shouldn't imagine that 'receiving the Spirit' is an experience to be had and filed away.<sup>846</sup> It's an invitation to a lifelong enjoyment of the Spirit's presence.<sup>847</sup>

Grudem's second major objection to Baptism in the Holy Spirit is with the way the doctrine can be perceived to be a once-for-all sanctification process, as would be especially seen in its Wesleyan Holiness roots.<sup>848</sup> He is comfortable with religious experiences being part of the progress of sanctification, but these need to be repeatable to maintain our ability to speak of the Christian life as a journey towards Christ.<sup>849</sup> His objection is understandable, but is levelled more against the way the doctrine might be perceived rather than the content of the teaching. This is easily countered with effective teaching to initiates into Christianity about the life of discipleship that they should expect to follow.

He feels that this would be avoided if we spoke instead of multiple fillings of the Spirit,<sup>850</sup> which most proponents of baptism in the Spirit actually do, I don't think it's as simple as that. The danger of people misinterpreting their own experiences will always be present,<sup>851</sup> and the solution isn't to throw away a doctrine on this basis. Were we to throw away doctrines on the basis of their potential misunderstanding, the majority of Grudem's strongly Calvinistic, strongly complementarian platform would be rejected.

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<sup>845</sup> Newman, *What we are about to receive*, 10

<sup>846</sup> "Again the use of the word 'receiving' does not imply an end of 'receiving' as though the baptism in the Spirit implies that nothing more was to be received. There must be an initial believing reception of the Holy Spirit, but this is but an introduction into the realm of the Spirit's dynamic operation in, upon and through the believer" Garner, *The Promise of the Spirit*, 39.

<sup>847</sup> Moore, *Straight to the Heart of Acts*, 32; Fee, *God's Empowering Presence*, 864

<sup>848</sup> Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 781. As we've seen, the doctrine doesn't only find its roots within the Holiness movements, which are certainly open to the criticism he levels, but also within the reformed strand of teaching on sealing in the Spirit that doesn't have this character at all.

<sup>849</sup> Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 781

<sup>850</sup> Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 782

<sup>851</sup> This is exactly what John Wimber accuses 'Pentecostals' of doing, "The Pentecostals' experience of God is better than their explanation of it." Quoted in Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 783 n.33.

## 8. Conclusion and Summary

“Perhaps the greater tragedy for the church is that it should have lost such touch with the Spirit of God in its ongoing life that it should settle for what is only ordinary.”<sup>852</sup> The Spirit is the “*absolutely essential constituent of the whole Christian life*, from its beginning to end.”<sup>853</sup> This is normative, biblical Christianity.<sup>854</sup>

I have endeavoured to demonstrate, at some length, that Baptism in the Holy Spirit is experiential; logically subsequent to regeneration though most naturally understood as part of conversion-initiation; basic Christianity, not an added extra for a spiritual elite; available to all without qualification or pre-condition; fundamentally about Christian assurance, but with eschatological, ecclesiological, missiological and charismatic significance following on from this; a fundamental internal sign of Christian faith, and external sign of Christian community; initiatory into a life of ongoing dramatic encounters; and to be expected, sort and enjoyed by all.

You will have to judge for yourself how successful I’ve been.

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<sup>852</sup> Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 600

<sup>853</sup> Fee, *God’s Empowering Presence*, 898. Believers in Christ are Spirit people, first and foremost. “The Spirit is the crucial reality for life in the coming age, now present.” (115)

<sup>854</sup> Stibbe, ‘Foreword’ in Pawson, *Jesus Baptises in One Holy Spirit*, ix

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