

Baptism
in the
Holy Spirit

Billy Prewitt

A Pentecostal Perspective

BAPTISM IN THE HOLY SPIRIT:
A PENTECOSTAL PERSPECTIVE

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INTRODUCTION

The twentieth century has been a century of industrious change quite possibly more than any other century in the history of the world. The changes that have taken place since the turn of that century have affected the whole planet in ways that persons from the century before would hardly be able to imagine. Not only have there been significant changes in the way of modern ingenuity, but also there has been significant change in the Church, for with the dawn of the twentieth century, there was a new (or possibly a renewed) era of experience that dawned on the Church with the inception of the modern Pentecostal movement.

The modern Pentecostal movement began with a new understanding concerning the baptism in the Holy Spirit. The distinction in the doctrine is both the matter of tongues as evidence and the issue of subsequence. Pentecostals state the doctrine in slightly different terms, but the basic conclusion is that subsequent to conversion a person can and should be baptized in the Holy Spirit and tongues are given as evidence of such. As a result of this distinctive doctrine, Pentecostals have placed a high emphasis on not only tongues, but also on the work, ministry, and person of the Holy Spirit as a whole.

Without question, since its early beginnings, the Pentecostal movement has faced direct and forceful opposition from fellow believers. Unfortunately, much of that opposition still exists today in many Christian circles in spite of the fact that the Pentecostal movement has had such tremendous success world wide. The real heart of the controversy is the doctrine of the baptism in the Holy Spirit. Martyn Lloyd-Jones notes, "People who are evangelical in their outlook are agreed with one another about practically everything in connection with the doctrine of the person and the work of the Holy Spirit apart from this one matter, . . . but when you come to this matter of the baptism with the Holy Spirit there is a divergence and a disagreement." There are a number of possible ways to view the doctrine of the baptism in the Holy Spirit, and Lloyd-Jones is indeed correct when he states that there is "divergence." This divergence has often been so sharp as to bring forceful

opposition and even persecution at times to those who propose that tongues is the evidence of a baptism that is subsequent to conversion. Pentecostals have endured ridicule, accusations of various kinds, and both social and ecumenical pressures. In spite of this intense opposition, Pentecostals have held forth their doctrine of a subsequent baptism with the Holy Spirit with the evidence of speaking in tongues with great zeal and fervor.

One might wonder why Pentecostals are so persistent to promote such a controversial doctrine. There could potentially be numerous answers to this question, but three are distinctly important in relation to this present subject matter. First, Pentecostals believe that the baptism in the Holy Spirit is the entrance to Spirit empowered ministry expansion. John R. Higgins expresses the value of the baptism in the Spirit for modern day church expansion:

The early disciples were instructed by Jesus that as a result of the experience of being filled with the Spirit they would receive power to be witnesses throughout the whole world. The unfolding of this Spirit-enabled witness is chronicled in the Book of Acts. Both in the Scripture and in current church history, where believers are baptized in the Spirit there is subsequent expansion of the Church.

In essence, Pentecostals believe that the baptism in the Holy Spirit is the endowment of power for accomplishing the mandate of Jesus: “And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature” (Mark 16:15 AV). In Acts 1:8, Jesus promises that power will be given to the disciples for fulfilling that mission: “But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.” Most interpreters maintain that the power for witness in the early church came from this experience spoken of by Jesus, and that this promise of power was realized on Pentecost in Acts 2:1-4. Pentecostals are distinct in that they proclaim that the same baptism that was given on Pentecost in the book of Acts is available (including evidential tongues) today and is the source of power for ministry expansion now. David Lim observes, “Pentecostals believe strongly in this point—the primary and foremost purpose of being baptized in the Holy Spirit is power for service. . . . Pentecostals believe that this same unique baptism in the Holy Spirit is available to believers today for the same purpose of

empowering them for service.” Donald Stamps writes, “The baptism in the Holy Spirit brings personal boldness and the power of the Spirit into the believer’s life in order to accomplish mighty works in Christ’s name and to make one’s witness and proclamation effective.” In the mindset of Pentecostals, the baptism in the Holy Spirit with evidential tongues is a prerequisite for all ministry expansion activity.

Second, it is understood by Pentecostals that the baptism in the Holy Spirit with the evidence of speaking in other tongues is the doorway to the gifts of the Spirit. Stamps observes, “The baptism in the Spirit is initiation into the Spirit’s fullness, prophetic activity and supernatural gifts.” John Wyckoff agrees by relating that the baptism in the Holy Spirit is not just for the empowering of ministry advancement, but it is also has to do with ministry in the body and in particular a ministry of gifts. In a discussion related to the benefits of the experience beyond tongues as evidence he notes that

the important point is that the initial experience, evidenced by speaking in tongues, is only an opening up into other dimensions of life in the Spirit [i.e. the gifts of the Spirit]. . . . Individuals baptized in and empowered by the Spirit affect the rest of the body of believers. . . . The ultimate need is for every member in the body of Christ to be thus empowered so the Church might operate in the full dimension of life in the Spirit.

Third, Pentecostals also hold to the belief that the baptism in the Holy Spirit with evidential tongues has a significant effect on believers as individuals as well. The Apostle Paul said, “He that speaketh in an *unknown* tongue edifieth himself” (1 Corinthians 14:4). Commenting on this verse, David Lim notes that “the world tears down. Christians may be built up in the Lord, personal edification coming first. Speaking in tongues edifies us personally.” Since Pentecostals avow the benefits not only to the ministry of the Church but also to the edification of the individual, they proceed to unashamedly encourage their constituents to seek for the blessing of the baptism with the Spirit.

Pentecostals hold that the controversial doctrine of the baptism with the Holy Spirit subsequent to salvation with the evidence of speaking in other tongues is the fulfillment of the promise of the Father, and can be progressively traced through the dispensations to the modern church as a

valid and necessary experience today that God has given to His people. According to David Lim, “The revival and growth of Christianity around the world, especially in third world countries, is a powerful testimony that spiritual gifts are at work advancing God’s kingdom. . . . The ten largest churches in the world belong to this [Pentecostal-charismatic] movement.”

Chapter 1

The Promise of the Father

For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, *even* as many as the Lord our God shall call. –Acts 2:39

The Apostle Peter spoke on the day of Pentecost to the crowd of confused and interested pilgrims as they had assembled in Jerusalem with these words of promise. What promise was he talking about? Who made the promise, and why was it so important? Does that promise have significance for believers today? In light of these questions it is necessary to consider the promise itself, the initiation of the promise, the progressive revelation, and the fulfillment of the promise.

The Promised Holy Spirit

Mankind is accustomed to hearing promises, and, as a result, is also familiar with the sting that broken promises offer. In America, where the saying used to be, “A man’s word is his bond,” we have come to the commonplace understanding that “promises were made to be broken.” Our society has devalued the concept of promises to the point that most people find it hard to believe anyone. The reason for this is quite clear: the weight of a promise is directly proportional to the character and integrity of the one making the promise.

The arena of politics provides us a vivid example of how this works. George Washington was heralded as a man of integrity because he admitted to the chopping down of his father’s cherry tree. This small example of honesty and integrity propelled him as one that would deal honestly. Based on a history of character, one would expect such a man to fulfill promises made. On the other side of that coin, many politicians today fill the air with

twisted facts and promises that are never realized. In such a case, when a politician makes a vow the history of broken promises should be taken into consideration before a person trusts that those promises will be fulfilled.

Knowing that integrity is the foundation for promises, what does that say about promises that God makes? The Scriptures teach very clearly that God cannot lie, indeed it is impossible (Titus 1:2, Hebrews 6:18). John R. Higgins rightly observes that “accommodation to falsehood is not morally possible for the God who is absolutely true.” Since it is impossible for God to lie, then every word that is spoken by Him must come to fulfillment. The Apostle Paul declared, “For all the promises of God in him are yea, and in him Amen” (2 Corinthians 1:20). Once God has made a promise there is no need to fear or worry because His word never can be broken. The very nature of His integrity requires His word to come to pass.

It is difficult to imagine that God can be obligated to do anything, yet, He is very obligated. Men do not have the power to obligate Him, and neither does any other created being. God, however, can and has obligated Himself in many ways by the words of His promises, for once He makes a pronouncement of intent, He voluntarily obligates Himself by His own word. “God did not have to promise anything to sinful people. But the fact that almost all biblical promises are those made by God to human beings indicates that His nature is characterized chiefly by grace and faithfulness.” The list of God’s obligations through promises is quite long.

God only needs to make a promise one time. Often in Scripture, however, we find that God’s promises are repeated. There are various reasons for repetition of God’s promises. Sometimes a different context will give a fuller understanding of the first expression. There are other times when promises are clarified and reaffirmed. It could be that many of the promises are repeated just so that the recipients of the promise will be more likely to remember what God intends to do.

Among the repeated thematic materials of the Scriptures is the promise concerning the person and work of the Holy Spirit. God, on a number of occasions, made a promise concerning the Spirit. Each repetition gives new understanding and/or reaffirmation that it is indeed God’s design that the Holy Spirit be poured out and minister in the lives of people and play an active role in the work of the Church. Examining this promise and

eventually its realization will demonstrate just how much God loves His people, in that He cares to make such a glorious provision in the Holy Spirit.

[Proclamation of the Promise](#)

In the Old Testament God spoke through the prophet Joel these words: “And it shall come to pass afterward, *that* I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions: And also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my spirit” (Joel 2:28, 29). In these words, the promise of the Holy Spirit is revealed. The promise states that there would be a time coming that would be different from the time in which the prophet lived. The time prophesied would be a time marked by the outpouring of the Spirit of God upon all flesh. This promise stands out among promises because it signifies that a new era will commence in which God will deal differently with His people than ever before. In the Old Testament, the Spirit of God was not poured out on all flesh, but the promise comes to boldly proclaim that a time was coming in which that would happen. According to Bullock this passage promises a “new age when Yahweh will pour out His Spirit upon all flesh, irrespective of sex, age, or social rank. . . . The new age will be characterized by a generalization of the phenomenon of prophecy, here described in terms of its major manifestations in oracles, dreams, and visions.”

In addition to Joel, there were others that spoke of a promise related to a future outpouring of the Spirit. Isaiah 32:15 says, “Until the spirit be poured upon us from on high, and the wilderness be a fruitful field, and the fruitful field be counted for a forest.” Again, the promise of a time to come when the Spirit would be poured out is given. Another instance in Isaiah 44:3 bears mention, “For I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground: I will pour my spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring.” Even though this mention of the promise is not as inclusive as the passage in Joel, the inclusion of offspring should be noted. Even though there is debate as to the meaning and fulfillment of these

passages, “The futuristic nature of this promise would indicate that in the future there was yet coming a time when this would happen.”

Ezekiel also spoke of an outpouring of the Spirit, “And I will never again hide my face from them, when I pour out my spirit upon the house of Israel, says the Lord God” (Ezekiel 39:29 NRSV). The KJV presents this verse in the past tense as if speaking from some distant point in the future: “Neither will I hide my face any more from them: for I have poured out my spirit upon the house of Israel, saith the Lord GOD.” When writing on this verse Williams claims, “The Spirit of God would some day [future] be poured out on Jacob’s house, the house of Israel.”

Long before Joel, Isaiah, or Ezekiel, Moses expressed a desired to see a time like the one they prophesied about. Moses was obviously a man of great understanding because of his relationship with God. Numbers 11 relates a story that has some special significance to this current topic. The children of Israel were in the wilderness and they began complaining that they wanted meat. Moses was deeply troubled when he spoke to the Lord concerning the problem and he said, “I am not able to bear all this people alone, because it is too heavy for me” (Numbers 11:14). In response, God told him to gather together seventy of the elders. Moses did as God said and the Scriptures record, “And the LORD came down in a cloud, and spake unto him, and took of the spirit that was upon him, and gave it unto the seventy elders: and it came to pass, that when the spirit rested upon them, they prophesied and did not cease” (Numbers 11:25). Two of those seventy elders that were summoned did not attend the meeting, however, the Spirit also rested upon them in the camp where they were and they prophesied there. When news of their prophesying reached Moses, Joshua urged him to forbid them. Moses answered, “Enviest thou for my sake? would God that all the LORD’S people were prophets, and that the LORD would put his spirit upon them!” (Numbers 11:29). Matthew Henry observes, “Moses was of another spirit; so far from silencing these two, and quenching the Spirit in them, he wished *all the Lord’s people were prophets*, that is, that he would *put his Spirit upon them*.” Through Moses’ words here it can be observed that God, at that time, was not pouring out His Spirit on all flesh. His Spirit was only available to a few chosen leaders. Moses realized this and was left wanting. According to Allen and Barker, “Moses desired that all God’s people might have the full gifts of the Spirit.” Commenting on the

community that Moses wished to see, David Lim says, “This community is a prophetic one.” He clearly longed for a time when the Spirit of God would be poured out on all flesh.

The narrative of Moses and the seventy elders clearly reveals that the spirit of God was transferred from Moses to the elders. There is a direct parallel between this event and the event that happened on the very first Easter. In John 20, the account is given of Jesus visiting the disciples on resurrection day. “And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost” (John 20:22). There is somewhat of a controversy concerning the actual activity of the experience on that Sunday evening. Some writers believe that Jesus did not actually impart the Spirit on this occasion. This view is evident in the words of Leon Morris when he comments on this verse by saying that the words “Receive the Holy Spirit” (NIV) are “thus anticipating what happened 50 days later on the day of Pentecost.” Pentecostals disagree with this interpretation. Donald Stamps emphatically notes that

There is no Scriptural foundation to suggest that Jesus’ bestowal of the Holy Spirit in John 20:22 was simply symbolical prophecy of the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. The use of the aorist imperative for “receive” . . . denotes reception at that moment and in that place. What occurred was a historical reality in space and time, and John records it as such.

J. Rodman Williams agrees with Stamps:

Thus the coming of the Spirit that Jesus promised is not to be confused with Jesus breathing on the disciples and saying, “Receive the Holy Spirit” (John 20:22). This insufflation of the Spirit occurred on the day of Jesus’ resurrection: Jesus had not yet gone “away.” . . . The resurrected Lord breathed the Holy Spirit into the disciples for the restoration of life—regeneration. Thereby the Holy Spirit came to dwell within them. Thus on their behalf Jesus’ words were fulfilled: “He dwells with you, and will be in you” (John 14:17).

J. Vernon Magee also believes that John 20:22 refers to an actual transference of the Spirit even though he does not write from a Pentecostal perspective, and also clearly states that John 20:22 was not to be equated with the outpouring that was yet to come:

I personally believe that at the moment our Lord breathed on them, and said, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost," these men were regenerated. Before this, they had not been indwelt by the Spirit of God. This expression "breathed on them" occurs only one other time in the Bible. In Genesis, God breathed into Adam the breath of life. I believe here that Jesus Christ breathed into these men eternal life by giving them the Spirit of God. This would sustain them and secure them for the interval between His ascension and the coming of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost.

Just as the Spirit of God was transferred from Moses to the seventy elders, the Holy Spirit was transferred from Jesus to His disciples. The only difference is eloquently stated by Matthew Henry: "Moses could not give his Spirit, God did it (Num. 11:17); but Christ did it himself."

Although this parallel is quite distinct, there is more to the parallel that is quite important. Moses specifically mentioned that he wanted all of the people to be prophets and receive the Spirit of the Lord. Moses was obviously pleased that God would answer his request by giving the Spirit to the seventy, but he was also acutely aware that there could be more. Jesus likewise knew that there was more. Henry again states, "The solemn grant he made, signified by this sign, *Receive ye the Holy Ghost*, in part now, as an earnest of what you shall further receive *not many days hence*."

As has already been stated, the context of John 20:22 was the Sunday evening of the day Jesus was raised from the dead. The same context is observed in Luke 24. In Luke the account is quite different. Here there is no mention of the Spirit being imparted as there is in John. Rather, on the same occasion, Jesus refers to a point that was yet in the future when those hearing would receive the promise of the Father: "And behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high" (Luke 24:49). Commentators generally agree that this verse directly predicts the day of Pentecost as recorded in Acts 2:1-4. Lewis Foster notes it succinctly: "The reference is to the coming power of the Spirit, fulfilled in Ac 2:4." In the context of the same visitation, Jesus imparts the Spirit and also speaks of a promise that would include and be marked by power from on high.

What promise was Jesus talking about? To make a clear definition based on Luke 24:49, it must be the promise of the Father. In Acts 1:4-5, Jesus clearly stated the content of the promise that the Father had made, “Wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith he, ye have heard of me. For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence.” Here Jesus links the promise of the Father to the Baptism with the Holy Ghost that was prophesied by John the Baptist (Matthew 3:11, Mark 1:8, Luke 3:16; John 1:33). This promise is recorded by all four Gospel writers indicating that it is a matter of utmost importance.

John the Baptist said, “I indeed have baptized you with water: but he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost” (Mark 1:8). Significantly, with the exception of the passage in Mark 16:15-18, there is no more information given in the Gospel of Mark as to what that baptism might be or include. James Brooks observes, “Presumably the reader is left to understand that the baptism with the Spirit takes place after the close of the narrative. At various places Mark’s account points beyond itself by leaving promises unfulfilled.” This is then somewhat of a hanging promise. The disciples, nor anyone else, knew what the content of the promised baptism would entail. Williams observes,

What the latter [baptism with the Holy Spirit] meant, however, could not be understood, or indeed could not happen, until Jesus had completed His work of redemption by taking away the sin of the world. After this initial proclamation by John the Baptist that Jesus would baptize in the Holy Spirit, nothing further is directly said on this matter in any of the four Gospels. The expression is not used again until the Book of Acts when Jesus Himself said, “Before many days you shall be baptized in the Holy Spirit.”

Regardless as to whether the original hearers and even John himself understood exactly what the promised baptism was, the fact still remains that the promise was indeed pronounced through his lips.

There is presented then a steady progression of promise starting with Moses. Moses longed for a promise as yet unmade, and Joel, Isaiah, and Ezekiel recorded the promise that Moses desired to see. Bullock states, “The lawgiver himself had once wished that all God’s people were

prophets. . . . Joel finally envisions that society, open to the voice of God in oracle, dream, and vision, with every social rank of society responsive to His revelation.” John restated the promise in different terms, and Jesus testified to its validity just before His ascension. One thing is obvious in all of this; the promise had not yet come into fulfillment before Jesus ascended.

[The Progressive Revelation of the Promise](#)

According to Nelson’s Dictionary of the Bible,

Biblical theologians work their way progressively through the Bible, tracing the progress of revelation and the development of theological thought, from the earliest writers to the latest. Biblical theology thus becomes the history of progressive revelation progressively set forth. The focus is not on the religious experience of the people, but on the revelation of God and His people’s understanding of His acts.

Steady progression of revelation is exactly what is seen concerning the promise of the Father. The theme is first introduced by Moses. In the account given in Numbers 11, the promise is not pronounced, but there are two significant aspects of the event that can be observed. The transference of the Spirit to the seventy elders was accompanied, or quite possibly announced, by prophecy. This is not the only record in the Old Testament when the empowerment of the Spirit caused the occasion of prophetic utterance, but it sets up somewhat of a foreshadowing that lingers consistently in relation to the workings of the Spirit. In addition, the purpose of the transference was clearly that of empowerment for service. Again, on many occasions in the Old Testament there were those that were endowed with power by the Spirit for certain tasks. Lim observes, “The anointing of the Spirit in the Old Testament was for every ministry God desired to raise up: priests, tabernacle craftsmen, military leaders, kings, prophets, musicians. The purpose of the anointing was to equip for service.”

Following Moses, the next person to write on the subject actually revealed the promise. It was either Joel or Isaiah depending on the dating of each of these books. There is significant debate concerning the dating of both books. Schultz summarizes the debate concerning the dating of Joel: “Dates for Joel range from the ninth century B. C., the reign of Joash (835-796 B.

C.), to postexilic times. With no datable historic events mentioned in the book, any dating can be only inferential and speculative.” Isaiah also has many questions concerning dating particularly among those that pose that the Isaiah of Jerusalem did not write the entire book. Motyer laments such scholarship with these words:

Sadly, . . . the prevailing spirit of scholarship was disposed to fragmentation rather than to holism, and in the case of Isaiah this meant that a literature bursting with internal evidence of its unity was rather made to burst into disparate pieces. The subsequent course of study has concentrated on the fragments until it is now widely assumed that the case for multiple authorship need no longer be argued but can be assumed. This is by no means so. The evidences of unity . . . require explanation and we must now explore the simplest explanation—that the whole literature is the product of Isaiah of Jerusalem.

If Joel was a precursor to Isaiah, it would follow that Isaiah’s prophecy would serve as a reminder to what Joel had already said, and then Ezekiel would be a further reminder. If Joel came later than Isaiah and possibly later than Ezekiel as well, then Isaiah would have been the first to pronounce the promise that was then later elaborated by Ezekiel and Joel. In either case we are given added elements by each of these prophets that were not given by the foreshadowing of Moses.

Joel, Isaiah, and Ezekiel speak of the promise in terms of an outpouring. There are three different Hebrew words used in these passages that are generally translated as “pour.” The meanings of these words vary slightly, but the basic concept is to pour, empty, or spill. God is promising that His Spirit would be spilled out or emptied. The implication is that there would be no measure. When a glass is toppled, all of its contents are spilled. When God pours out the Spirit, those that are the subjects of such an outpouring will be swallowed up in the gush that flows. When the Spirit is poured out, the spiritual flood will engulf those that receive the outpouring. Also, God is saying that He will empty His Spirit. It is difficult to imagine that the Spirit of God could be emptied; therefore, the magnitude of power behind this promise is astounding. God promised that His Spirit would be spilled out and emptied on all flesh.

To clarify the concept of the outpouring on all flesh, the Lord spoke more detail through Joel. “Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions” (Joel 2:28). This text gives us a distinct picture that the outpouring is going to elevate the normal experience of God’s people into a level of prophetic expression. Stamps writes, “This outpouring will result in a charismatic flow of the Spirit and prophetic manifestations among God’s people.” In other words, Moses’ heart cry will be answered. The people of God will all be filled with the Spirit of God and speak prophetically.

Another observation that can be made from this text is that the outpouring is inclusive regardless of generation or gender. Isaiah 44:3 includes generations with the mention of the word “offspring,” but no mention is particularly made in reference to female inclusion. Jack P. Lewis observes, “All will participate without regard to gender, age or rank; and then Moses’ wish . . . will be realized.” McLean states,

Notice that the promise is not a change of activity or of the quality of the activity of the Spirit of God. A change in the quantity or scope of the activity is prophesied. The radical nature of the promise is clearly seen from the inclusion of daughters and male and female slaves. It is one thing for Yahweh to pour out His Spirit on the sons, young men, and elders of the free citizens of Israel. However, to pour out His Spirit on the chattel of the household is something quite different.

The outpouring will not be limited to the old and mature men, but will be available to the women and children as well. The inclusion of children in the passage is an indication that this is something that will be passed from generation to generation in conforming to the pattern of Deuteronomy 6:7, where God instructs the Israelites to pass on the commandments to the children.

Joel’s prophecy goes on, “And also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my spirit” (Joel 2:29). This additional information makes the promise even more inclusive. If the servants and handmaids receive the same outpouring as everyone else then the barrier of social class is effectively erased. In addition to the erasing of the social class, it must be understood that there were some very strict

guidelines concerning Hebrew servants. Nelson's Dictionary of the Bible comments, "Slaves were allowed to secure their freedom. Under the law, no Hebrew was to be the permanent slave of another Hebrew. After six years of service, a slave was to be released (Ex. 21:2; Deut. 15:12). In the Year of Jubilee, no matter how long a slave had served, he was to be released (Lev. 25:37-43)." Therefore, it is necessary to understand the inclusion of servants as a racial inclusion of the alien in this utterance.

When John the Baptist spoke on the subject of the promise, he did not use the same language as Joel, Isaiah and Ezekiel. He introduced the promise in terms of baptism. "I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and *with fire*" (Matthew 3:11). Baptism presents a different picture than that of outpouring. In the prophetic utterance of Joel, Isaiah, Ezekiel and John it becomes apparent that no humanly understood words can fully communicate the grandeur of the Holy Spirit's ministry, much less give us a visual illustration of His coming. Even so, John's picture is that of Jesus administering a baptism with the Holy Ghost as the element of the baptism. According to Williams,

It is important to emphasize that the expression cannot properly be rendered as "baptized by the Holy Spirit." "By" would imply that the Holy Spirit is the agent. However, it is evident that Jesus is the agent, the baptizer, not the Holy Spirit. This is especially apparent when we recall the words of John the Baptist. . . . Even as water is not the agent in water baptism, neither is the Spirit the agent in Spirit baptism. Water and Spirit are the elements in which baptism takes place.

In comparison with John's baptism, Jesus was to be the baptizer. Instead of using water as the substance of this baptism, Jesus would be baptizing in the Holy Spirit. The image is that of a person being fully immersed in the Spirit of God by the very hands of Christ.

Finally, Jesus spoke often of the promised Holy Spirit. Once He made a stark comparison between natural fathers and the Heavenly Father in His discourse on prayer in the book of Luke. He asked, "If a son shall ask bread of any of you that is a father, will he give him a stone?" (Luke 11:11). Several similar questions were asked with the obvious answer being that an

earthly father would do better than that. Earthly fathers often are willing to expend themselves to meet the needs and wants of their sons and daughters. After establishing the generous and provisional nature of earthly fathers, Jesus said, “If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?” (Luke 11:13). The only way to make a comparison like this is to do it with the perspective that an earthly father must be called evil when compared to God. Yet, even earthly fathers know what is good for their own children. How much more would God know the needs of His children? God’s answer to the inferred questions and needs is plainly this, the Holy Spirit. Matthew Henry writes,

If our earthly parents, though *evil*, be yet so kind, if they, though *weak*, be yet so *knowing*, that they not only give, but give with discretion, give what is best, in the best manner and time, much more will our *heavenly Father*, who infinitely excels the fathers of our flesh both in wisdom and goodness, give us his *Holy Spirit*. If earthly parents be willing to lay out for the education of their children, to whom they design to leave their estates, much more will our heavenly Father give the spirit of sons to all those whom he has predestinated to the inheritance of sons.

Jesus reveals that the Father earnestly desires to give the Holy Spirit. He also shows that this gift is comparable in its nature to fatherly gifts. God wants the very best for His children and the very best that He has to give us is His Holy Spirit. Jesus also makes reference to the fact that asking is necessary. The promise of the Father is limited only in that it is reserved for those that desire it.

Among the last words of Jesus before His ascension were several comments concerning the still yet future work and ministry of the Holy Spirit. In drawing to the climax of progression in this revelation of the promise of the Father Jesus adds the final element of the revelation, “And, being assembled together with *them*, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, *saith he*, ye have heard of me. For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence” (Acts 1:4-5). Here Jesus gives the added information of a definite time element. The Apostles did not know when the outpouring would occur, they were simply told that

it would be “not many days hence,” and that they were to wait in Jerusalem until it happened. The immanence of the imperative that Jesus gives surely caused an air of excitement among them for as Bruce notes, “The time was now drawing very near, said Jesus, when these words of John would be fulfilled.”

The Promise Fulfilled

“And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance” (Acts 2:1-4).

The noise on the day of Pentecost attracted a crowd that asked, “What meaneth this?” (Acts 2:12). Peter was quick with a response to the confused crowd. His answer was simple, “This is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel” (Acts 2:16). Peter had the unique opportunity of being the first to interpret the events of that memorable day. For Pentecostals, there is really no question as to what had actually occurred, but there are others that raise questions as to the interpretation of these verses.

Among the possible reasons for questioning or even flatly denying that the outpouring of Pentecost fulfills the prophecy of Joel 2:28-32 is the fact that “Joel has compressed together, in true prophetic fashion, events separated by millennia.” J. Vernon McGee relates his view with these words:

“I will shew wonders in the heavens and in the earth, blood, and fire, and pillars of smoke. The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and terrible day of the Lord come” (vv. 30–31). Was that fulfilled on the Day of Pentecost? Of course not. There were no earthquakes, no changes in the sun and moon. These will occur on “that great and notable day of the Lord.” Joel calls it, “the great and terrible day of the Lord.” The Day of Pentecost was a great day, but it was not a terrible day. It was a wonderful day!

Pentecostals and non-Pentecostals alike would not be impressed with this particular line of reasoning for the simple reason as stated above of “true prophetic fashion.” It completely ignores the principle of developmental fulfillment which “refers to the accomplishment of a generalized,

comprehensive prophecy in several progressive stages.” It also ignores telescoping prophecy which is the common understanding that prophets move from one distant moment in time to another that may be many years apart without making any differentiation between. “The telescoping that sometimes occurred when prophets blended the first and second advents of Christ is an example of this phenomenon.”

After paraphrasing the Joel passage, Watchman Nee similarly explains:

But did Peter prophesy? Well, hardly in the sense in which Joel meant it. Did the hundred and twenty prophesy or see visions? We are not told that they did. Did they dream dreams? How could they, for were they not all wide awake? Well then, what did Peter mean by using a quotation that seems scarcely to fit the case at all? In the passage quoted (Joel 2:28, 29), prophecy, dreams, and visions are said to accompany the outpouring of the Spirit, yet these evidences were apparently lacking at Pentecost. . . . What did Peter mean? Imagine him quoting God’s Word to show that the experience of Pentecost was the outpouring of the Spirit spoken of by Joel, without a single one of the evidences mentioned by Joel being found at Pentecost.

Here again the principles of hermeneutics concerning developmental fulfillment have been ignored. Peter was clearly a man of visions (Acts 10:10-17). Saying that Pentecost does not fulfill Joel on the grounds that Peter did not have a vision is like saying that Jesus in the manger does not fulfill the Isaiah 53 passage because there were no stripes on His back while He was being born. Also, it might be noted that Pentecostals firmly believe that tongues are a form of prophetic utterance and in particular when they are interpreted (or in the case of Acts 2, understood naturally) that they are equal to prophecy. Commenting on 1 Corinthians 14:5 Williams notes, “In this same verse Paul makes it clear that when the interpretation of tongues does occur, speaking in tongues and prophecy are equal in value.” The supposed lack of dreams, visions, and prophecy on the day of Pentecost would propose that Joel was looking for a single unrepeated event that is finished on the day it began. The generational nature of the prophecy in and of itself prevents that interpretation from being valid.

Another reason for questioning Pentecost as a fulfillment of Joel is the absence of the word “fulfillment” in Peter’s speech. Watchman Nee explains,

Note carefully that Peter did not say: “What you see and hear fulfills what was spoken by the prophet Joel.” What he said was: “This is that which hath been spoken by the prophet Joel” (Acts 2:16). It was not a case of fulfillment, but of an experience *of the same order*. “This is that” means that “this which you see and hear is of the same order as that which is foretold.”

McGee again agrees with Nee. He writes,

The question arises: What did Peter mean when he referred to this passage of Scripture on the Day of Pentecost? Did he mean that the prophecy of Joel was fulfilled? No, he didn’t say that. He never claimed that this prophecy was fulfilled. . . . Peter continues, “But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel” (Acts 2:16). You will notice that Peter does not say that this is in *fulfillment* of what the prophet Joel said. . . .What does Peter say in Acts 2:16? “... this is *that* which was spoken by the prophet Joel” (italics [McGee]). He does not say it was a fulfillment of what Joel had predicted. Rather, he said, “This is *that*”—this is like that or similar to that. If you will go back in your mind to the Day of Pentecost, you will realize that Peter was not talking to Gentiles; he was speaking to Jews who were schooled in the Old Testament. They *knew* the Old Testament. They were Jews from all over the empire who had come to Jerusalem for the feast; they had traveled long distances because they were keeping what was required of them according to the Mosaic Law. Peter says to them in effect, “Don’t mock, don’t ridicule this thing which you see happening. This is like that which is going to take place in the Day of the Lord as it is told to us by the prophet Joel.”

It is interesting to observe that both writers cited above have a problem with the supposed missing word fulfillment, but are perfectly willing to insert their own qualifying words into the text.

Many non-Pentecostals disagree with McGee and Nee. Bullock writes, “With inexpressible elation the apostle Peter announced that the coming of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost had fulfilled Joel’s prophecy. The

age had dawned when all men and women would join in the prophetic ranks, when all would hear the voice of God and render obeisance to His Name.” Brooks notes, “The concept of baptism ‘with the Holy Spirit’ . . . fulfills Isa 32:15; 44:3; . . . Joel 2:28-29.” The KJV Bible Commentary reads, “Much ink has been used attempting to explain these five words, **the promise of the Father**. Various passages of Scripture make it clear that the promise of the Father (Joel 2:28; Acts 2:16) and also the promise of the Son (Jn 14:16, 26; 15:26; 16:7) were references to the arrival of the Holy Spirit of God.”

Pentecostals such as Donald Stamps view Acts 2 as the fulfillment of the Joel passage. He argues, “Christ’s baptizing His followers with [or in] the Holy Spirit . . . is the new sign by which to identify God’s people. (1) This was promised in Joel 2:28 and reaffirmed after Christ’s resurrection. . . . This prediction was initially fulfilled on the day of Pentecost.” Williams also argues,

Accordingly, the event on the Day of Pentecost recorded in Acts 2:1-4 was the fulfillment of this promise; they were all baptized in the Holy Spirit. . . . By extension, since we have noted the use of such other terms as ‘outpouring,’ ‘falling on,’ and ‘coming on’ associated with the coming of the Holy Spirit we may properly speak of all these as occurrences of being baptized in the Holy Spirit.

In this particular interpretation, Pentecostals are not alone.

In further analysis of Peter’s speech in Acts 2:14-21, it is interesting to note that in explaining to the crowd he did not refer to the recent speech of Jesus concerning the promised Holy Spirit or to the words of John the Baptist. This was likely because his audience was Jewish, or at least converts to Judaism. There is no question that popular Jewish opinion concerning John was divided (Mark 11:27-33). Quite possibly the common folk thought John was a prophet, but that was far from a settled matter in the minds of the religious authorities. The Jewish people on the day of Pentecost may not have taken a quotation from John as authoritative.

If John’s reputation was questionable in the Jewish mindset, the reputation of Jesus must have been even fully disreputable. Recalling the cover-up of the resurrection (Matthew 28:11-15), Matthew records that it had continued

to be a popular theory even at the writing of his Gospel which would have been clearly years after Pentecost.

Rather than use the words of John or even Jesus, Peter referred directly to the Old Testament as his source of interpretation. He gladly announced that what Moses had longed for, and Joel had spoken of was now reality. The Spirit of God was indeed being poured out. The promise of the Father was being realized.

In all the excitement that was taking place, Peter had another unique opportunity. He had been the first to interpret the events of the day of Pentecost, and he was also the first to expound on the promise of the Father. The outpouring was not to be a single event for those blessed to be in Jerusalem on that particular day. It was more far reaching than that. If the Spirit had been poured out only on the day of Pentecost, then that would not have constituted “all flesh” as Joel had prophesied. Peter clarified the promise with these words, “For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call” (Acts 2:39). Peter’s clear motive was to establish that the promise was to be inclusive.

There are three general interpretations concerning the promise and its fulfillment. As discussed earlier, there are those like McGee that believe the promise has not yet been fulfilled. There are others that believe that the promise of baptism with the Spirit was a one time event on Pentecost never to happen again. Bruce notes this view, “Being filled with the Spirit was an experience to be repeated on several occasions . . . , but the baptism in the Spirit which the believing community now experienced was an event which took place once for all.” Williams sharply disagrees with Bruce’s position:

From the reading of these two accounts concerning the Jewish disciples in Jerusalem and the Gentiles in Caesarea, it is apparent that the outpouring of the Spirit occurred on both occasions. There is no suggestion that the coming of the Spirit in Jerusalem was a once-for-all matter, or that somehow what happened in Caesarea was secondary or subordinate. . . . Furthermore, some additional words of Peter underscore this point; for shortly after the Holy Spirit had been poured out, Peter asked rhetorically: “Can any one forbid water for baptizing these people who have received the Holy Spirit just as

we have?” (Acts 10:47). “*Just as we have,*” Peter said; in other words, there was no real difference.

Like Williams, Pentecostals and many non-Pentecostals see a third possibility and believe that the promise is ongoing even to the present day even though they may disagree as to the nature and content of the baptism. John R. Higgins relates this view from a Pentecostal perspective:

In the context of Acts, the terms “promise,” “gift,” and “receive” used in Acts 2:28-39 are used to identify baptism in the Spirit. This promise of the Holy Spirit extends not just to those present on the Day of Pentecost but to their descendants—those far off in time and distance—even as many as God continues to call. If one has been called to salvation, that one may claim the promise of the Father, the baptism in the Spirit. . . . The Bible nowhere limits the experience of baptism in the Spirit to a certain age or group. Nearly twenty centuries after the initial outpouring of the Spirit at Pentecost, more than three hundred million believers in this generation claim to have received the “like gift,” the baptism in the Holy Spirit.

Like the prophecy of Joel, Peter makes some inclusions that merit a brief analysis. “The promise is unto you . . .” (Acts 2:39). There is no escaping the fact that Peter meant to include all hearers in the promise. Every person within the sound of his voice was to be included. In addition, the children of those present were included. This is a generational inclusion and also a geographical inclusion. The text indicates that there were people present from many different places. It must be reasoned that this promise was available to the hearers and then transferable to any who had children that were not present. Thus there was generational dissemination. Any of these men that had children that were not present would then be able to take the promise back to whatever land he had come from making this promise unlimited to geography. The inclusion of “all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call” increases the generational and geographical context. In other words, the promise is not limited to time or distance. While Bruce identifies the content of the promise as the gospel rather than that of the baptism with the Holy Spirit as Pentecostals would, he interprets the inclusive nature of the promise by stating, “The promise of the gospel was extended not only to those present on that occasion, not only to the contemporary generation but to their descendents as well, not only to the

people of Jerusalem but to those of distant lands (and, as appears later in Luke's narrative, not only to Jews but to Gentiles also)." Pentecostals maintain that the promise that Peter was speaking of is not the gospel, but rather the baptism with the Holy Spirit. Wyckoff argues, "The Pentecostal position on the availability of the baptism of the Holy Spirit evidenced by tongues begins with the Day of Pentecost. More specifically it begins with Peter's words: 'The promise is for you and your children, and for all who are far off, as many as the Lord our God shall call to himself' (Acts 2:39, NASB)."

The significance of generational and geographical inclusion in the promise is thematic in the book of Acts, and provides a backdrop for understanding the work of the Holy Spirit in the early church and throughout church history. Donald Stamps presents his claim that

the promise of the baptism in the Holy Spirit was not just for those present on the day of Pentecost (v. 4), but for all who would believe in Christ throughout this age: "unto you"—Peter's audience; "to your children" —the next generation; "to all that are afar off" —the third and subsequent generations. (1) The baptism in the Spirit with its accompanying power was not a once-for-all occurrence in the church's history. It did not cease with Pentecost . . . , nor with the close of the apostolic age. (2) It is the birthright of every Christian to seek, expect and experience the same baptism in the Spirit that was promised and given to the NT Christians.

Of the many promises that God has made in His word, Pentecostals particularly emphasize the promise of the Father, being the subsequent baptism with the Holy Spirit with the evidence of speaking in other tongues, as an experience that has been progressively revealed throughout both the Old and New Testaments. They hold that the desire of Moses, and the relevant passages of prophetic writings in Joel, Isaiah, and Ezekiel were all fulfilled on the day of Pentecost in Acts 2, and that the promise is still being fulfilled in the lives of modern Christians. Pentecostals also teach that every believer is entitled to this experience and should earnestly seek it. Stamps notes this emphasis: "The disciples devoted themselves to prayer as they waited for the fulfillment of the promise. . . . The believer today seeking the baptism in the Holy Spirit should do the same."

[Chapter 2](#)

The Evidence and Subsequent Nature of the Baptism in the Holy Spirit

For they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God.—Acts 10:46

Pentecostals teach that the baptism in the Holy Spirit is a distinct teaching in the Scriptures that should be understood as the single most important gift of God after the crucifixion and resurrection of Christ. Because of this emphasis, they believe that its place in the life of the believer and the work of the Church is significant beyond measure. Also, it is believed that it is the door through which the Church can enter into the supernatural giftedness that God intends, and the door through which believers can be both empowered for service and empowered to live the life of holiness. Much argument has been made to the claim of Pentecostals concerning tongues as initial evidence and the subsequent nature of the baptism in the Holy Spirit. In order to present the Pentecostal mindset in answer to those arguments it is necessary to consider interpretation techniques, identification of the occurrences in Acts, and the Biblical record itself in light of criticism.

[Scholarship and Interpretation](#)

With such an emphasis on the baptism with the Holy Spirit in the twentieth century, it has been discovered by some that there is a gap concerning scholarship on the subject in both the writings of those before the twentieth century and those since. John Wyckoff regrettably observes, “Many systematic theology works do not include a chapter specifically on the

subject of the baptism in the Holy Spirit. As a matter of fact, the entire area of the Person and work of the Holy Spirit has been greatly neglected.” J. Rodman Williams seems to agree. He opens his teaching on the Holy Spirit with by observing, “This area of theology is often the least comprehended. Many persons profess to some knowledge of, or about, God the Father and Jesus Christ but express much uncertainty concerning the Holy Spirit.” This may be because of the absence of scholarship in both the past and in the present. Williams says, “The role of the Holy Spirit in connection with Christ has been viewed largely as applying the benefits of Christ to the believer, whereas His further work in the Pentecostal coming has been seriously neglected.” He bases his comment on the title of Calvin’s chapter on the Holy Spirit in *Institutes*, Book III. Williams further compares modern Christians to the believers that Paul found at Ephesus in Acts 19. He states, “Most people today in a country of Christian influence, and presumably everyone in the church, have at least heard of the Holy Spirit; however, that may unfortunately be the limit of their knowledge.”

In addition to an absence of scholarship, there is also disagreement about the method and manner in which to even approach such scholarship concerning the baptism in the Holy Spirit. John Wyckoff presents some important information on this subject:

The conclusion that in Acts the baptism in the Holy Spirit is a separable experience is only the first aspect of the issue. Whether separability or even subsequence is shown to be a pattern in Acts is one matter. Whether such a pattern should be viewed as normative for doctrine and practice today is yet another matter. Is Luke only describing what happened to be the case in that historical situation? Or does he intend to teach that the pattern and character of the baptism in the Holy Spirit in his historical narrative of Acts is normative for Christian doctrine and practice? . . . The second aspect of the separability issue can then be stated as follows: Is the pattern and characteristic of the baptism in the Holy Spirit shown by Luke in Acts normative for the Church in all generations?

This question is basically one of hermeneutics. Should the interpreter value didactic materials or historical materials as having priority? Williams explains that

a proper methodology entails, whenever possible, giving priority to the narrational and descriptive over the didactic. For example, in regard to the study of the Incarnation, it is better to begin with the narratives in the Gospels before proceeding to the briefer references and interpretation in the Epistles. This is likewise true about the coming of the Holy Spirit. Since Acts is the actual record of this event, its narration is the primary place to gain perspective and understanding.

In response to those that argue for the use of didactic alone for the establishment of doctrine Williams argues, “Such an approach, I submit, reverses the proper order of understanding. Actually it is a combination of the two, the narrational or descriptive *and* the didactic, with the former having priority, that is the best hermeneutical procedure.”

Wyckoff briefly explains the view of scholars that refuse the historical materials as having any value for doctrine:

They distinguish between *historical* and *didactic* materials in the New Testament, regarding the purpose and use of each kind of material as different. They contend that historical materials are just that – historical; but didactic materials are designed and intended to teach. Historical narrative material, such as Luke’s in the Book of Acts, does not have didactic and instructional purpose. . . . Consequently, contrary to most Pentecostals, . . . [they] contend that the historical materials in the Book of Acts cannot be used to formulate normative Christian doctrine and practice.

The Pentecostal position is quite different as Wyckoff explains:

Just as Paul believed that “whatever was written in earlier times [i.e., the Old Testament] was written for our instruction” (Rom. 15:4, NASB), so Pentecostals similarly believe that whatever was written in Acts, as well as in the Gospels or the Epistles, was written for our instruction. There is sufficient reason, therefore, to conclude that Luke intended to teach Theophilus a model that he could consider normative for formulating Christian doctrine, practice and experience.

John Higgins agrees with Wyckoff's description, and briefly dismisses the notion of using only didactic materials. He writes, "It is questioned whether the Book of Acts which deals with the *history* of the Early Church should be used to teach doctrine. However, Paul teaches us that all Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for *teaching* [doctrine] (2 Ti 3:16)."

David Lim similarly points out that

Scholars, both liberal and conservative, have recognized that Luke was not simply recording history. When relating Spirit enablement for service, Luke deliberately used the same terminology (e.g., "clothed," "filled," and "poured out") as the translators of the Old Testament had when they produced the Septuagint. He did this to show the continuity of the Spirit's work from the Old Testament into the Messianic era: Pointing back to Israel's experiences of the Spirit, Luke used those experiences to teach what lay ahead in Christ's ministry and the work of the Church.

After this comment concerning the validity of Luke's writings for teaching, Lim immediately follows with a statement concerning normative experience: "Certain Luke-Acts narratives are written to describe normative features of the mission and character of God's people. This being so, his narratives have historical-theological intent."

After commenting on the accounts in the book of Acts of the Spirit being given, Higgins is not hesitant to use the narrative passages to validate normative experience. He states, "Baptism in the Spirit is considered a normative experience because it fits the teaching of Scripture." He ends the chapter by quoting the question of Acts 19:2, "Have you received the Holy Spirit since you believed?" Wyckoff also readily recognizes Luke as a source for normative experience: "The conclusion, then, is that a similar distinctive, separable baptism in the Holy Spirit experience is normative for contemporary Christian experience."

Another consideration to take into account is the intent of the author. Was Luke writing for the purpose of teaching or was he strictly giving a historical narrative void of instruction? In order to understand the intention of Luke in Acts, it is important to remember that Acts is the second book in the Luke – Acts series. F. F. Bruce observes, "The purpose of Acts cannot be considered in isolation from the purpose of Luke's Gospel. The two

parts, for all their stylistic differences, make up an integral whole, with one coherent purpose.” With that in mind W. A. Criswell states the purpose of the Gospel of Luke in these terms: “In addition, the prologue (1:1–4) can be interpreted to mean that Theophilus was not yet a Christian (hence Luke’s purpose would be evangelistic), or that he was a new Christian who needed to be strengthened in the faith (hence Luke would have a didactic purpose).” Higgins also observes that “in recent years a number of biblical scholars have recognized the theological character of Luke’s historiography.” Wyckoff observes, “Taking this position, Pentecostals study the accounts in Acts where Luke relates historical incidents in which individuals evidently experience the baptism in the Holy Spirit. . . . Luke the theologian’s material is acknowledged as a valid source for standard Christian doctrine and experience.”

Identification of the Biblical Occurrences

With the Pentecostal position on hermeneutics defined to include both narrative and didactic passages, the actual occurrences may be considered. As was mentioned in the first chapter, the baptism in the Holy Spirit was spoken of by John the Baptist. He spoke in terms of baptism to give a visual understanding of the spiritual reality that was soon to take place. He said of Jesus, “He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire” (Luke 3:16). The picture is that of Jesus performing a baptism with the Holy Spirit being the element into which the believer is submerged. Pentecostals along with others teach that this experience occurred five times in the book of Acts. Higgins identifies the five occasions as Pentecost, the outpouring on the Samaritans, Saul, the household of Cornelius, and the disciples at Ephesus. The obvious problem is that no direct mention is made of baptism in the Spirit in any of those passages. How do Pentecostals arrive at this conclusion?

At the opening of Acts 11, after Peter went to the home of Cornelius he went back to Jerusalem. F. F. Bruce observes, “When Peter arrived home, then, he was immediately taken to task by ‘those who were of the circumcision.’” Some of the Jewish believers were not happy with Peter’s recent excursion into the home of a gentile. Peter recounts the incident and

includes an interpretation that is relevant to the current topic in Acts 11:15-17. He said,

And as I began to speak, the Holy Ghost fell on them, as on us at the beginning. Then remembered I the word of the Lord, how that he said, John indeed baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost. Forasmuch then as God gave them the like gift as *he did* unto us, who believed on the Lord Jesus Christ; what was I, that I could withstand God?

Bruce understands Peter's reference to the baptism with the Holy Ghost to identify the experience with both Caesarea and Pentecost. He claims,

The words of the risen Christ to his disciples, "John indeed baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit in a few days' time" (1:5), were quickly fulfilled in Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost, but as Peter saw what took place in the house of Cornelius, and heard those Gentiles speak with tongues and magnify God, the words came afresh to his mind, and he recognized that now they were being fulfilled anew.

By this interpretation, Peter clearly aligned the terminology of "baptized with the Holy Ghost" to the incidents of Pentecost and Caesarea. According to Williams, "Although the expression 'baptized in the Holy Spirit' is not directly used in either account (Acts 2 or Acts 10), it is apparent that both occasions were baptisms in the Holy Spirit."

Donald Stamps, true to Pentecostal norms, uses the terms "baptized in the Spirit" and "filled with the Spirit" interchangeably. He claims, "To be baptized in the Spirit means to be filled with the Spirit." On the day of Pentecost Acts 2:4 records, "And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost." He comments on this verse: "Through this baptism in the Spirit . . ." thus equating "filled" with "baptized." In connecting these two terms it is possible for him to claim that "Paul's experience parallels that of the disciples at Pentecost." In Acts 9:17, Ananias uses the same terminology as Acts 2:4 in relation to the experience: "Brother Saul, the Lord, *even* Jesus, that appeared unto thee in the way as thou camest, hath sent me, that thou mightest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost." Williams claims that "the experience of Saul of Tarsus was like that of the disciples at Jerusalem who were also filled with the Spirit."

Similarly, Peter's identification of the baptism with the Holy Spirit at the house of Cornelius causes a parallel concerning terminology. In the Caesarea account Acts records, "While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word." Interestingly, similar wording is used of the Samaritans in Acts 8:15-16: "Who, when they were come down, prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Ghost: (For as yet he was fallen upon none of them: only they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.)" Williams comments, "Hence, by implication the Holy Spirit fell on them also, and as a result the Samaritans received the gift of the Holy Spirit. . . . Hence, in both Samaria and Caesarea the promise of the Holy Spirit was truly fulfilled."

The account of the disciples at Ephesus still then remains. In the account there are two terms mentioned to validate the experience. Paul's original question in Acts 19:2 uses the word "receive:" "Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed?" Later in the passage the experience is described in these terms: "And when Paul had laid *his* hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them." The word "receive" was also used in Samaria. John and Peter had come from Jerusalem to Samaria so that the Samaritans "might receive the Holy Ghost" (Acts 18:15). What the Samaritans "received" was no doubt what Paul wanted the Ephesians to "receive." In addition, the terminology "came on," gives a reference to the words of Jesus in His statement of the promised baptism in Acts 1:8, "But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you." Thus the Ephesians also shared in the experience of the baptism with the Holy Spirit. As has already been mentioned in chapter 1, according to Williams, "By extension, since we have noted the use of such other terms as 'outpouring,' 'falling on,' and 'coming on' associated with the coming of the Holy Spirit, we may properly speak of all these as occurrences of being baptized in the Holy Spirit."

Evidence

With the occurrences identified, consideration concerning the question of evidence can be given. What exactly is the Biblical evidence that the baptism with the Holy Ghost had occurred? In reading the writings of various commentators and Bible teachers, it becomes obvious that there is

much disagreement and even possibly confusion concerning this topic, and yet the Pentecostals agree that the Bible is quite clear about it. Brief analysis of the five recorded narratives of the baptism with the Holy Spirit in the book of Acts will reveal the Pentecostal perspective of evidence.

The Day of Pentecost

And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance. –Acts 2:1-4

The day of Pentecost was the first outpouring of the Spirit. This particular day marked the inauguration of the Church that Jesus promised that He would build. McGee states, “The Book of Acts records the beginning of the church, the birth of the church.”

It is significant that Jesus inaugurated the Church with an outpouring of the Holy Spirit. Brumback notes,

It was not an accident that God chose Pentecost as the day upon which to send the Holy Spirit, to make manifest the merits of the atoning work of the Lord Jesus Christ, and to reveal that the time for dealing with Israel as a nation was now supplanted by the dispensation of the Church. This day, fraught with its memories of new beginnings, provided a perfect background for the birthday of the Church.”

The Lord indeed chose a significant day to begin a significant work, the Church. Expectedly, there is significance to every detail of the happenings on that particular day. There were supernatural signs, anointed preaching, explosive expansion, and also confusion and mocking. Limiting the scope of this section it will be necessary to consider only one question. What was the evidence that made it known that the Holy Spirit had indeed been poured out? In order to do this it will be necessary to consider each of the three observable phenomena that occurred.

Looking at the outpouring on the day of Pentecost there are three observable phenomena that could easily serve as evidence that the Holy Spirit had been given. There was a sound from heaven like a rushing mighty wind, cloven tongues like fire, and speaking in tongues. Stamps observes, “At Pentecost there were three observable manifestations that the Holy Spirit was descending upon the 120 disciples in fulfillment of Acts 1:8.” Each of these could easily be seen as evidence.

Stamps refers to the sound of wind as an “audible manifestation.” He observes, “There was a sound ‘as of a rushing mighty wind’ (v. 2) as a prophetic sign that the Holy Spirit was coming in ‘power’ . . . Note that the Hebrew and Greek words for Spirit (Heb *rauch*; Gk *pneuma*) also have the meaning of ‘wind.’ Wind is one of the Biblical symbols for the Holy Spirit.” Bruce also observes the correlation between wind and the presence of the Spirit: “What is certain is that the wind was held to symbolize the Spirit of God. . . . Whatever else may be said about the disciples’ experience, this at least is clear: the Spirit of God came on them in power.”

In addition to identifying the sound of wind as an “audible manifestation,” Stamps refers to the tongues of fire as a “visual manifestation.” He notes, “There also appeared visibly ‘cloven tongues like as of fire’ (v. 3) that rested on each of the disciples as a prophetic symbol that the Holy Spirit was coming to empower them to be fiery, contagious witnesses for Jesus.” Bruce also identifies the visual and audible natures of the two signs: “The manifestation of the Spirit’s advent was visible as well as audible.” Williams argues that “Here is the fulfillment of the promise: ‘He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire.’ This fire in the mouth and on the tongue would consume the chaff and make salvation possible as the gospel was proclaimed. Thus the Holy Spirit and fire are closely and vitally related.”

Even though the power and relevance of each of these phenomena is quite substantial as evidence for the baptism in the Holy Spirit, looking forward in the book or Acts, they are not repeated. According to Brumback, “The Pentecostal experience is a pattern.” Even though there is no questions that both the sound of wind and the tongues of fire served as evidence on the day of Pentecost, neither could be argued as evidence going forward as normative evidence. If, as Brumback argues, there is a pattern, it cannot possibly be the sound of wind or the tongues of fire.

The third evidence on the day of Pentecost was tongues. John R. Higgins explains, “As a result of being filled with the Holy Spirit they all began to speak in a language other than their own (Ac 2:4). . . . The technical term, 'glossolalia,' has been coined from *glossai* (tongues) and *laleo* (to speak). As the Holy Spirit enabled them, those filled with the Spirit began to speak languages previously unlearned and unknown to them.” This phenomenon of tongues is what Brumback refers to as the pattern: “There its initial oncoming was signaled by utterances by the one hundred and twenty in languages never learned by them. It is our belief that the speaking in tongues on that occasion formed the pattern for every similar baptism or charismatic enduement.”

Brumback raises a significant question that he says Pentecostals are often asked: “What about the wind and fire at Pentecost? Why should the speaking with other tongues be singled out of the three supernatural manifestations as the initial physical evidence of the baptism with the Holy Ghost?” There are three basic answers to the question. The first has to do with timing. Williams argues that after the baptism was given, the “primary activity” was tongues, and therefore, it is the evidence:

it is clear that the *primary activity* consequent to the reception of the Holy Spirit was that of speaking in tongues. We focus on the word “primary,” because although other things were mentioned, speaking in tongues was first. . . . It follows that the speaking in tongues was clear evidence that the Holy Spirit had been given. Speaking in tongues was *the* evidence in Jerusalem.

Brumback answers the question and along with Williams notices that the tongues came after the baptism rather than before as had the other two signs. He argues,

The “sound as of a rushing mighty wind” and the “cloven tongues like as of fire” were accompaniments of the Holy Spirit in His official descent from heaven and in His outward and visible revelation of His presence. These demonstrations had occurred before Pentecost; whereas speaking in tongues . . . was distinctly a Pentecostal and post-Pentecostal experience. The wind and the fire were outside the disciples themselves and in the realm of nature: but the Galileans themselves spoke with other tongues. The wind and

fire preceded the filling of the believer; speaking in tongues, however, came as a result of the filling.

The second answer is that tongues was repeated. Wyckoff claims that this is the factor that leads Pentecostals to see tongues as a pattern:

Pentecostals believe their conclusions about tongues being the initial physical evidence of the baptism in the Holy Spirit is based on Scripture, especially the book of Acts. In three cases where Luke records details of individuals experiencing being baptized in the Holy Spirit, speaking in tongues is clearly evident. Competent exegetes then, including most non-Pentecostal scholars, quickly acknowledge that Luke was speaking of the supernatural manifestation of tongues in these three cases. Pentecostal scholars furthermore maintain that Luke revealed a *pattern* in these three cases—a distinctive experience of the Spirit evidenced by speaking in tongues.

In addition to the repetition, the fact that the wind and fire were not repeated is significant. Brumback answers the question again with these words: “The wind and fire were never repeated after this occasion; on the other hand, speaking with tongues is the recorded accompaniment of several subsequent fillings with the Spirit in the Book of Acts.”

Brumback also gives a third answer to the question. He argues,

We would also point out the superiority of tongues over these first two signs. As we have mentioned, the wind and the fire were natural forces, not of human volition. Now consider the speaking in tongues. Here the Lord must deal with the human will which He recognizes as sovereign, and which He will not set aside. To exert His will and power is not enough; He also needs the voluntary surrender of man to bring about the perfect manifestation. And in the case of the speaking in tongues, man must yield not only his will, but also his whole being—his physical, mental, vocal and spiritual faculties.

David Lim interestingly discusses what he calls “the incarnational nature of the gifts.” This would, of course, include tongues. He claims that there are two basic misunderstandings: one is to say that gifts are entirely supernatural and the other is to say that they are primarily natural abilities.

He claims that “if the gifts are neither all natural nor all supernatural, what is their nature? At the point where the supernatural (all of God) meets the natural (all of man), the gifts begin. *The gifts are incarnational.*” While not directly speaking of the occasion of Pentecost, Lim’s argument seems to elaborate on Brumback’s third answer. Tongues, therefore, arise as the evidence that is primary after the infilling, repeated in the Scriptural record, and are incarnational in nature.

[The Samaritans](#)

Now when the apostles which were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John: Who, when they were come down, prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Ghost: (For as yet he was fallen upon none of them: only they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.) Then laid they *their* hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost. –Acts 8:14-17

By making some observations in this text it is easy to notice that early on, the priority of the Apostles was to secure the blessing of the baptism in the Holy Spirit for the Samaritans. The very first thing recorded when they arrived is that they prayed that they might receive the Holy Spirit. This was not prayer for salvation. Interestingly there does not seem to be any hesitance on the part of the Apostles to accept the Samaritans. This was probably because of the various times that Jesus had taken them to that area. Thus they did not hesitate to seek the infilling for the Samaritans that they themselves had enjoyed at Pentecost.

At the laying on of the Apostles’ hands, the Samaritans received the Holy Ghost, but no description is given concerning any outward signs. Brumback notes, “One striking feature of the Scriptural narrative of this reception of the Spirit is the absence of any mention of tongues. This would appear to be a fatal blow to the view . . . embraced by Pentecostalists today.” Before discussing this topic, Brumback makes an inflaming comment concerning critics: “It seems that the critics of Pentecost are so happily proclaiming the absence of tongues that they do not take time to read what the record does say.” Brumback wrote this almost fifty years before John F. MacArthur, Jr. writes, “What about tongues? Believers spoke in tongues in Acts 2, 10, and 19, but there is no record of tongues in chapter 8.” Based on this he argues,

“The point is clear. To say that the book of Acts presents the normal pattern for receiving the Holy Spirit presents a problem: no consistent pattern is evident in Acts!” Then only a few pages later he admits that “it is interesting that in Acts 8 there is no mention of tongues or fire or the sound of wind, although some supernatural sign must have occurred, as indicated by Simon’s reaction (8:18-19).” He does not propose what that sign might have been, however. Other non-Pentecostals are in agreement with MacArthur. Criswell claims, “If speaking in tongues is the final and most convincing evidence that people are filled with the Spirit, this incident should have reflected it. However, they [the Samaritans] did not speak in tongues.” Some non-Pentecostals do not make such bold claims as MacArthur and Criswell. Bruce hesitates to name tongues as present in the Samaritan account, but maintains that the external manifestation was the same as Pentecost:

it is clearly implied that their [the Samaritans] reception of the Spirit was marked by external manifestations such as had marked his descent on the earliest disciples at Pentecost. . . . Whether the external signs which accompanied the reception of the Spirit on this occasion were identical with the Pentecostal signs or not, they were at any rate of so impressive a nature that Simon Magus craved the power to reproduce them at will.

Other non-Pentecostals evade the topic entirely. Neither McGee, nor the KJV Bible Commentary, nor the King James Study Bible even mentions the subject of what Simon saw.

In spite of this line of reasoning, Brumback claims that “the Pentecostal ‘evidence doctrine’ can be sustained despite the absence of mention of tongues here. Since all courts will accept circumstantial evidence as support for a case, we propose to submit circumstantial facts here as proof that tongues were present, even though they were not included in the report.”

Before continuing with Brumback’s “circumstantial facts” there are other’s that have contributed thought that is relevant to this argument. David Lim observes,

Simon perceived the Holy Spirit was given (Acts 8:18). A total perception is indicated by the Greek word *idon*, which could include seeing and hearing. Although his heart was wrong, he could clearly

see and hear that something unique was occurring. Although tongues is not mentioned in Acts 8, most commentators readily admit that what Simon perceived was speaking in tongues.

Wyckoff summarizes the Pentecostal thought with these words:

Although Luke did not choose to state it, Pentecostals *also* believe tongues was likewise manifested in the other cases of initial baptism in the Holy Spirit in Acts. For example, Pentecostals maintain that the Samaritan believers (Acts 8:4-24) spoke in tongues like the 120 on the Day of Pentecost, the household of Cornelius, and the Ephesian disciples.

Williams also argues,

In the case of Samaria, speaking in tongues, while not specified, seems clearly to be implied. . . . What Simon saw, in all likelihood, was the Samaritans speaking in tongues, something extraordinary beyond his previous abilities in the realm of the occult. . . . That the Samaritans spoke in tongues was the most logical reason for his request. Both the word structure in Acts 8:18-19 and the context imply that the Samaritans spoke in tongues.

In a footnote after this quotation, Williams quotes four commentators that discuss the context and the word structure and come to the same conclusion. He then ends with a statement of his own, "There can be little doubt that the Samaritans spoke in tongues."

Higgins also claims that there is "implicit support" for the Samaritans speaking in tongues through the account of Simon. He argues, "In addition to the three Scripture passages mentioned above [Acts 2, 10, and 19] which explicitly link glossolalia with baptism in the Spirit, the following two passages provide implicit support for tongues as evidence of Spirit baptism."

It seems clear that Brumback is by no means alone and possibly not even in a minority of thought in finding "circumstantial facts." According to him,

We would notice first that the enduement of power given to the Samaritans was of the same charismatic character as that of the disciples at Pentecost. It was a definite, sudden inspiration experience. . . . Such language is not used to describe a quiet,

gradual experience, nor is it used to depict a work of the Spirit which is only spiritual and invisible.

As he continues his argument he asks, “Now what did Simon see? What manifestation did he witness that made him eager to possess the power to impart this Gift? . . . It is our conviction that Simon witnessed the *glossolalia*. This miracle of utterance was entirely new to him, and would arrest his attention as nothing else.”

Brumback’s third line of argument is that “Six Jewish brethren were convinced that ‘on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost’ only when they heard them speak with new tongues. Why should we believe that the brethren from Jerusalem, especially Peter (Acts 10), would require any less proof in this earlier instance at Samaria?”

Lastly, “to prove that we are not alone in our belief that the Samaritans spoke in tongues upon receiving the Holy Spirit,” Brumback makes quotation of 22 commentators that agree with his position. In particular he mentions that, “their testimonies will be lacking in prejudice, for they lived and wrote long before this Twentieth Century Pentecostal Revival.” One of those commentators listed by Brumback is Matthew Henry. According to Henry,

How they advanced and improved those of them that were sincere. It is said (v. 16), *The Holy Ghost was as yet fallen upon none of them*, in those extraordinary powers which were conveyed by the descent of the Spirit upon the day of pentecost. They were none of them endued with the gift of tongues, which seems then to have been the most usual immediate effect of the pouring out of the Spirit. See ch. 10:45, 46. This was both an eminent sign to those that believed not, and of excellent service to those that did. This, and other such gifts, they had not, *only they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus*, and so engaged in him and interested in him, which was necessary to salvation, and in this they had joy and satisfaction (v. 8), though they could not speak with tongues.

Brumback, however, does not make quotation of Henry’s full comment. Henry further claimed, “They laid their hands on them, to signify that their prayers were answered, and *that the gift of the Holy Ghost was conferred*

upon them; for, upon the use of this sign, they received the Holy Ghost, and spoke with tongues.”

Brumback’s case is strong enough that even in his own words he claims,

We conclude this chapter by saying that we do not enter our conjectures as positive proof that the Samaritans spoke in tongues, but we submit these facts and testimonies as circumstantial evidence supporting what is definitely stated in other instance. The burden of proof would most certainly seem to lie upon those who assert that speaking with tongues was not present on this occasion.

Saul of Tarsus

And Ananias went his way, and entered into the house; and putting his hands on him said, Brother Saul, the Lord, *even* Jesus, that appeared unto thee in the way as thou camest, hath sent me, that thou mightest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost. And immediately there fell from his eyes as it had been scales: and he received sight forthwith, and arose, and was baptized.—Acts 9:17-18

Once again, just as in the case of the Samaritans, we see the noticeable absence of specific mention of tongues, and once again, there is argument as to what that absence may imply. The Pentecostal doctrine of initial evidence is at stake and the claim of Pentecostals that the entrance into Spirit-gifted ministry is through the experience of baptism in the Holy Spirit with evidential tongues is determined by the outcome.

According to MacArthur, “Interestingly, Acts 9 does not mention that Paul spoke in tongues at that time. Yet later he told the Corinthians that he spoke in *languages* [emphasis added] more than all of them (1 Cor. 14:18).” After reading this, one might wonder why he would use “tongues” in the first sentence and “languages” in the second. There is no question that MacArthur’s observation of the absence of tongues is correct, but his bias is equally obvious. Brumback agrees with the factual information that MacArthur presents. Brumback observes,

Again we Pentecostals are confronted with the absence of tongues in the narrative. Again we are reduced to the task of securing

circumstantial evidence. Our non-Pentecostal friends are particularly happy over this instance, for there are no implications whatsoever in the historical record that Paul's infilling with the Spirit was accompanied by tongues.

At least, MacArthur addresses the issue; other commentators choose simply to ignore the question of evidence entirely as it relates to this passage.

In careful observation of the text, however, there may be made an interesting observation that is crucial to the argument of Pentecostals: the text does not specifically describe Paul's infilling with the Spirit. In answer to a critic that pointed out the absence of tongues, Brumback makes his case:

Acts also fails to tell us that Paul was filled with the Spirit? It is true that Ananias put his hands on him, and said, "Brother Saul, the Lord, even Jesus, that appeared unto thee in the way as thou camest, has sent me, that thou mightest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost." But what saith the next verse? "And immediately there fell from his eyes as it had been scales: and he received sight forthwith, and arose, and was baptized." Not a single word about his reception of the Spirit? . . . If our non-Pentecostal friends insist on emphasizing the absence in the record of Paul's speaking in tongues, we can say, just as logically, that he was not filled with the Holy Ghost at that hour. How could there possibly be any mention of tongues in the narrative, when there is a complete absence of mention of the experience of which the speaking in tongues is but a part?

Another strong argument against those that would argue against Paul speaking in tongues in Damascus is 1 Corinthians 14:18. "I thank my God, I speak with tongues more than ye all." Clearly, Paul testified that he indeed did speak with tongues. Stamps claims, "Paul himself testifies that he frequently spoke in tongues. . . . Although not stated explicitly, the likelihood is that his initiation into speaking in tongues occurred when he was filled with the Spirit."

The KJV Bible Commentary fails to mention evidence, tongues or anything related to the argument in relation to Acts 9:17, but on 1 Corinthians 14:18 it states, "Paul possessed the gift of tongues. It is interesting that this is the

only place that he makes mention of it.” It is indeed interesting that they would bring this point to light following the statement of 1 Corinthians 14:5, “I would that ye all spake with tongues.” There could only be one possible reason for including this comment. In opposition to this line of thought, Higgins claims,

A second passage that implicitly supports tongues as the evidence of baptism in the Spirit is the account in Acts 9 of Paul’s being filled with the Spirit. . . . While the context does not indicate whether or not Paul spoke in tongues at this time, it is certain that he did at a later time. His own testimony was “I thank God that I speak with tongues more than all of you” (1 Co 14:18). Since Paul did speak with tongues and we have a pattern of glossolalia accompanying Spirit baptism it is reasonable to conclude that, following the pattern, Paul began to speak in tongues when he was filled with the Spirit.

Brumback also comments on the same subject. He claims,

At the time that Paul was writing the First Epistle to the Corinthians it is certain that he possessed the gift of tongues (1 Corinthians 14:18). This being so, there must have been a first time when he was given this miracle of utterance. The logical place for this primary experience would have been, as in the case of all the other apostles, at the hour when he was filled with the Spirit.

[The Household of Cornelius](#)

While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word. And they of the circumcision which believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost. For they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God. Then answered Peter, Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we? –Acts 10:44-47

The experience of Cornelius is the first reference to the baptism in the Holy Spirit being received by gentiles. In this passage, the presence of tongues is not in question. The argument shifts, however, to the significance of such.

The non-Pentecostal argument is that the tongues in Acts 10 were for a sign alerting the Jewish believers that *salvation* had come to the gentiles. According to MacArthur,

Had there been no visible evidence of the Holy Spirit, Peter and the others would not have been as quickly convinced that Gentiles were now a part of the body of Christ. As it was, the Jewish believers saw an irrefutable demonstration that these Gentiles were in Christ. Peter immediately concluded that they should be baptized (10:47). Obviously Peter was equating receiving the Holy Spirit with salvation.

McGee argues similarly, “The tongues were an evidence to Simon Peter and the others with him that God would save the Gentiles and would give to them His Holy Spirit. Peter later relates this as evidence that these Gentiles had believed on the Lord Jesus Christ and that God had granted repentance unto life also to the Gentiles.” The KJV Bible Commentary states, “It is a unique, one-time-only occurrence which was designed to show the Jews the validity of Gentile salvation.”

Proverbs 18:17 says, “*He that is first in his own cause seemeth just; but his neighbour cometh and searcheth him.*” David Lim does exactly that to the argument presented above:

The Gentiles had the same experience of speaking in tongues as the disciples at Pentecost. . . . Because of this, Peter was able to determine that they, too, had received the baptism in the Holy Spirit.

He was not amazed that Gentiles could become believers; the Old Testament had foretold that. But just as Jews expected Gentiles to become proselytes, so most Jewish Christians before the Jerusalem Council of Acts 15 would naturally have felt that Gentile Christians needed to embrace Jewish practices. Peter and the Jerusalem church shared that bias.

Consequently, Peter was amazed that Gentiles . . . could receive the Holy Spirit “just as we [Jews] have” (Acts 10:47).

Donald Stamps also speaks of the occasion. He argues that the purpose of the outpouring was the same as Pentecost, “power.” He states: “The coming of the Holy Spirit upon Cornelius’s household has the same purpose as the

gift of the Spirit had for the disciples on the day of Pentecost. This outpouring does not describe God's work of regeneration, but His coming on them for power." In his discussion of the occasion at the home of Cornelius, McLean observes, "This work of the Holy Spirit includes the indwelling of the Holy Spirit at salvation and the subsequent baptism in the Holy Spirit."

Brumback counters the argument that Peter needed tongues to signal salvation. He notes, "After hearing Cornelius' testimony at Caesarea, Peter did seem to grasp the fact that the Gentiles were to be included in the new kingdom." The passage indeed indicates that Peter had, with the help of the vision, made a decision that he was not going to withhold the message of the gospel from the gentiles or call them unclean (vv. 28, 34-35). Peter did not need more evidence that God had ordained this meeting.

[The Disciples at Ephesus](#)

And it came to pass, that, while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul having passed through the upper coasts came to Ephesus: and finding certain disciples, He said unto them, Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed? And they said unto him, We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost. And he said unto them, Unto what then were ye baptized? And they said, Unto John's baptism. Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus. When they heard *this*, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. And when Paul had laid *his* hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied.—Acts 19:1-6

In Ephesus there was some obvious confusion related to the work of Christ and John's Baptism, but several things are made very clear. After these men had been "baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus," Paul laid his hands on them and they received the Holy Spirit. It is not surprising to see tongues manifested once again.

Of the attempts by non-Pentecostals to explain in a way that refuses the pattern Pentecostals uphold why these men spoke in tongues, the most popular attempt lies in the effort to dispensationalize the whole of the Acts

accounts. The KJV Bible Commentary summarizes this view, "Like the other transitional groups in Acts, the original disciples, the Samaritan believers, the Gentile converts, and now these wandering followers of John the Baptist, each new group receives the baptism of the Holy Spirit in a dramatic outward manner, resulting in speaking in tongues." Bruce apparently agrees with this theory. He argues, "Ephesus was to be a new center for the Gentile mission . . . and these twelve disciples were probably to be the nucleus of the Ephesian church. By this exceptional procedure, then, they were integrated into the church's missionary program." Gundry summarizes this view well: "It is notable that the four occasions in Acts when the Holy Spirit was bestowed in spectacular manner had to do with the entrance of different groups into the church: the original Jewish believers (ch. 2), the Samaritans (ch. 8), the Gentiles (ch. 10), the half-taught disciples in Ephesus (ch. 19)."

Pentecostals see a significant problem with this view: the disciples at Ephesus do not constitute a new group of outreach. It is easy enough to argue that the Jews were one group and that the Samaritans and the gentiles were each distinct groups, but there is no such racial or ethnic availability for such a claim with the Ephesians. According to Lim,

Tongues . . . did not serve that purpose in Ephesus. The issue at the time of Paul's third missionary journey could not have been that of the acceptance of Gentiles within the Church. That issue would have been essentially resolved through the Jerusalem Council of A.D. 47 and the vast numbers of Gentiles already in the churches.

It is also important for us to notice that these men of Ephesus do not constitute a new outreach of the baptism in the Spirit because Paul's visit to Ephesus in Acts 19 was his second visit (Acts 18:19-21). In addition, Paul had already stayed in Corinth for a year and a half (Acts 18:11). It is unreasonable to think that Paul had not brought the doctrine of the baptism in the Holy Spirit to the Corinthians at that time considering his extensive handling of the topic of tongues and spiritual gifts in 1 Corinthians 12 and 14.

Brumback seems to lose patience with critics on this passage. He argues,

This is the third case in which it is recorded that those receiving the Spirit spoke with tongues. It seems that our friends who offer a

dispensational explanation for the other two cases . . . are at a loss to explain the appearance of tongues at Ephesus. There was no racial significance here; indeed, no special purpose at all to which they can attribute the phenomenon. . . . But it must be manifest even to these teachers that its very existence weakens their whole dispensational theory.

Subsequence

In addition to the controversy over evidence, there is also controversy over what Pentecostals teach as the doctrine of subsequence. Is the baptism in the Holy Spirit subsequent to salvation? Is it a separate and independent experience, or is it part of the regeneration that all believers share? In researching this question, it is found that it is as divisive in and of itself as the matter of tongues as evidence.

Divergent Stances

There are two basic views concerning the very nature of the baptism in the Holy Spirit. Many non-Pentecostals teach that every believer receives the baptism in the Holy Spirit at conversion. Some non-Pentecostals and virtually all Pentecostals teach that the baptism in the Holy Spirit is not part of the conversion experience but rather a secondary work that is subsequent to conversion. Wyckoff relates,

One of the major differences among theologians regarding this experience called baptism in the Holy Spirit has to do with its relationship to regeneration. . . . Some argue that it is part of the conversion-initiation experience; others hold that it is an experience that is in some sense distinct from regeneration. This issue is stated as follows: Is there available to the believer today an experience commonly called the baptism in the Holy Spirit that is in some sense distinctive and unique in relationship to the conversion-initiation experience?

Billy Graham presents the basic argument from the bias of those that teach that the baptism in the Holy Spirit takes place at conversion. He relates,

Many years ago when I was attending a small Bible school in Florida, I visited what was called a “brush arbor revival meeting.” The speaker was an old-fashioned Southern revival preacher. The little place seated about two hundred people and was filled. The speaker made up in thunder what he lacked in logic, and the people loved it.

“Have you been baptized with the Holy Spirit?” he asked the audience during the sermon.

Apparently he knew a great many in the audience because he would point to someone and ask, “Brother, have you been baptized with the Spirit?” And the man would answer, “Yes, bless God.”

“Young man,” he said, spotting me, “have you been baptized with the Holy Spirit?” “Yes, sir,” I replied.

“When were you baptized with the Holy Spirit?” he asked. He had not questioned the others on this.

“The moment I received Jesus Christ as my Savior,” I replied. He looked at me with a puzzled expression, but before going to the next person he said, “That couldn’t be.”

But it could! It was.

I do not doubt the sincerity of this preacher. However, in my own study of the Scriptures through the years I have become convinced that there is only one baptism with the Holy Spirit in the life of every believer, and that takes place at the moment of conversion.

Thus Billy Graham’s experience illustrates the divergence. He is by no means alone in this opinion. Criswell simply states that salvation is equal to baptism in the Holy Spirit: “‘At hand’ means that God is about to act to bring both judgment (‘baptize with fire’) and salvation (‘baptize with the Holy Spirit’). This is to be accomplished by Him ‘who is coming after me’ (v. 11).”

The KJV Study Bible agrees with Criswell. It states,

That this baptism is common to all believers at Corinth is implied by the fact that Paul does not exhort them to be baptized by the Spirit. Rather, he asserts that they have all been baptized. The believer does

not tarry or pray for this baptism. It occurs at the moment of regeneration. This passage is clear that all believers have received the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

The KJV Bible Commentary says the same thing almost word for word. It states, "That this baptism is common to all believers at Corinth is implied by the fact that Paul does not further exhort them to be baptized by the Spirit. Rather he assumes that they have all been baptized. The believer does not tarry or pray for this baptism. It occurs at the moment of regeneration." Once again the baptism in the Holy Spirit is defined as regeneration.

Criswell again argues, "Asked about his baptism, John the Baptist replies that while he administers the sign, i.e., baptism in water, the One who comes after him, Jesus Christ, alone can bestow the thing signified, i.e., the regenerating power of the Spirit (v. 13)."

John MacArthur dramatically protests the doctrine of subsequence. He argues,

Not only have believers been placed into Someone (Christ), but they have had Someone placed into them (the Holy Spirit). As Christians we have the Holy Spirit. Our bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 6:19). God himself indwells our bodies (2 Cor. 6:16). All the resources we need are there. The promise of the Holy Spirit has already been fulfilled for us. The Bible is absolutely clear on that point. There is nothing more to wait for. The Christian life consists of yielding to the control of the Spirit who is *already* in us. We do that through obedience to the Word (Col. 3:16).

McGee writes similarly. He observes, "In the present age of the Holy Spirit, the Holy Spirit comes upon every believer. Not just *some*, but *every* believer is baptized by the Holy Spirit, which means that the believer is identified with the body of Christ; that is, he becomes part of the body of Christ. This is one of the great truths in the Word of God."

All of the above authors in this section define the baptism in the Holy Spirit as either part of or synonymous with regeneration. Pentecostals of necessity disagree, but even many non-Pentecostals teach that the baptism in the Holy Spirit is a separate and distinct work of God apart from salvation.

In an effort to refute the Pentecostal position, John MacArthur summarizes the Pentecostal viewpoint well. He observes,

One reason experience is the touchstone for charismatics is their undue emphasis on the baptism of the Holy Spirit as a post-salvation experience. . . . Charismatics generally believe that after someone becomes a Christian, he or she must seek diligently for the baptism of the Spirit. Those who get this baptism also experience various phenomena, such as speaking in tongues, feelings of euphoria, visions, and emotional outbursts of various kinds. Those who have not experienced the baptism and its accompanying phenomena are not considered Spirit-filled; that is, they are immature, carnal, disobedient, or otherwise incomplete Christians.

MacArthur's last sentence may be in relation to Brumback's position on those that either in the past or present have not experienced the Pentecostal experience. Brumback proposes that "the saints referred to earlier in the chapter were exceptional men, having a conception of truth and consecration deep enough to walk in the power of the experience which they did receive." Overall, Brumback is very complimentary toward these men. He regards their lives and words with reverence. He does, however, view their experience as "limited by the time in which they lived." In regard to the modern non-Pentecostals he refers to them as "present-day Apolloses," but even so in the context of respect for the high quality of Apollos. Never does he even hint that these are "immature, carnal, disobedient, or otherwise incomplete Christians" as MacArthur claims charismatics say.

The definition of MacArthur basically aligns to what Pentecostals would claim for themselves; however, there is a grievous injustice in the last sentence. Pentecostals do not generally claim that those who have not received the baptism are "immature, carnal, disobedient, or otherwise incomplete Christians." In fact, many Pentecostals are very careful to guard against such thinking. According to Higgins, "Like non-charismatics, Pentecostals recognize that every true believer receives the Holy Spirit at salvation. . . . One is born of the Spirit at regeneration and the indwelling of the Spirit of holiness begins to produce the fruit of Christian character." Donald Stamps claims, "At conversion believers are indwelt by the Holy

Spirit and come under His sanctifying influence.” This clearly indicates that Pentecostals overall do not claim the last portion of MacArthurs argument.

Pentecostals do, however, teach, as MacArthur has noted, that the baptism in the Spirit is a “post-salvation experience.” Higgins again observes, “The Bible speaks of another experience of the Spirit which is in addition to and subsequent to salvation which has become identified as ‘baptism in the Spirit.’” According to Menzies, this understanding was present even in the precursors of the modern Pentecostal movement. He claims that Charles Parham “had become convinced that there was a supernatural experience available to believers in addition to regeneration and sanctification.” This position has been maintained to the present. Williams notes, “The final background factor for the coming of the Holy Spirit is the occurrence of salvation. Those who turn to Christ in true faith and thereby enter into a new life in His name may receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. Against the background of salvation, however worded, the Holy Spirit is given.”

Criswell completely ignores the Pentecostal claim. He states, “The reference to baptizing with the Holy Spirit and fire is understood by some to refer to one act, that of purification by the Holy Spirit as the fire burns away impurity. Others understand two acts: baptism with the Holy Spirit for those who are saved, and baptism with fire for those who are damned. The context suggest two acts.” He does not even mention that there are many others, both Pentecostal and non-Pentecostal that see a work of the Spirit between the “two acts” that he has mentioned. Martin Lloyd-Jones argues, “They say the church was baptized with the Holy Spirit once and for ever on the day of Pentecost at Jerusalem and everybody who believes at regeneration is baptized into the church. There is utter confusion there.”

Charles Finney taught a subsequent baptism with the Spirit. In speaking of his mentor minister he writes, “He had fallen short of receiving the baptism of the Holy Ghost, which is indispensable to ministerial success.” Watchman Nee identifies similar experiences as “the gift of the Holy Ghost.” Even though he believed the gift to have been given at conversion, he still identified it as a second gift that some believers have not realized. He observes,

Have you repented? Have you testified publicly to your union with your Lord? Then have you received remission of sins and the gift of

the Holy Ghost? You say you have only received the first gift, not the second. But, my friend, God offered you two things if you fulfilled two conditions! Why have you only taken one? What are you doing about the second?

According to Donald Dayton two women began to believe that Moody was lacking a Pentecostal experience. “When they approached Moody with a report of their prayers, he invited them to pray with him regularly on Fridays. Their prayers brought a great hunger to Moody’s soul. . . . Resolution of this struggle was to come while Moody paced the streets of New York as he was about to leave for England.” Afterward, Dayton relates that “Moody had a sure instinct for avoiding controversy and kept his public statements, some have suggested, deliberately vague, especially on disputed issues.” Dayton goes on to relate that even so, Moody taught an experience that related to power for service consistently in his preaching.

Although Andrew Murray does not specifically identify the baptism in the Holy Spirit, it is clear that he teaches some kind of post-conversion experience with the Spirit:

These thoughts suggest to us the great danger of the Christian life—seeking to know the truth of God in His word without the distinct waiting on the Spirit of Truth in the heart. . . . How many Christians there are who could confess that their knowledge of divine truth does but little for them: it leaves them powerless against the world and sin; they know little of the light and the liberty, the strength and the joy the truth was meant to bring.

[Scriptural Occurrences](#)

Finney, Nee, Moody, Murray, and Lloyd-Jones all describe an experience of the Spirit of God subsequent to conversion, but they themselves were not Pentecostals. Pentecostals concur with their thinking. The only difference is that Pentecostals insist on tongues as evidence. Otherwise the language is the same. Where do Pentecostals and others get such strong conviction concerning the subsequent nature of the baptism in the Holy Spirit?

According to Wyckoff, “Usually, both those who deny and those who affirm that the baptism in the Holy Spirit is separable from regeneration

recognize the importance of Scripture as the ultimate authority.” He also observes, “Much, though not all, of this discussion focuses on the Book of Acts. Certainly, there are relevant passages in other areas of Scripture. However, scholars on both sides of the issue generally agree that the doctrine of separability depends largely on the Book of Acts.”

Wyckoff observes the Scriptural argument of both sides:

Those who believe that the baptism in the Holy Spirit is a distinctive experience usually contend that in these cases the individuals were already believers who had experienced regeneration *before* – at least momentarily – their Holy Spirit baptism experience. Therefore, they say Luke shows that the baptism in the Holy Spirit is a distinct experience. Further, they hold that Luke intends to teach that a distinctive, separable baptism in the Holy Spirit experience is normative for Christian experience in all times. Those who deny separability contend that if the experience seems to be separable and distinct because it appears to be subsequent in these Acts cases, this is due to the unique historical situation during the initial stages of the Church. Luke, they say, is not intending to teach that a separate, distinct baptism in the Holy Spirit experience is normative for Christian experience during later stages of the Church.

According to him, the question is, “Do the Acts texts listed above show that, for the individuals in these incidents, the baptism in the Holy Spirit was a separable and distinct experience in relationship to their conversion, or regeneration, experience? Pentecostals answer yes.”

Before examining the Scriptures on this topic a clear definition must be given concerning the necessary ingredients for salvation. The Apostle Paul records in Romans that there are two basic essentials of salvation. Romans 10:9 says, “That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.” According to the KJV Bible Commentary, “Salvation must entail faith in One who is Lord. Confession of the lordship of Christ presupposes the incarnation, death, and resurrection of the Lord.” The necessary ingredients for salvation are generally attested to by both non-Pentecostals and Pentecostals alike. The KJV Study Bible defines salvation similarly: “*Salvation* is the most common biblical expression used to

identify the subjective changes in people's lives, when by faith they have received the benefit of the Christ's death and resurrection." Criswell states, "The concept of salvation is as profound and extensive as God Himself. But the method of securing that salvation is simple enough for a child. Anyone who calls upon God will be saved." In summary, both faith and a verbal statement of a confessional nature are all that are necessary. Pentecostals take this simple formula and apply it to the occurrences in the book of Acts to determine whether conversion and the baptism in the Spirit are the same. Once again it will be necessary to examine the five occurrences.

The Day of Pentecost

Were the disciples saved before Pentecost? According to Wyckoff, "The 120 on the Day of Pentecost were believers before the outpouring of the Spirit on that day. Prior to this event they had already repented and entered into a new life in Christ." Interestingly, McGee agrees,

I personally believe that at the moment our Lord breathed on them, and said, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost," these men were regenerated. Before this, they had not been indwelt by the Spirit of God.

This expression "breathed on them" occurs only one other time in the Bible. In Genesis, God breathed into Adam the breath of life. I believe here that Jesus Christ breathed into these men eternal life by giving them the Spirit of God.

Cho makes a strong argument that the disciples were saved even before the cross. He claims,

Before Jesus' death His disciples had already received eternal life, for Jesus called them in person and they obeyed Him, believing that He was the Son of God.

Jesus said, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life" (John 5:24). Jesus also testified in John 13:10 that His disciples were all clean except Judas Iscariot. And when the seventy disciples returned from preaching and told Jesus how the devils were subject to them, Jesus admitted that the seventy disciples had already received everlasting life (see Luke 10:20).

John MacArthur using the same references confirms Cho's conclusion:

Charismatics point out that the apostles and other disciples who experienced the baptism and tongues in Acts 2:1-4 had already been saved. Here at Pentecost they were receiving the power of the Holy Spirit, which they would use to change the world.

On those points the charismatic view cannot be faulted. We can be certain that the disciples mentioned in Acts 2—at least some of them—*had* experienced salvation. . . . How do we know that some of them were already saved? Jesus had told His apostles, “Rejoice that your names are recorded in heaven” (Luke 10:20) and “You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you” (John 15:3). There is no doubt that he was affirming their salvation.

Williams places the reception of regeneration on the night of the resurrection rather than before the cross. He argues,

The coming of the Spirit that Jesus promised is not to be confused with Jesus breathing on the disciples and saying, “Receive the Holy Spirit” (John 20:22). This insufflation of the Spirit occurred on the day of Jesus' resurrection; Jesus had not yet gone “away.” . . . The resurrected Lord breathed the Holy Spirit into the disciples for the restoration of life – regeneration.

He continues,

It is important to emphasize that the Holy Spirit would later come to the disciples as a newborn community of believers. To some extent the disciples had been believers for about three years; they had followed Him and even did miracles in His name. But it was not until the resurrection of Jesus that faith was firmly established. . . . It was only the appearance of the resurrected Jesus (as all the Gospels report) that changed their disbelief to faith. It was on Easter evening that disbelief and doubt were at last completely dispersed: the Spirit was breathed into them, and they became a community of living faith. As such a community—reborn, regenerated, redeemed from abject disbelief and despair—they would later experience the coming of the Holy Spirit.

Donald Stamps also states this position:

The impartation of the Holy Spirit by Jesus to His disciples on resurrection day was not the baptism in the Spirit as experienced at Pentecost (Acts 1:5; 2:4). It was rather the disciples' initial new covenant experience of the regenerating presence of the Holy Spirit and the impartation of new life from the risen Christ. . . . That John 20:22 refers to regeneration can be inferred from the phrase, "he breathed on them." The Greek word for "breathed" . . . is the same verb used in the Septuagint . . . at Gen 2:7, where God "breathed into his [Adam's] nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul." . . . That is, just as God breathed into physical man the breath of life and he became a new creation (Gen 2:7), so Jesus now breathed on the disciples spiritually and they became a new creation in the new covenant sense.

The Samaritans

Even if those who disagree with the notion that the baptism in the Holy Spirit is subsequent to salvation recognize the regenerative state of the disciples on Pentecost, they often do not allow such to be the case for the other occurrences in Acts. Cho relates,

Some people agree that the believing disciples needed the baptism of the Holy Spirit, but they say that was only because they were believers before Pentecost. The argument goes that any believer since that Pentecost when the Church was born and the Holy Spirit descended receives the baptism of the Holy Spirit at the time of conversion. But New Testament accounts show such a theory to be wrong.

McGee is one who claims that the Samaritans were not saved prior to the arrival of Peter and John, "When the apostles heard that there was a great moving of the Spirit down in Samaria, they sent Peter and John to check on it. They found a great company of professing believers who had not been born again. They had not been baptized into the church by the Holy Spirit. They were not saved. They had gone through an outward ceremony."

The KJV Bible Commentary likewise refuses subsequence in Samaria, however, unlike McGee, there is clear contradiction in their comments. They state, "When the news of Philip's preaching and the subsequent

conversion of the Samaritans reached Jerusalem, it was necessary for the Jewish church there to send their two key representatives in order to investigate these ‘conversions.’” There may be implication that they doubt the conversions by including quotation marks, but no direct statement is made. They end their comment by saying, “Every believer is baptized into the body of Christ the instant he believes (I Cor 12:12–13). Subsequent baptisms of the individual by the Holy Spirit are unknown in Scripture.” There is no comment concerning their conclusions and, therefore, there is clear conflict within their text.

Other non-Pentecostals readily admit to subsequence in the case of the Samaritans, but do not allow that subsequence to be normative. John MacArthur observes, “The Samaritans had been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus, but they had not yet received the Holy Spirit. Clearly, subsequence *is* present here, but this incident cannot prove that subsequence is the rule for the entire age.” Bruce also recognizes subsequence in Samaria. He states, “The Samaritan converts, although baptized by Philip ‘into the name of the Lord Jesus,’ had not at the same time received the gift of the Holy Spirit.”

Wyckoff states, “The Samaritans had already come to faith in Jesus Christ and had been baptized in water by Philip before Peter and John prayed for them to receive the special gift of the Holy Spirit.” Concerning the Samaritans Cho contends,

The account goes on to say that a great number of men and women believed the gospel and were baptized. But the next passage says that though they believed and were baptized, they were by no means baptized with the Holy Spirit. . . . This indicates that to believe and to be born again is distinctly different from receiving the Holy Spirit.

Williams agrees,

The Samaritans’ reception of the Holy Spirit through the ministry of Peter and John has already been noted (Acts 8:14-17). Some time before this occurred Philip had “proclaimed to them the Christ” (v. 5), and as a result the Samaritans came to faith and were baptized. . . . Their baptism betokened repentance and faith, through which they entered into salvation. Their conversion to Christ, accordingly, was the background for their later reception of the Holy Spirit.

Saul of Tarsus

The occurrence of Saul's conversion is another point of contention. Was Saul converted before he was baptized or was it all one event? Wyckoff argues, "Paul's case is clearly subsequent. He had been converted and had become a new man in Christ at the time of his vision on the Damascus road. Three days later he received the Spirit in a new and special way when Ananias prayed for him."

Cho relates, "Acts 9:15-17 tells a vivid account of Paul's conversion and experience of being filled with the Holy Spirit, which didn't happen simultaneously." After recounting the story he adds,

Having heard the voice of the Lord Jesus, Saul fell to the earth and confessed that Jesus was the Lord. He went into Damascus a different man, obeying God. Saul fasted and prayed for three days. From this we see that he had become a new creature in Christ. Then Ananias put his hands on Saul and prayed that he be filled with the Holy Spirit, which he was.

The KJV Study Bible relates the subsequence of Paul's baptism:

Ananias was a common name among the Jews, which in its Hebrew form was Hananiah. Three men have this name in the New Testament. The most important of the three was the disciple from Damascus whom God used to minister to Saul (Paul) after his conversion. Paul describes him as "a devout man according to the law," with a good testimony before others (22:12). When Ananias laid hands upon Saul, he received his sight and was filled with the Holy Spirit.

This is a direct conflict with their note on 1 Corinthians 12:13 cited above where they claim that the baptism in the Holy Spirit "occurs at the moment of regeneration. This passage is clear that all believers have received the baptism of the Holy Spirit." And yet they state that Paul received it after conversion.

McGee brings an unusual interpretation concerning this occurrence. He refuses subsequence of the baptism, but differentiates between the baptism and filling of the Spirit. He claims,

Saul is to receive his physical sight. Also, he is to be filled with the Holy Spirit. He is to be filled with the Holy Spirit for service. This is the experience which reveals itself in the life of the believer. He was baptized with the Holy Spirit on the Damascus road. In other words, he was saved on the Damascus road. But it wasn't until this man Ananias came to him that he was filled with the Holy Spirit. He is going to become a witness for the Lord Jesus. He will receive his physical weight and his spiritual sight.

Clearly McGee has confused the baptism in the Spirit with salvation to the point that he refers to "filling" as being for power rather than baptism. Jesus, however, promised a "baptism" for power (Acts 1:5, 8).

Billy Graham agrees with McGee's position. He argues, "All who come to know Jesus Christ as Savior share in that experience and are baptized with the Spirit the moment they are regenerated. In addition, they may be filled with the Holy Spirit; if not, they need to be." Graham does not explain what he means, however.

Williams strongly argues Paul's converted state prior to his baptism with the Spirit: "It was at the moment of the vision vouchsafed to Paul on the road to Damascus that he became a new man in Christ. As one converted, saved, made new—whatever the language—Paul later received the Holy Spirit." Pentecostals would agree with his position.

The Household of Cornelius

The Household of Cornelius is the fourth occurrence to be examined. This one stands out particularly because of the clear implication in the text that the gentiles were baptized with the Spirit on the same occasion as their conversion. In this case, it is hard for Pentecostals to argue subsequence, however, is subsequence really the point? MacArthur rightly observes, "No interval passed between Cornelius's trusting Christ and his receiving of the Holy Spirit." It seems that the doctrine of subsequence is extinguished by this one observation, but what do the Pentecostals say?

Wyckoff explains,

The fact that Luke clearly describes incidents in which the "parts" of Christian experience are separated by time is a point in favor of the

Pentecostal position. Nevertheless, Pentecostals need not focus so intently upon *subsequence* to make their point for *separability* and *distinctiveness*. Subsequence puts the emphasis on following in time or order. Separability refers to the quality of being dissimilar in nature or identity. And distinctiveness has to do with being discrete in character and purpose or both. So subsequence is not absolutely essential to the concepts of separability and distinctiveness. Events may be simultaneous, yet separable and distinctive if they are dissimilar in nature or identity. They are also distinctive if they are discrete in character and/or purpose. . . . Whatever its time relationship to these other works, the baptism in the Holy Spirit is a separable and distinctive work of the Spirit.

David Lim also prefers to use separation rather than subsequence. Concerning the house of Cornelius he states,

They had experienced the Holy Spirit—apart from any other qualification—at the same time they were saved. Before Pentecost the disciples had believed; at Pentecost they were filled: The Baptism in the Holy Spirit was an additional experience. Cornelius’s household was saved and filled at the same time. Peter implies that the experience of this gift, as at Pentecost, was separate from salvation (Acts 11:17).

Williams also comments on the happenings in Caesarea. His terminology is “background” which may or may not imply subsequence. It would certainly allow for a simultaneous experience. He argues,

So it was that these Gentiles repented and believed, for in later words regarding this incident the apostles and brethren in Jerusalem declared, “Then to the Gentiles also God has granted repentance unto life” (Acts 11:18). Against the background of their repentance and faith (to return to the event in Caesarea), the Holy Spirit came: “While Peter was still saying this [the words about belief and forgiveness], the Holy Spirit fell on all who heard the word” (Acts 10:44). . . . The relevant point here is that it was the Gentiles’ “repentance unto life,” i.e., their salvation, that was background for the reception of the Holy Spirit.

Wyckoff observes,

Certainly Pentecostals can acknowledge that in Cornelius' case he experienced regeneration and the baptism in the Holy Spirit on the same occasion. Also, even if the 120 were not Christians in the New Testament sense until the Day of Pentecost and even if the Ephesians were only disciples of John before Paul prayed for them—in all three cases the recipients received a distinctive experience of the baptism in the Holy Spirit. This is true because, again, subsequence is not absolutely essential to separability and distinctiveness. However, Pentecostals can present a strong argument not only for separability and distinctiveness, but also for subsequence in the cases of the Samaritans and Paul. The important point to note is this: The fact Luke shows that the experience of the baptism in the Holy Spirit *can be* subsequent serves to underscore that it is a separable and distinctive experience.

Interestingly, after making such a strong case for separability and distinctiveness over subsequence Wyckoff relates his own personal view in a footnote: “I hold that the 120 on the day of Pentecost had experienced New Testament regeneration prior to that day and the Ephesians disciples were full-fledged Christians before Paul arrived in Ephesus. Also, logically, Cornelius could have experienced regeneration momentarily before he experienced being baptized in the Holy Spirit.”

If indeed as Wyckoff states, Pentecostals are arguing that the baptism in the Holy Spirit “*can be*” subsequent, then the issue as to whether it was or was not in Acts 10 is really no issue for them. Their opponents are then faced with a far greater challenge. Proving that subsequence is not the normative experience would be one thing. Proving that subsequence is not possible is entirely another. Yet many of their opponents still attempt to do so. In such an effort there is often much confusion. oH

An example of such confusion is easily seen in the account provided by the KJV Study Bible. In an effort to explain the baptism in the Holy Spirit they contradict themselves and clearly confuse baptism with the Holy Spirit and regeneration:

The baptism of the Holy Spirit is an act whereby the individual believer becomes united with Christ. Even though the *effects* of the Holy Spirit are realized at a believer's conversion, which is thus

experiential, the baptism of the Holy Spirit is not experiential. . . . There are four biblical answers to this question: The theological answer states the baptism of the Spirit is the effect of the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ and that the believer is united with Christ by this baptism (Gal. 2:20).

This clearly describes the experience of John 20:22. It would certainly be difficult to explain how the disciples on resurrection evening did not experience the “effect of the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ and that the believer is united with Christ,” on that night. Even so, their very next sentence states, “Initially, the baptism of the Holy Spirit occurred on the Day of Pentecost when the new church was baptized in the Spirit (Acts 2:2). Personally, a Christian is baptized in the Spirit at the moment of conversion (v. 13). As the believer submits to water baptism, he testifies of the baptism of the Holy Spirit (Rom. 6:4–6).”

The Disciples at Ephesus

The last occasion that is under dispute concerning subsequence is Acts 19:1-7. Were these disciples believers when Paul found them or were they still unconverted? As has already been noted, John Wyckoff believes that they were believers in the fullest sense. Most Pentecostals would agree, but even if they were not converted when Paul arrived, is that the real issue?

Billy Graham makes an attempt to explain the occurrences in the book of Acts even though he freely confesses the personal difficulty he still has with them. He states,

Paul visited Ephesus and found twelve professing disciples who had not received the Holy Spirit. On regarding this passage the question immediately arises: Were these twelve people true Christians before their meeting with Paul? They seemed to be ignorant about the Holy Spirit and Jesus. Also they talked about John’s baptism. Certainly, Paul did not recognize their earlier baptism sufficient grounds for calling them believers. He had them undergo water baptism in the name of Christ.

Probably thousands of people had heard John or Jesus during the previous few years. John’s baptism had made a deep impression on

them, but during the intervening period of time they probably had lost all contact with the teachings of both John and Jesus. Thus again we have a unique situation. . . .

However, we must still deal with Acts 19:6. . . . In my thinking, this does not suggest a second baptism with Spirit subsequent to a baptism with the Spirit at regeneration. Rather, it appears that they were regenerated and baptized with the Spirit at the same time.

In Graham's analysis, there is an obvious exclusion to the context of Acts 19. David Lim relates, "Apollos had taught about Jesus accurately enough, but he had known only John's baptism (Acts 18:24-28)." Gundry, like Lim, connects the context of Acts 18 to Acts 19. He contends that "Paul . . . found some disciples who, like Apollos, knew only the baptism of John. Probably they were converts of Apollos." In addition, Graham's interpretation is clearly marked with the inclusion of two distinct *baptisms* in the Holy Spirit. In other words, he does not see how they could have been baptized in the Holy Spirit for regeneration before they were baptized in the Holy Spirit. Pentecostals do not teach this at all. His bias is clearly stated before the comment above,

I have suggested that all believers have the Holy Spirit, who comes to dwell within them at the time of their regeneration or conversion. However, some have urged that the Book of Acts gives us several examples of people who did not receive the Holy Spirit when they first believed. Instead, some contend, these incidents indicate that a baptism with the Spirit occurs subsequent to our incorporation into the body of Christ.

Not all non-Pentecostals are in agreement, however, concerning the spiritual state of these Ephesians. In spite of the fact that the KJV Study Bible declares that, "Personally, a Christian is baptized in the Spirit at the moment of conversion," they comment on Acts 19 1-5:

This incident is unique in that here are 12 men whom the text presents as believers who are, nevertheless, rebaptized. They, like John the Baptist, had received Christ and were baptized. But they knew nothing of the church age or the coming of the Holy Spirit, even though these had happened 20 years earlier. Paul deems it

necessary to rebaptize them. The evidence that they had already been saved is substantial.

John MacArthur disagrees. He presents his case that the disciples in Ephesus were not converted prior to Paul's visit:

Again there is no subsequence, no interval between salvation and Spirit baptism. Some charismatics and Pentecostals would like to claim that these people had been believers in Christ prior to the encounter recorded here, but a study of the text shows clearly that they were not. . . .

The disciples at Ephesus were not Christians. They were believers in the Old Testament sense. The sum of their spiritual knowledge stopped with John the Baptist, and somehow they were not familiar with the ministry of Christ. . . . They had not yet heard anything about Jesus Christ.

Once again, the context of Acts 19 is ignored.

As stated above, David Lim is quick to observe the context of Acts 18:24-28. In addition he argues,

Some argue that the Ephesians were not Christians when Paul came. But the word "disciple" is not used of followers of John the Baptist after his death, for they became disciples of Jesus (see also the usage of the word "disciple" in Acts 6:1; 9:10; 16:1). The disciples in Achaia (Acts 18:27) were clearly believers, for they "by grace had believed." Why would not the disciples in Ephesus (Acts 19:1) be in the same category of believers? Evangelism of the lost does not include the question of receiving the Holy Spirit.

Bruce insists that the very use of the word "disciple" has relevance. He makes his suggestion that

when the men are called "disciples" without further qualification, that (in accordance with Luke's usage) seems to mean that they were disciples of Jesus. Had Luke meant to indicate that they were disciples of John the Baptist (as has sometimes been deduced from v. 3), he would have said so explicitly. How they acquired their knowledge of Jesus can only be guessed. . . . But when they heard of him, they believed in him. This is at least implied in Paul's question.

Bruce continues to bring more light to the context:

More particularly, since they had received John's baptism, they would presumably have been told that John's baptism was preparatory, in view of the approach of one who was going to baptize with the Holy Spirit. If so, they did not know that Jesus, in whom they had believed, was the one who would administer this baptism with the Holy Spirit, or that this baptism had been inaugurated.

The non-Pentecostals, like MacArthur above, that attempt to prove that the disciples at Ephesus were not saved when Paul arrived fail to consider that many times Pentecostals are willing to concede that argument in favor of another. There are many Pentecostals that do not argue that point at all, but rather contend that their conversion clearly preceded their water baptism and thus their baptism in the Spirit.

Higgins expresses this view:

Since these were disciples of John the Baptist, who had to be introduced to the message and work of Christ, it has been questioned whether the reception of the Spirit refers to their conversion or a subsequent experience of the Spirit. Pentecostals hold that the Holy Spirit came upon them as a separate experience, though very soon after their conversion. . . . A receiving of the Holy Spirit *subsequent* to salvation is also supported by the context. When Paul discovered these Ephesians were John's disciples and not followers of Christ, he taught them of Christ and exhorted them to believe on Him. Then in Acts 19:5 these new disciples are baptized in water in the name of the Lord Jesus. Presumably they were baptized by Paul or one of his co-workers. Before he would have baptized them Paul certainly would have been satisfied that they had truly believed and were converted. Not until they had believed and were baptized in water did Paul lay hands on them and the Holy Spirit came upon them.

Williams similarly observes,

Finally, in the case of the Ephesians who received the Holy Spirit through the ministry of Paul, it is apparent that they had come to faith in Christ. . . . "On hearing this, they were baptized into the

name of the Lord Jesus” (vv. 4-5). This was clearly the hearing of faith through which they received salvation, else Paul would not have baptized them. Following this, “when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Spirit came on them” (v. 6). Thus, once again, the occurrence of salvation was the background for their receiving the Holy Spirit.

David Lim notices the same thing:

Even if one insists that the Ephesians were not full believers when Paul first arrived, they clearly would be after he had them baptized in water. That act preceded his laying hands upon them and their speaking in tongues and prophesying. The Early Church expected a separate, distinct, and vital experience of an enablement of power in the Holy Spirit. Spirit reception for the Ephesians was similar to the Samaritans: an experience separate from salvation.

One final argument needs to be addressed concerning the account in Acts 19. Neither outcome jeopardizes the Pentecostal view concerning subsequence in this passage, but it is pertinent to the argument for subsequence in general. Should Paul’s question in Acts 19:2 be translated as “since” or “when” you believed? The KJV translates it as “since,” but it is overwhelmingly outnumbered by the newer translations that use “when” (i.e. NIV, NASB, NKJV, CEV, NRSV, LB). Which is best, and why is it important? If “when” is used, then those that contend for one simultaneous event can at least attempt to argue the matter, otherwise, their argument is lost. Either translation would be sufficient for the Pentecostal stance seeing that subsequence is not in jeopardy in the context, but nonetheless, many still argue for “since.” An observation that might be worthy of note is that the KJV is the only version listed that predates this controversy.

McGee contends,

“Have ye received the Holy Ghost *since* ye believed?” is a poor translation. Both verbs *receive* and *believe*, are in the same tense. The American Standard Version translates the verse more accurately: “Did ye receive the Holy Spirit when ye believed?” Paul is asking them, “When you believed, did you receive the Holy Spirit?”

The KJV Bible Commentary agrees,

The Greek participle should be translated “when you believed” rather than “since ye believed” (AV). This passage does not imply that one receives the Holy Spirit after salvation, since the rest of the New Testament makes it clear that the Holy Spirit is received at the time of salvation and that every true believer has received the Holy Spirit, or been a partaker of the Holy Spirit.

In spite of the fact that they contend that the disciples were saved before Paul’s arrival (see above), the KJV Study Bible also agrees with this position:

Paul’s question here is better translated, “Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?” The manner and time of the receiving of the Holy Spirit in the Book of Acts does not follow a set pattern. Therefore, to base one’s beliefs on any one passage in this transitional book is precarious. (Note 2:4; 8:15–17; 9:17, 18; 10:44; 13:48, 52; 16:31–34; 18:8; 19:6.) Rather, we must listen to what the apostles understood concerning these circumstances. Follow the consistent teachings of the apostles rather than their diverse experiences. Every person at the moment of his salvation receives the Holy Spirit without the laying on of hands and without any outward sign.

Most Pentecostals do not agree with this interpretation. Donald Stamps argues,

“The literal translation of Paul’s question is, “Having believed, did you receive the Holy Ghost?” “Having believed” (Gk *pisteusantes*, from *pisteuō*) is an aorist participle, which normally indicates action prior to the action of the main verb (in this case, “receive”). Thus we may render this: “Did ye receive the Holy Ghost after ye believed?”

It is interesting to note that while the NIV uses “when” there is a footnote that suggests “after” would be appropriate.

Higgins agrees with Stamps. He contends,

The grammatical construction of the question “Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?” involves a Greek verb (received) with an aorist participle (having believed). While the question may be translated “Did you receive . . . when you believed?”, it may be

preferable not to view the two actions of “belief” and “receive” as coincident. . . . Thus the question would be “Did you receive . . . *since* (or after) you believed?”

David Lim also speaks on this subject: “In this case the action of the aorist participle in Greek should be taken as preceding the main verb: They had already believed. Have they now received? The context indicates that this is a possible usage of the aorist participle.”

After having reviewed the views of both Pentecostals and non-Pentecostals in the areas of hermeneutics, evidence, and subsequence it is found that in spite of much argument, Pentecostals make strong points concerning each of these important issues. Pentecostals continue to teach that the workings of the Spirit as they define them are still available today for modern believers. They also contend that this rich experience has its precursors in the early Old Testament and the pre-Pentecost New Testament and that the full manifestation has been enjoyed at Pentecost, in the post-Pentecost Church, and in the modern movement.

Chapter 3

The Dispensations of the Spirit

But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth. –Acts 1:8

Primarily, the Spirit is outpoured on the Church for the empowerment of believers. Many people deny the Holy Spirit His primary work by relegating the supernatural manifestations to the Apostolic Age of the first century, and unfortunately it is to their detriment. Like the people of Nazareth that were denied the miracles of Jesus because of unbelief, many churches deny themselves great blessings because they do not believe in the supernatural power of the Holy Spirit today. In a radio broadcast Pastor Bob Coy of Calvary Chapel Fort Lauderdale [2006?] made this observation:

When you look at the Church at large across the United States of America, I think you will agree with me that the churches that embrace the doctrine of the Baptism of the Holy Spirit are the churches today where some amazing and mighty things are going on. And what you will also see, and this is a sad note, that the churches that do not embrace the Baptism of the Holy Spirit everything in their life is programmed and planned and sadly enough these are the same churches that are closing their doors week in and week out. There is no midweek Bible study, there's not an interest in the Word of God, there's not an interest in evangelism, it's just not happening.

Fortunately, there are many that do indeed believe in the power of the Spirit for today. Pentecostals believe it is that power that equips the Church to do the work for which she is called. They also believe that it is that power that equips believers to be effective in service, and enables them to perform

supernatural wonders. What is the basis for that belief? Does their belief have roots in the Scriptures? How do the experiences in Scripture relate to the teachings of modern Pentecostals?

[The Old Testament External Experience](#)

In the Old Testament, there is a repeated experience that needs to be investigated. Judges 3:9-10 records, “And when the children of Israel cried unto the LORD, the LORD raised up a deliverer to the children of Israel, who delivered them, *even* Othniel the son of Kenaz, Caleb’s younger brother. And the Spirit of the LORD came upon him, and he judged Israel, and went out to war.” The same experience happened to a small number of individuals in the Old Testament. What was the purpose of this experience? How can it be compared and/or contrasted to the New Testament’s Pentecostal experience?

The phrase “the spirit of the LORD,” occurs 26 times in the Old Testament. Of those times, a dozen are related to the same experience. The occurrences include Othniel (Judges 3:10), Gideon (Judges 6:34), Jephthah (Judges 11:29), Samson (Judges 13:25, 14:6, 14:19, 15:14), Saul (1 Samuel 10:6), David (1 Samuel 16:13), Jahaziel (2 Chronicles 20:14), Ezekiel (Ezekiel 11:5), and Micah (Micah 3:8). Another similar expression that occurs 14 times in the Old Testament is “the spirit of God.” Of those mentions eleven are personal experiences. The occurrences include Joseph (Genesis 41:38), Bezaleel (Exodus 31:3, 35:31), Balaam (Numbers 24:2), Saul (1 Samuel 10:10, 11:6, 19:23), the messengers of Saul (1 Samuel 19:20), Azariah (2 Chronicles 15:1), Zechariah (2 Chronicles 24:20), and Ezekiel (Ezekiel 11:24). In addition to these, Joshua experienced the Spirit at the laying on of Moses’ hands even though the particular expressions mentioned above are not given (Numbers 27:18, Deuteronomy 34:9). In observation of these occurrences, it is found that the person on whom the Spirit was bestowed was empowered. According to Lim, “The anointing of the Spirit in the Old Testament was for every ministry God desired to raise up: priests, tabernacle craftsmen, military leaders, kings, prophets, musicians. The purpose of the anointing was to equip people for service.”

Matthew Henry describes the experience of Othniel with these words: “Whence he had his commission, not of man, nor by man; but *the Spirit of the Lord came upon him* (v. 10), the spirit of wisdom and courage to qualify him for the service, and a spirit of power to excite him to it, so as to give him and others full satisfaction that it was the will of God he should engage in it.” He describes the experience of Gideon even more elaborately:

God by his Spirit put life into Gideon: *The Spirit of the Lord clothes Gideon* (so the word is), clothed him as a robe, to put honour upon him, clothed him as a coat of mail, to put defence upon him. Those are well clad that are thus clothed. *A spirit of fortitude from before the Lord clothed Gideon*; so the Chaldee. He was of himself a mighty man of valour; yet personal strength and courage, though vigorously exerted, would not suffice for this great action; he must have the *armour of God* upon him, and this is what he must depend upon: *The Spirit of the Lord clothed him* in an extraordinary manner.

The KJV Bible Commentary observes, “This section begins with the statement that the **spirit of the Lord came upon Jephthah**, clearly indicating his supernatural power as a charismatic judge-leader.” Samson is likewise empowered in the same way. Stamps comments, “Samson’s great physical strength was not his own, but was resulted from the Spirit coming upon him.”

In the first three examples men were empowered to lead the people into war. These men were supernaturally victorious against quite unlikely odds. Samson was similarly empowered for war, but with the exception that he didn’t lead anyone else. It is easily observable that Samson was a great warrior, but he was not a military leader.

Saul was another on whom God bestowed the Spirit for supernatural military prowess. Williams comments, “Saul, as a recently anointed king, heard the Ammonite threats of atrocity, and ‘the Spirit of God came upon Saul mightily’ (1 Sam. 11:6 NASB). As a result he mobilized the men of Israel and Judea to fight against the enemy.” Saul’s experience with the Spirit of God was not limited to war. Williams describes the first experience of Saul:

Saul was on occasion enabled by the Spirit to prophesy. Immediately after his anointing as king, Saul was told by Samuel (who had

anointed him), “You will meet a band of prophets. . . . Then the Spirit of the LORD will come mightily upon you, and you shall prophesy with them and be turned into another man” (1 Sam. 10:5-6). Samuel’s prediction was fulfilled shortly after, and many began to say, “Is Saul also among the prophets” (v. 12).

On a later occasion when Saul was already rejected by God, he yet again experienced the Spirit. Matthew Henry comments, “Saul himself was likewise seized with the spirit of prophecy before he came to the place. One would have thought that so bad a man as he was in no danger of being turned into a prophet.” After Saul, no mention is made of any person being specifically endowed by the Spirit in a military campaign.

Saul was not the only person that was enabled to prophesy by an endowment of the Spirit. Even his messengers were able to prophesy by the Spirit (1 Samuel 19:20). On several other occasions other men were able to do the same. Jahaziel, Ezekiel, Micah, Azariah, Zechariah, and even Balaam are all credited as prophesying under the power of the Spirit. In addition to warfare and prophesying, the Spirit was given for wisdom. Bezaleel and Joshua are examples of this kind of endowment.

The empowerment for various kinds of service is a marked characteristic of the Old Testament experience. According to David Lim,

The outpouring of the Holy Spirit is not unique to the New Testament era. The Old Testament records five major visitations of the Israelites by God. . . . The giving of the Spirit was not for salvation, but for service. In each period God anointed only key leadership for special ministries. Accompanying that anointing were the outward signs of prophecy, miracles, military prowess, and divine wisdom.

Another observable characteristic is that this experience was given to selected individuals (with the possible exception of the messengers of Saul). This was not a generalized experience that anyone could expect, but rather an experience that God sovereignly chose to bestow on an individual. Gideon must have had brothers because he was the least in his father’s house (Judges 6:15), and yet none of the brothers had the Spirit of the LORD come upon them. How many men were there in Israel when Samson and Jephthah were alive? According to Schultz, “Israel was oppressed

simultaneously by the Ammonites and the Philistines (Judg. 10:6). While Jephthah defeated the former, Samson is the hero who resisted and challenged the power of the latter.” These two were endowed by the Spirit while there is no mention that any others had the Spirit upon them. The New International Dictionary of the Bible says, “In the OT . . . the Spirit of God comes on certain men for special purposes.” Some were occasionally and sparsely selected, others were not. God is sovereign and He chooses whom He will.

In addition to the selective nature of the experience, the bestowal of the Spirit was neither permanent nor irrevocable. Again the New International Dictionary of the Bible notes, “This kind of endowment was temporary.” In the case of Samson, the Spirit came upon him on several occasions. This would clearly reveal that the Spirit was not upon him perpetually, but only briefly for certain situations. Matthew Henry describes Saul’s first experience of the Spirit: “And the Spirit of God came upon him, strongly and suddenly (so the word signifies), but not so as to rest and abide upon him. It came on so as to go off quickly.” Even one step farther than this is the observable fact that the Spirit could be grieved away entirely. Judges 16 tells the sad story of Samson’s experience at the hands of Delilah. When he was awakened with his hair being cut, he no longer had the power to overcome the Philistines. The Scripture says, “And she said, The Philistines *be* upon thee, Samson. And he awoke out of his sleep, and said, I will go out as at other times before, and shake myself. And he wist not that the LORD was departed from him” (Judges 16:20). Donald Stamps comments, “Samson is an example of those believers who think that God will remain with them even while they continue in sinful and immoral conduct. The Lord departed from this judge because of his continued disobedience.” Another example of this is found in the life of Saul. “But the Spirit of the LORD departed from Saul, and an evil spirit from the LORD troubled him” (1 Samuel 16:14). Matthew Henry comments,

He having forsaken God and his duty, God, in a way of righteous judgment, withdrew from him those assistances of the good Spirit with which he was directed, animated, and encouraged in his government and wars. He lost all his good qualities. This was the effect of his rejecting God, and an evidence of his being rejected by him. Now God took his mercy from Saul (as it is expressed, 2 Sa.

7:15); for, when the Spirit of the Lord departs from us, all good goes.

One of the cases was obviously not temporary and is noteworthy. Williams observes, “Of particular significance in David’s case was the permanence of the endowment of the Spirit—‘from that day forward.’ Regardless of what happened, either good or evil, he remained until his death the Spirit-anointed ruler over Israel.”

In all of the cases observed to this point the experience of the Spirit of God entailed the empowerment for either war or prophecy. Also, each occurrence (except David) was either temporary or as in the cases of Sampson and Saul losable. One further observation must be made: these were external experiences. Criswell observes, “The verb translated 'came upon' . . . literally means “put on.” The Spirit clothed Himself in Gideon as in a garment.” The KJV Bible Commentary says that the Spirit “clothed Zechariah.”

Vine’s has an interesting article on the word:

“to put on (a garment), clothe, wear, be clothed.” . . . is found very early in the Old Testament, in Gen. 3:21: “Unto Adam also and to his wife did the Lord God make coats of skin, and [put on] them.” As always, God provided something much better for man than man could do for himself—in this instance, fig-leaf garments (Gen. 3:7). . .

A very important figurative use of [put on] is found in Judg. 6:34, where the stative form of the verb may be translated, “The spirit of the Lord clothed itself [was clothed] with Gideon.” The *idea seems to be* [italics mine] that the Spirit of the Lord incarnated Himself in Gideon and thus empowered him from within.

Vine’s clearly is not dogmatic concerning the stated internal nature of the experience of Gideon indicating that there must be some level of doubt. In addition, the KJV translates the word 52 times as either “clothe,” “clothed,” or “clothest.” Some of those are abstract or metaphorical statements such as Psalm 93:1, “The LORD is clothed with strength,” however, the great majority of them simply refer to the external experience of putting on a

covering. None of the instances is internal. As noted above, Matthew Henry directly and clearly implies that Gideon's endowment was external.

More argument concerning the internal versus external nature of the experience comes from analysis of the situations in addition to lexical considerations. Three individuals bear mention: Samson, Saul and Balaam. Would the Holy Spirit of God indwell a person that is of questionable or even wicked character? The last recorded instance of the Spirit being bestowed upon Samson is in Judges 15:15. After that, he defiled himself with a harlot (16:1) and was involved with Delilah before it is recorded that his strength was gone and that the Lord had departed (16:19-20). In fact, he was with Delilah for at least long enough for her to persuade his secret from him, all the while supernaturally empowered with strength. Saul is another similar case. Well after Saul had backslidden and the pronouncement of the departure of the Spirit (1 Samuel 16:14), he was empowered by the Spirit to prophecy (19:23). At least in the cases of Samson and Saul both were Israelites and chosen by God. A case could even be made that each of them had at one time been somewhat godly. Balaam, however, does not share those characteristics. In addition, he was directly responsible for advising Balak to lead the Israelites into idolatry and immorality. Tim LaHaye observes, "At Balaam's suggestion, the Israelites intermarried with the Moabites, contrary to the will of God. Thus the people were polluted socially and spiritually." Morris likewise notes, "Balaam . . . was the man who after being prevented from cursing Israel, apparently advised Balak, king of Moab, that the Israelites would forfeit God's protection if he could induce them to worship idols." If in fact Balaam, Samson, and Saul had the same experience as Othniel and Jephthah, then it stands to reason that the Spirit was not inside, but rather external. The KJV Bible Commentary rightly observes that "this did not necessarily mean, in Old Testament times, that the human instrument which the Holy Spirit visited or used was always a saved individual." McGee also argues,

Someone is bound to say, "But the Spirit of God came upon Saul and he was a different man." Yes, but it does not say that he became a *new* man. After all, didn't the Spirit of God come upon Balaam? And we have no proof that he was converted. What about Judas? Christ sent out twelve disciples, and we are told that all of them

performed miracles. Did Judas perform miracles? Certainly he did.
Would you say that Judas was converted?

The KJV Bible Commentary makes this distinct summary statement: “The Spirit in the Old Testament came **upon** people, but Christ promised that the Spirit would come to live **in** people.

The Pentecost and Post-Pentecost Experience

There are some distinct similarities and differences between the experience in the Old Testament of the Spirit of the Lord coming upon an individual and the experience that is spoken of in the books of the New Testament, particularly in the book of Acts. The similarities give us insight into the current workings of the Spirit whereas the differences give us understanding of the new covenant and the work of the Spirit in the age of the Church.

Empowerment

One easily recognizable similarity is empowerment. Just as the various people of the Old Testament were empowered in various ways, when the Holy Spirit is poured out in the New Testament, believers are empowered. According to Williams,

It is apparent from Acts that Jesus intended for the same Spirit of power that rested on Him to rest also on His disciples. Thus He declared, "You shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you" (Acts 1:8). Thereby His disciples would be able to move in the power of the Spirit for the ministry that lay ahead. It would not be in the energy that the Holy Spirit provided but in the power of the Spirit Himself. The Holy Spirit would personally empower Jesus' disciples.

In comparison to the Old Testament experience McLean states that a "parallel exists between the Spirit's coming upon an individual, resulting in empowerment for an office or ministry, and the infilling of the Holy Spirit in the Church." The empowerment may take a different shape and have an entirely different purpose, but the presence of supernatural workings is similar. Most of the empowering in the Old Testament was either for war, leadership, or prophesying. In the Church, however, there is almost no empowerment for war with the exception of spiritual war which sometimes includes people (Acts 13:9-11). In the empowering of the Church most of the empowering related to offices or gifts. According to Cho, "When there is a great work to do for God, the gifts of the Holy Spirit are given to

different believers within the church, His body. These enable believers to accomplish His work and responsibility effectively and the work grows because of the gifts of the Holy Spirit.” As a result, the empowerment in the Church includes things that are completely absent or at the least only hinted at in the Old Testament (e.g. tongues, healings, and discernment), however, Mclean observes, “We see an expansion of the activity of the Holy Spirit, not a change in the quality.” In Mark 16:15-18, Jesus sums up the experience of empowerment for the Church and includes some of the new manifestations of the Spirit that had not been seen in the Old Testament:

And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned. And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover.

[Distribution of the Spirit](#)

Even though there is similarity in the empowerment of people, there is no similarity in the selection of those empowered. In reference to the first chapter on *The Promise of the Father*, Joel prophesied that there would come a day when the Spirit would be poured out on all flesh. The selection and individual bestowal of the Spirit was replaced on the day of Pentecost with a general outpouring that included “all that are afar off, *even* as many as the Lord our God shall call” (Acts 2:39). No longer was it necessary for there to be recipients and spectators, but since the outpouring of Pentecost in Acts 2:1-4, every believer can and should be a participant in the power of the Spirit. According to Cho, “The excellent and wonderful point of this prophecy is that God declared through the prophet Joel that in the future He would provide salvation not only for Israel but for everyone regardless of nation, race or status; He would give the fullness of the Holy Spirit to all peoples.” Unlike the Old Testament examples, the Spirit is poured out on those that are not leaders and are not warriors. Higgins observes,

Another difference in the work of the Spirit post-Pentecost is the enlarged field of candidates for His work. All who earnestly awaited

His coming were filled with the Holy Spirit (Ac 2:4). Previously the Spirit singled out relatively few people of God to come upon and to fill. Now the commission has been given to all to go into the whole world and preach the Gospel (Mk 16:15). The power to accomplish such a great task is now made available to all.

It is as if God has effectively erased the line that was established in the Old Testament between those that could have the Spirit and those that could not.

Temporary/Permanent Bestowal

The temporary nature of the bestowal of the Spirit in the Old Testament can be significantly contrasted to the experience of the Church. The out pouring of the Spirit on the day of Pentecost was only the beginning. Wyckoff observes,

Pentecostals contend that indeed the experience of being baptized is repeated distinctively with the evidence of speaking in tongues following the Day of Pentecost. In the Book of Acts they point to the other four incidents (Samaritan converts, Paul, Cornelius, Ephesian disciples) . . . especially the latter two cases where tongues is clearly evident.

It was not a singular event and neither was it to be temporary. The KJV Study Bible recognizes that the experience of the Church was different from that of the Judges. Their definition of the experience is completely different to that of most Pentecostals, but they recognize the clear contrast in duration:

However, the Holy Spirit did not deal with Old Testament believers in precisely the same way as with New Testament saints. This is seen from such phrases as “departed from” (1 Sam. 16:14) and “take not” (Ps. 51:11) with regard to the Holy Spirit. With Pentecost (Acts 2), the “Age of the Spirit,” in which the Holy Spirit permanently indwells all believers, was inaugurated.

It was and is to be a permanently continuing event. Williams claims,

There are a number of references in the Old Testament to the Spirit’s coming upon various persons. . . . This was largely temporary to enable a person to fulfill a certain role or function, such as judging, ruling, or prophesying. But with the outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost the situation was quite different, for the Holy Spirit came to remain.

Williams also draws attention to Isaiah 59:21. It says, “As for me, this *is* my covenant with them, saith the LORD; My spirit that *is* upon thee, and my words which I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor

out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seed's seed, saith the LORD, from henceforth and for ever." He then adds, This refers to believers under God's future covenant."

Jesus described the ongoing nature of the Spirit in these words found in John 7:37-39,

In the last day, that great *day* of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. (But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet *given*; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.)

A river has a continual flow. It is not like a shower of rain that has an end, but rather is an ongoing flow. Matthew Henry comments on this verse: "Provision is made not only for their *present* satisfaction, but for their *continual perpetual* comfort." The perpetual nature of the outpouring is also seen on several occasions in the book of Acts. Williams notes,

Other references in Acts to being "filled with the Spirit" concern persons who had been filled earlier. Peter, when he later addressed the high council of the Jews, was "filled with the Holy Spirit" and spoke to them (4:8). Afterward when Peter and the company of disciples prayed for boldness to speak the word, "they were all filled with the Holy Spirit" (4:31). Saul of Tarsus, now called Paul, is described as "filled with the Holy Spirit" when he discerned the evil intentions of Elymas the magician and spoke against him (13:9). It would seem from these passages that, in addition to the initial experience of being filled, there may be subsequent fresh fillings with the Holy Spirit.

Williams further observes: "There is also reference to a condition of fullness: some persons are said to be 'full of the Holy Spirit.' . . . The language of spiritual fullness bespeaks God's overflowing gift of the Holy Spirit."

[Departure of the Spirit](#)

The continual infilling never has need to expire or to wane. In fact, its permanent nature shows that such would be against the original intent, however, similar to the Old Testament, the Spirit can still be grieved. Most Pentecostals maintain that the Spirit can be grieved entirely away. This is in contrast to those persons that hold the doctrine of eternal security. It would be impossible to consider the matter of the departure of the Spirit without briefly discussing this doctrine. According to the KJV Study Bible,

The doctrine of eternal security teaches that God is able to complete the good work of eternal life that He has begun in every believer (Phil. 1:6). The eternal security of the believer is guaranteed by the person and work of God. He is true and just, and cannot deny Himself. Therefore anyone who *has* eternal life, has it forever. God promises that no one can ever be separated from His love (Rom. 8:33–39). **Illustration:** Some argue that this doctrine leads to antinomianism, that is, allowing Christians to live in sin. This charge, however, denies the very nature of salvation, which involves union with Christ and death to sin (cf. Rom. 6). But to the extent that a Christian fails to serve God, his reward may be lost, though he will be saved from everlasting wrath (1 Cor. 3:15).

As has been cited earlier, with this kind of doctrinal stance it is not surprising that they state, “Holy Spirit permanently indwells all believers.”

The KJV Bible Commentary states, “Once a person is genuinely saved, he is saved forever.” McGee declares,

The spirit of God came upon David as king that he might be God’s man. By the way, no Christian today can pray that prayer, because if you are indwelt by the Spirit of God, He will never leave you. You can grieve Him, you can quench Him, but you can never grieve Him away or quench Him away. We are told, “And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed *unto the day of redemption*” (Eph. 4:30). Therefore no child of God can lose the Spirit of God.

Matthew Henry disagrees with this position. He observes while commenting on Saul that “when men grieve and quench the Spirit, by wilful sin, he departs, and will not always strive. The consequence of this was that *an evil spirit from God troubled him*. Those that drive the good Spirit away from them do of course become prey to the evil spirit. If God and his grace

do not rule us, sin and Satan will have possession of us.” Most Pentecostals would agree with this position. Michael Dusing observes, “In particular, John Wesley (eighteenth century) adapted the Arminian view of salvation to the theology of Methodism, which in turn had a strong influence on the later Holiness and Pentecostal movements. It would seem accurate to say that most modern Pentecostals are more Arminian than Calvinist in their soteriology.” Stamps contends that “the refusal of believers to separate themselves from evil will inevitably result in the loss of fellowship with God (2 Cor 6:16), of acceptance by the Father (6:17) and of our rights as children (2 Cor 6:18; cf. Rom 8:15-16).”

Daniel Pecota observes, “Wesleyan-Arminians readily accept the strength and assurance of the above passages. But it appears that Calvinists sometimes resort to exegetical and hermeneutical twists and turns to avoid the implications of other passages in the New Testament. Not merely formal but real apostasy is possible (Heb. 6:4-6; 10:26-31).” Apostasy would of necessity require a departure of the Spirit.

Williams similarly observes, “Although perseverance in salvation is surely grounded in who God is and what He has done . . . there is no assured continuance in salvation: apostasy is a real possibility.” He also identifies some of the teachings that have been made to refute such a stance: “It is sometimes said that apostasy refers only to those who are not true believers. If persons fall away, this shows that they were not believers in the first place.” Williams answers this claim: “Apostasy can only mean *departure* [italics mine] from the faith.” Again he notes,

Also, the claim is similarly made by some persons that all the references in Scripture (especially in Hebrews) to those who turn aside describe persons who have not actually received salvation. . . . It is apparent that this is a serious misreading. Often such interpretation is due to the importing of a theological perspective that leads to a false interpretation.”

Williams further identifies an example of this type of interpretation in the writings of John Calvin:

John Calvin is a significant case in point. In his exegesis of Hebrews 6:4-6, though he first speaks of the “enlightenment” of illumination, and “tasting” as pertaining to genuine faith, when he proceeds to

deal with the fact that Hebrews speaks also of the same persons as falling away, Calvin does and about-face and refers the language of enlightenment and tasting to “the reprobate” since from his theological perspective it is only the reprobate who can so fall. . . . This is *eisegesis*, not *exegesis*, and badly in error.

Ephesians 4:30 says, “And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.” In addition, 1 Thessalonians 5:19 says, “Quench not the Spirit.” Most Pentecostals teach that it is possible for a person that is born again and full of the Spirit to grieve and quench the Spirit to the point that the Spirit departs forever. Hebrews 6:4-6 illustrates the point quite clearly to the mind of the Pentecostal,

For *it is* impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, And have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, If they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put *him* to an open shame.

Many Pentecostals would feel that no lengthy explanation is necessary.

[External and Internal](#)

Quite possibly the most marked difference between the work of the Spirit in the Old Testament and the work of the Spirit since Pentecost is that the work of the Spirit became both external and internal. Joel 2:28 prophesied, “I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh.” This indicates that the experience to come would be external. John the Baptist speaks of the baptism with the Holy Spirit and again the Holy Spirit being the element of baptism is still external. As has been discussed above, the Spirit primarily worked in external ways in the Old Testament experience. Thus it was possible for Him to endow those of low character (Samson, Saul, and Balaam) with supernatural power or prophetic utterance. Ezekiel 11:19, however, expands the concept to include the internal as well, “And I will give them one heart, and I will put a new spirit within you.” Not only would the promised experience be an external experience but also an internal one that would be

able to affect the character of the individual and lead not only to powerful works but also to power in holiness.

Jesus reinstates exactly that in His words concerning the Holy Spirit in John 14:17, “*Even* the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.” According to Williams, “Through the Holy Spirit dwelling in us . . . the life of God verily is *within* [italics mine] our life.” Dusing observes, “It is important to note that from the moment one becomes a Christian, the Holy Spirit indwells the life of every believer.” Both of these writers were commenting on salvation rather than the baptism in the Holy Spirit, but the obvious implication of internal experience is clearly seen. The KJV Bible Commentary agrees, “This Spirit would have a twofold ministry. He would dwell with them (be in their midst), and He would **be in** them (dwell within).”

To clarify, the Pentecostal and post-Pentecostal experience is both external and internal. The internal does not replace the external experience, but rather adds to it. In addition to being “upon” as in the Old Testament, the Spirit can be both “upon” and “in.” These relationships are clearly seen in the book of Acts through the use of both the words “upon” (Acts 8:16) and “filled” (Acts 2:4) both being used of the baptism with the Spirit. Concerning the actual baptism in the Holy Spirit Williams further comments, “The filling of the house suggests the presence of God in an intensive manner throughout the place of assembly. Those gathered knew themselves to be surrounded by and enveloped in the presence of the Holy Spirit. What was felt outwardly in fullness then became an inner total experience.” He later notes, “What, then is the overall significance of being ‘filled’ or ‘full’? It points to that dimension of the Spirit’s bestowal that relates to interiority.”

[The Spirit Within Before Pentecost](#)

There is one question left for discussion concerning the internal and external nature of experiencing the Spirit. If indeed, the baptism with the

Holy Spirit is both an internal and an external experience and the Spirit of the Lord coming upon someone is only external, how do we look at those that are credited as having been filled with the Spirit before the Pentecostal outpouring? There is an answer to this question given in the Scriptures, and the answer will give us insight into the progressive revelation of God concerning the Holy Spirit and provide a distinct parallel between the timeline of the Scriptures and the timeline of the Church. It will be necessary to begin by examining some of the individuals in Scripture that pre-date Pentecost that were filled with the Spirit. Genesis 41:38 says, “And Pharaoh said unto his servants, Can we find *such a one* as this *is*, a man [Joseph] in whom the Spirit of God *is*?” (Although Daniel could also be considered in this category, “in whom *is* the spirit of the holy gods” (Daniel 4:8), specific mention is not made that he was filled with the Spirit of Yahweh.) One thing that must be noted concerning the Genesis text is that this is a quotation of Pharaoh. Often the Bible quotes people that make statements in error, thus the wise interpreter will need to consider the source. The most obvious example of this is found in the book of Job. Job’s friends were directly confronted by God for their erroneous speeches, “And it was so, that after the LORD had spoken these words unto Job, the LORD said to Eliphaz the Temanite, My wrath is kindled against thee, and against thy two friends: for ye have not spoken of me *the thing that is* right, as my servant Job *hath*” (Job 42:7). Even so, in the case of Joseph one should hardly question the correctness of Pharaoh’s statement even if the source is questionable.

Another such case is recorded in Exodus 31:1-3, “And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, See, I have called by name Bezaleel the son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah: And I have filled him with the spirit of God, in wisdom, and in understanding, and in knowledge, and in all manner of workmanship.” On this occasion the source is not even a question. God is the source for the information, and Bezaleel is the recipient. Joshua is also credited as having been full of the Spirit: “And Joshua the son of Nun was full of the spirit of wisdom; for Moses had laid his hands upon him: and the children of Israel hearkened unto him, and did as the LORD commanded Moses” (Deuteronomy 34:9). Ezekiel testifies, “And the spirit entered into me when he spake unto me” (Ezekiel 2:2).

There are also several examples of individuals in the New Testament that were filled with the Spirit. Williams identifies five such that are credited with that distinction: John the Baptist, Mary, Elizabeth, Zechariah, and Simeon (in the case of Simeon the KJV uses the word “upon” quite possibly indicating an external experience as is mentioned above). He observes of all those mentioned that “there is the *strong religious character* of all who were activated by the Holy Spirit.” This could be said also of those mentioned in the preceding paragraphs, but it is clearly contrasted with those that experienced the Spirit externally like Balaam and Saul.

Even though there were a few individuals that experienced the infilling of the Spirit before Pentecost, Pentecostals can yet confidently state that this experience, even though using the same wording, is not the same as the baptism with the Holy Spirit. In the book of Luke, three people are credited specifically as being “filled” with the Spirit before Jesus was even born. Luke 1:41 records, “And it came to pass, that, when Elisabeth heard the salutation of Mary, the babe leaped in her womb; and Elisabeth was filled with the Holy Ghost.” Luke 1:67 says, “And his father Zacharias was filled with the Holy Ghost, and prophesied.” The significance of these two people being filled with the Spirit cannot be overlooked in relation to parallels in the age of the Church, but for now it is enough to note that they were filled. These instances do not provide conclusive evidence that these individuals were filled but did not receive the baptism with the Spirit.

The one instance of infilling that makes it absolutely conclusive that this was not the baptism with the Holy Spirit is found in Luke 1:15, “For he [John the Baptist] shall be great in the sight of the Lord, and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink; and he shall be filled with the Holy Ghost, even from his mother’s womb.” There is no question that John was special in purpose and anointing. Williams notes, “John, therefore, was a climactic representative of the Old Testament prophetic line. . . . In terms of the Spirit, John the Baptist stands out above any Old Testament figure. . . . John thus was an extraordinary figure with an unusual endowment, and, of course, with a unique role—that of preparing the way for the coming of the Lord.” Even so, what John experienced was not the experience of Pentecost. This passage brings a very interesting point to light. The reason being is that John was the one that spoke of the baptism with the Holy Spirit so adamantly (see chapter 1). In fact, his preaching on that subject was so

strong and important that it is recorded in all four Gospels (Matthew 3:11; Mark 1:8; Luke 3:16; John 1:33). Since John, being full of the Holy Spirit was preaching concerning a yet future experience called the baptism with the Holy Spirit, it stands to reason that this was an experience that John himself had not realized. There is never a hint of such a thing in the Scriptures. Thus Pentecostals proclaim that the Spirit had not yet been given. Higgins observes, "This promise of John serves as a prime source for referring to this special experience with the Spirit as a 'baptism in/with the Holy Spirit.'" Higgins also notes, "Pentecostals believe that the above mentioned promises of the special descent of the Holy Spirit upon the Church were fulfilled on the Day of Pentecost."

The Pentecostal position leads to an interesting question. According to their position, the Scriptures record that there were individuals that were filled with the Holy Spirit that did not receive the experience of the baptism with the Holy Spirit. What then is the difference? In looking back at the examples of those that are specifically recorded as having been filled with the Spirit without the baptism five of the six are credited with no other supernatural manifestation other than prophetic utterance and/or wisdom. Joseph could prophetically interpret dreams. Bezaleel was given wisdom for craftsmanship. Elisabeth, Zechariah, and John gave prophetic utterances. When compared to the lives of those that did experience the baptism like Peter, John, Stephen, Philip, and Paul, there is found a very interesting contrast. In those that were filled with the Holy Spirit before Pentecost there is found an absence of miraculous works. Joseph was a man of moral distinction, Bezaleel was a man distinguished in skill and craftsmanship, Zacharias, Elisabeth, and John were distinguished by their separation and their lives of holiness, but none of these are recorded to have done any mighty works of a supernatural nature other than what is stated above. No person was healed or delivered from demon possession. No person was raised from the dead, etc. In contrast, Peter, John, Paul and the others mentioned in the early church worked mighty miracles seemingly everywhere they went. (Make no mistake; there were plenty of miraculous works in the Old Testament, but this study is limited to the subject of the Spirit.) Thus by contrast it becomes evident that as Pentecostals avow, that the baptism with the Holy Spirit serves as an entrance into the supernatural gifts of the Spirit. After his chapters on *The Reception of the Holy Spirit*,

and *The Effects of the Coming of the Spirit*, Williams expresses, “For the Holy Spirit who is given bestows gifts in turn.”

Joshua requires more consideration because his life was clearly marked with the miraculous. It would seem that his story would completely upset the statement of the above paragraph. In answer to this question it will be necessary to consider a few distinct observations. First, it must be observed that the Spirit of God is not directly mentioned in the book of Joshua. This is very much different to the experiences of the others that are attributed mighty works by the Spirit (i.e. Samson). In addition, mighty works in the Old Testament are not always directly attributed to the Spirit. The life of Elijah is a case in point. No direct mention is made of the Spirit in the life of Elijah with the exception of Obadiah’s comment in 1 Kings 18:12 and possibly the request of Elisha for a double portion of Elijah’s spirit in 2 Kings 2:9. Elijah, however, may be the key to understanding Joshua. James 5:14-18 says,

Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord: And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him. Confess *your* faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much. Elias was a man subject to like passions as we are, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain: and it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months. And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth brought forth her fruit.

Vernon Purdy notes, “It is probable that the healing mentioned in James 5:14-16 is not the charismatic gift of healing, but rather the result of community and elder prayers for the sick.” If this is indeed the case, then James is advocating a principle of prayer and faith that do not categorically fit into the realm of the Spirit. The inclusion of Elijah as the example would indicate that this kind of prayer is not limited to dispensations. E. M. Bounds clearly identifies the source of Elijah’s power:

Elijah, without his praying, would have neither record nor place in the divine legacy – his life would have been insipid and cowardly;

its energy, defiance, and fire would have disappeared. Without Elijah's praying, the Jordan would never have yielded to the stroke of his mantle (see 2 Kings 2:6-8), nor would the stern angel of death have honored him with the chariot and horses of fire. (see verses 9-11).

The KJV Bible Commentary notes, "His greatness did not lie in special *gifts* [italics mine] or a superhuman character, but he is distinguished by the way he prayed." McGee's comment directly shows that the kind of prayer like Elijah's is not dependent on dispensations:

Can you imagine that? Elijah was a weatherman for three and a half years, and for three and a half years he held back the rain! It did not come until he prayed. You are the same kind of person Elijah was. Elijah wasn't a superman; he was "a man subject to like passions as we are." But he was a man who prayed with passion, and that is the kind of praying we need today.

Joshua, like Elijah, was a man of prayer. "And the LORD spake unto Moses face to face, as a man speaketh unto his friend. And he turned again into the camp: but his servant Joshua, the son of Nun, a young man, departed not out of the tabernacle" (Exodus 33:11). If indeed, Joshua commanded the sun to stand still through the prayer of faith rather than through charismata, then the theory holds true that the baptism in the Holy Spirit is the entry to the charismatic gifts even if not necessarily to all miraculous power.

[Pre-Twentieth Century and Early Twentieth Century Experiences](#)

Understanding the baptism with the Holy Spirit as the entrance into the supernatural gifts gives a distinctive insight into progressive revelation. God often reveals things slowly over great periods of time. He will drop a hint of an idea and then not speak on it for centuries. Just as an example, Adam and Eve were promised that the seed of woman would crush the head of the serpent in Genesis 3:15 and it was not until Abraham, almost two thousand years later, (although there is considerable typography) that a clear statement is given that the seed of woman would arrive as a lamb (Genesis

22:8). Then gradually throughout the Old Testament more information is given concerning the coming Messiah.

Similarly, there is a progressive revelation concerning the infilling of the Spirit. Joseph is credited by Pharaoh as having the Spirit within him, but there is no explanation given. Then about four hundred years later Bezaleel is filled and this time we know that the infilling comes with supernatural wisdom. Gradually through the Old Testament more information becomes available, but it was not until Pentecost that the actual experience of the baptism in the Holy Spirit became a reality.

The most interesting thing about this is that the same kind of progressive revelation that occurred in the Old Testament can be clearly seen in the history of the Church as well. After the death of the Apostles, within a few centuries the Church went through nearly a thousand years of formalism that is so rightly called the Dark Ages. Carl Brumback observes, “The failure of the post-apostolic Church plunged many New Testament truths and experiences into an almost total eclipse. For one thousand years Christendom was under the darkness of the perverted teachings and pagan practices of Papal Rome, and very few rays of light were able to penetrate that gross darkness.”

Even though there were occasional pockets of supernatural activity (even including tongues) the Church as a whole did not experience anything like what the book of Acts records as possible. Brumback devotes an entire chapter in his book to tongues throughout the history of the Church. He states, “So often it is asserted that the *glossolalia* was almost wholly removed from the Church by the end of the First Century, the latest date of its existence being given as the Third Century, after which the gift completely disappeared. This assertion, however, rests entirely upon an ignorance of the facts of Church history.” Even so, he later attests, “It would appear from the available records that most of the great saints of this dispensation, who lived previous to the Twentieth Century, did not receive an infilling with the Spirit which included speaking with other tongues.”

Brumback accounts for this in his “Dispensational Principle” with its subsequent principle the “Loss and Recovery of New Testament Truths.” According to him, this recovery began with “the Reformation with its burning and shining lights . . . reviving and proclaiming long-lost Scriptural

truths. The Church was awakened out of her millennium of sleep, and arose to walk again in the pathway of truth and the highway of holiness. . . . But even in that glorious hour the recovery of the apostles' doctrine was not complete." Brumback further claims,

It seems that they, and their successors as well, had blind spots in their spiritual vision. Some portions of truth were hidden from them, awaiting another hour for their full revelation. But each new generation brought its own theologians and revivalists who added more and more to the knowledge of the truth, and the gospel was preached in ever-increasing fullness.

In considering why God has delayed to bring the truth of the baptism in the Holy Spirit with evidential tongues back into the Church before, Brumback supposes that it "may be that in accomplishing His overall plan for this dispensation God has designed the full revelation of the baptism to coincide with the peculiar hour in which we live."

How is it that these people of a few centuries ago were able to do such mighty things in the Church without being baptized in the Spirit? This is not an easy question for Pentecostals to answer, at least not without extreme criticism.

For example, Charles Finney is heralded as a man of distinction for the powerful ministry that he maintained. He testifies to his own experience:

But as I turned and was about to take a seat by the fire, I received a mighty baptism of the Holy Ghost. Without any expectation of it, without ever having the thought in my mind that there was any such thing for me, without any recollection that I have ever heard the thing mentioned by any person in the world, the Holy Spirit descended upon me in a manner that seemed to go through me, body and soul. I could feel the impression, like a wave of electricity, going through and through me. Indeed it seemed to come in waves and waves of liquid love—for I could not express it in any other way. It seemed like the very breath of God. I can recollect distinctly that it seemed to fan me, like immense wings.

Brumback recognizes that examples like this are "cited frequently as proof of the error of the 'tongues-evidence' teaching."

Brumback's answer is simple, and indicative of Pentecostal sentiment. He believes that "the baptism with the Holy Spirit was among the truths which were not fully revealed to those great men of God. . . . Many of these men realized a partial restoration of the New Testament pattern; they saw the filling with the Spirit as a definite experience subsequent to conversion, and desperately needed by every child of God." Finney attested exactly what Brumback observes. Finney states that at the prayer meetings he attended before his conversion, he "heard them pray continually for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, and as often confess that they did not receive what they asked for." That Finney believed the baptism in the Spirit to be a secondary work is clearly stated:

But there was another defect in brother Gale's education, which I regarded as fundamental. If he had ever been converted to Christ, he had failed to receive that divine anointing of the Holy Ghost that would make him a power in the pulpit and in society, for the conversion of souls. He had fallen short of receiving the baptism of the Holy Ghost, which is indispensable to ministerial success.

The original question still stands. If for example, Charles Finney, did not have the baptism in the Spirit how was he able to be so successful in soul winning? Brumback argues, "Unlike tongues, soul winning is not a part of the baptism itself; it is not the initial physical evidence of that experience." He adds,

And as far as soul winning is concerned, we believe that statistics will indicate clearly that the average Pentecostal believer has witnessed to and won far more souls to the Lord than the average non-Pentecostal believer. The miraculous growth of the Pentecostal Movement during this Twentieth Century can be traced directly to the passion for souls and power to witness derived from the charismatic endowment from on high.

Even so, Brumback's answers seem to be left somewhat wanting.

Fortunately, there is another Scriptural observation that may bring a better answer. The answer lies in the lives of Joshua and John the Baptist. Based on the above discussion, these two were filled with the Holy Spirit without the baptism. They had neither received the promised salvation through the death and resurrection of Christ in the fullest context of Christian

experience, nor had they the experience of Pentecost, and yet the Bible records that they were filled. Similarly, it is not difficult to believe that just as John was filled but not baptized, many of the Christian brethren of years gone by were filled without the baptism. Surely there has been no person more successful in ministry during the pre-twentieth century Church than John the Baptist was in pre-Pentecost Judea. Even miracles of the past can be explained via Joshua without the necessity of charismata. Thus Pentecostals can continue to hold that the baptism in the Spirit was not given prior to Pentecost, and that those men in the recently past centuries that did marvelous works did even quite possibly by the power of the Spirit or by the power of prayer through faith, but without the baptism in the Spirit.

In summary of the above, why then would they be filled and not baptized in an Old Testament kind of way in the age of the Church? The progressive revelation of the Church closely parallels the progressive revelation of Scripture. Salvation was revealed before Pentecost. Even after the disciples were saved, they were waiting around in Jerusalem for a promise that they did not know much about. Salvation had surely been fully realized by the time that Jesus revealed Himself after the resurrection (see chapter 2 on subsequence), and the Apostles were even indwelt by the Spirit in a pre-Pentecostal manner (John 20:22), and yet they waited in Jerusalem for more. In exactly the same way, the men of faith that lived before the Pentecostal outpouring of the 1900s began to anticipate that there was a greater fullness to come, but they did not know exactly what it would look like. There was an air of expectancy, but nobody knew what to expect. Some of these men and women like John the Baptist and his parents were possibly full of the Spirit, but they were not baptized.

Before the modern Pentecostal movement Charles Spurgeon foretold that it was coming. He states,

Another great work of the Holy Spirit which is not accomplished is the bringing of the latter-day glory. In a few more years, I know not when, and I know not how, the Holy Spirit will be poured out in a far different style from the present. “*There are diversities of operations*” (1 Cor. 12:6), and during the last few years, the diversified operations have consisted in very little pouring out of the

Spirit. Ministers have gone on in dull routine, continually preaching, preaching, preaching, and little good has been done.

The hour is coming when the Holy Ghost will be poured out again in such a wonderful manner that many will run to and fro, “*knowledge shall be increased*” (Dan. 12:4), and the knowledge of the Lord will cover the earth as the waters covered the great deep (Isa. 11:9).

Brumback relates,

At the dawn of the Twentieth Century a deep spirit of prayer gripped many of the people of God in behalf of a great world-wide revival. This fervent intercession was accompanied by an intense study of the Scriptures. Long, prayerful hours spent searching the Book of Acts and the Epistles convinced these believers that the early Christians enjoyed a much richer and fuller experience than they themselves had yet received.

Menzies relates the activity of those that are indeed most famed for the beginnings of the modern Pentecostal Movement:

Late in December, just before his departure for a series of meetings in Kansas City, [Charles] Parham assigned the entire student body [of Bethel Bible College] the topic of the Biblical evidence of the baptism in the Holy Spirit. . . . He had become convinced that there was a supernatural experience available to believers in addition to regeneration and sanctification, yet he had run into considerable variety of opinion as to what constituted the evidence for such an experience. This question he left to his students to ferret out from the Scriptures.

Parham returned to the school on the morning of December 31, 1900. . . . To his astonishment the students all had the same story, reporting that although different things occurred when the Pentecostal blessing fell in the various episodes recorded in Acts, the common denominator on each occasion was that they spoke with other tongues. . . .

At once an air of expectancy charged the atmosphere of the little school in Topeka, for as yet none had received the experience which

they had all come to believe was normative for the Apostolic Church. The first to receive was Miss Agnes N. Ozman. . . .

For three days she could not speak in the English language, so overwhelmed was she.

Blumhofer adds, “Parham asserted that Ozman spoke Chinese for three days, during which she could neither speak nor write English.” Thus began the modern Pentecostal Movement.

Starting with the recorded activity of the Spirit in the Old Testament, there can be distinct observable dispensations drawn. The four most obvious to Pentecostals are the pre-Pentecost, Pentecost and post-Pentecost, the pre-twentieth century, and the twentieth century to present. Tracing its roots back into the early pages of the Old Testament, the Pentecostal movement can chart a steady course of progressive revelation through the various dispensations of the Spirit in Scripture. Each dispensation in Scripture then was repeated in the course of the Church culminating in the modern experience and understanding that Pentecostals around the world now share.

CONCLUSION

Beginning with the prophecies of the Old Testament and the promise of the Father, Pentecostals can progressively trace their doctrine of the baptism with the Holy Spirit subsequent to salvation with the evidence of speaking in other tongues through the dispensations to the present day. This experience is valid and should be sought by every believer for empowerment, edification, and entrance into the realm of Spirit-giftedness. Through this research, one question has not been addressed. Why has this doctrine received such criticism? Why are derogatory books such as the one by John MacArthur, Jr. titled, *Charismatic Chaos*, even in print at all? There may be a number of speculative answers to this question.

One possible answer is that the Pentecostal position effectively but without intention alienates non-Pentecostals. Of necessity, Pentecostals believe that those who have not and do not speak in tongues are not Spirit-filled. The men who are the leaders among non-Pentecostals are in effect rendered not Spirit-filled by the mere statement of the doctrine. It is therefore necessary for them to either agree and seek to be filled, or argue denying themselves the experience but thus saving their pride. The latter option would produce intense argument which is indeed what is seen. If pride is a motive, then it should be expected that some would “wrest” the Scriptures. Some such wresting has been briefly mentioned in the research (see chapter 3).

Another possible answer may be fear. Any leader that is less than an expert clearly would lose the confidence of followers. If they fear that their followers are likely to move to a movement other than their own, they may attack the movement regardless of its character. Possibly by making such a vicious attack they hope to make themselves look credible once again in an effort to convince those under them of their validity.

Envy could also be a factor. There is no question that the Pentecostal and Charismatic movements have drawn much attention in the United States

and abroad. Those that do not have such excitements may find themselves under the power of envy. An attack from this source would not seek only to prove their own credibility, but would also seek to destroy the credibility of the opponent. Pentecostals have certainly endured this kind of aggression. Such teaching is so pervasive that this writer has personally answered to the charges of having been a member of a “sect” simply for identification with the name “Pentecostal.”

It is possible that some of the harsh criticism comes from those that are doctrinally predisposed. They may not be prideful, fearful, or envious, but they in true sincerity by the predisposition of their doctrinal position exclude themselves from the blessing of Pentecost. Charles Finney relates a similar situation: “The fact is that Mr. Gale’s education for the ministry had been entirely defective. He had imbibed a set of opinions, both theological and practical, that were a strait jacket to him. He could accomplish very little or nothing if he carried out his own principles.” In this observation, Finney’s mentor minister was doctrinally predisposed to failure. Many modern non-Pentecostals may be doctrinally predisposed similarly to reject the Pentecostal doctrine of the baptism in the Spirit both in its subsequence and its evidential tongues.

In all of the above speculations either sincere ignorance or fleshly concerns play a part in the reason for criticism. Even so, this would not of necessity require that those that participate in such are ignorant or fleshly overall. Neither does it imply a lack of the grace of salvation even on the part of the foremost frontrunner of such disparagement. It does, however, present a similar scenario as is seen in 1 Corinthians 1:10-16. A call to Christian love, unity, and maturity may be in order.

One might raise the fact that Pentecostals are often more than ready to engage in theological battle also causing the situation to be inflamed. While this is true, there is a very marked observable difference that need be noted. Non-Pentecostals have not only grievously assaulted the doctrines of Pentecostals, but have also assaulted the Pentecostals themselves in both their person and character. Again, John MacArthur, Jr. in his book, *Charismatic Chaos*, makes every attempt possible while saying that he respects many Charismatics, to tear down the movement not just doctrinally but from a personal perspective as well. He uses example after example of extreme cases pointing out the obvious errors and faults. He even used a

statement on the moral failure of Pentecostal and Charismatic leaders to demonstrate his point: “Would anyone seriously argue that today’s tongues-speakers live holier, more consistent lives for Christ than believers who do not speak in tongues? What about all the charismatic leaders in recent years whose lives have proved to be morally and spiritually bankrupt?” What does that have to do with truth or lack thereof? The fact that Judas had fallen did not discount the truth that Peter preached on Pentecost. Would it not be just as easy for a Pentecostal to call out a scandal in a non-Pentecostal church and say the same thing? Yet, back to the marked observable difference, they most often do not do so. Over and over again, while being attacked viciously both doctrinally and personally Pentecostals generally stick to the doctrine and leave the personal out. This writer cannot recall ever having read an account of a Pentecostal making an attack on a non-Pentecostal’s character for the purposes of proving an argument. As has been observed in Chapter 2, most of the time non-Pentecostals show significant respect to their non-Pentecostal brethren in terms of their personal piety and faith. Within the Christian community doctrinal statements and even practices of individuals should be argued in the atmosphere of love, but not in an atmosphere like the political arena where the opponent is maligned to prove a point.

MacArthur readily admitted that “some critics of the movement want to write off all supposed tongues as the work of the devil. While I am not ready to do that, I am convinced that Satan is often the force behind phenomena that pass as gifts of the Spirit. After all, he is behind every false religion.” While MacArthur does not brand false religion on the Pentecostal movement as a whole, there are many that do. Any person that would make the accusation that MacArthur says “some critics” do, would of necessity be branding all tongues talkers as “false.” Again this kind of teaching is pervasive. This writer has had to personally defend against this teaching simply to defend his Christianity to a non-Pentecostal friend. In general, Pentecostals do not look at non-Pentecostal churches and brand them as demonic cults simply because they do not agree on doctrinal issues. Why is it necessary for non-Pentecostal brethren to do so to the Pentecostals?

One more comment by MacArthur will be observed. He claims that “In most other areas of theology, charismatics are vague, but here [subsequence and tongues] they usually speak a clear word regarding what they believe.”

Although there could easily be argument made concerning the presupposition that charismatics and/or Pentecostals are “vague” in theology, their clarity on the issues related to their distinctiveness have come as a result of much assault. Countries that are constantly engaged in war know well the concepts of defense. Countries in peace are hardly aware of the concept. Pentecostals have been so attacked on the points of their distinctiveness that they are very prepared to make a clear defense. Notice the word defense rather than the word offense. It is fortunate that most in the Pentecostal movement spend time making offensive for the Kingdom of God rather than offensive against the ranks of believers using only defensive measures when necessary in relation to those in the Kingdom.

Pentecostals going forward should continue to make the necessary defense of their distinctiveness; however, of a far greater importance is the wane of Pentecostal zeal and the need of revival. It was observed by Rev. John Bosman at the 1999 General Council of the Assemblies of God that there has been a recent decline in the percentage of believers that are experiencing the baptism in the Holy Spirit in Assembly of God churches. If it would be safe to assume that the same is happening in all of the Pentecostal and Charismatic churches, then there is a matter of urgency at hand. From personal experience this writer can attest that there is often very little difference between Pentecostal churches and non-Pentecostal churches with the exception of doctrinal statements and worship style. Many Pentecostal churches go for months or possibly even years without any visible, recognizable manifestation of charismata. Pentecostal leaders generally agree that the key to revival is the Holy Spirit.

The necessary resonant call today cannot be limited to scholarship (although scholarship should not be neglected). The call today must be a call to prayer and consecration with the earnest desire of a resulting revival in the power of the Holy Spirit. In this age, we will not have revival apart from the power of the Spirit. Conversely, we will not have the power of the Spirit unless we are willing to humble ourselves and pray. This writer would urge all Christians, both Pentecostal and non-Pentecostals alike, to consider the words of the first and fourth stanzas of this hymn by J. Edwin Orr:

1. Search me, O God, and know my heart today;

Try me, O Savior, know my thoughts, I pray:
See if there be some wicked way in me:
Cleanse me from ev'ry sin, and set me free.

4. O Holy Ghost, revival comes from Thee:
Send a revival—start the work in me:
Thy Word declares Thou wilt supply our need:
For blessing now, O Lord, I humbly plead.

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