

CORYBANTS AND OTHERS

Legend says that the ancient Asiatic goddess Cybele was attended by a company of wild, half-demonic beings called Corybants. They followed her over the dark mountains by torchlight, eager to serve their divine Queen, and to entertain her with weird music. Their performance included frantic dancing, and other frenzied rites; they were a merry crowd! The *Mountain Mother* (as she was also called) was mightily famous in her time, and her followers numbered many thousands. But now she is chiefly remembered because her crazed retinue gave rise to a medical term, "corybantism" - a state of mental derangement in which the sick person suffers from fantastic visions.

However, some unkind critics have now begun snorting "corybantic!" at those Christians who delight in the real power of the Holy Spirit. They pronounce demented anyone who claims to do what the apostles did in *Acts 2:1-4*, that is "*speaking in other tongues*". Since I happen to be one of those "*glossolalists*",¹ I feel constrained to raise an eyebrow at the suggestion that at I must be sick, or that I have fallen into a frenzy, and am subject to crazy visions! My wife also is a "*glossolalist*", and we have lived together in idyllic bliss for forty years. Never (I am sure) have I observed her in a corybantic state. We have both been occasionally ill, yes; but never once in a frenzy, nor once out of our minds. (Except that when Alison first wafted past me like a heavenly vision, and I sighed, "Fantastic!" I may have been in *something* of a corybantic state. Perhaps also when I stood at the altar with her, and hypnotically mumbled the appropriate words. But that is not quite what the critics mean!)

During those same four decades I have watched hundreds of quite normal people, from almost every walk of life, enter into the experience of baptism in the Holy Spirit, accompanied by "*glossolalia*". They would be greatly astonished to be told that they had fallen into a deranged frenzy and were tangled up with fantastic visions!

(1) Someone who speaks in tongues; from the Greek noun "glossa" = "the tongue".

So I have written this book to show that “charismatics”² are generally reasonable people, who approach their experience thoughtfully, and who believe that it reflects the pattern described in scripture. They are convinced that the early church was richly “*charismatic*”, and they can see no reason why the modern church should not enjoy the same gifts. And I have also written in this hope: if you have not already discovered Holy Spirit baptism and the “*charismata*”, may you soon do so.

BUTTER ON THE BREAD

Writers are often condemned for failing to reach a goal they had no intention of hitting. But that is like criticising an archer for missing a target he was not aiming for. This book is like that archer. It is written within a limited framework to achieve a limited purpose. Do not blame me for achieving things I never set out to achieve! The next few pages explain the purpose of this book, along with the general rules I have followed in trying to fulfil that purpose. I hope you will read them, and not pass them over as unimportant. They will put a little butter on the bread, and make its eating smoother.

THE PENTECOSTAL POSITION

This book is a presentation of the Pentecostal position on Holy Spirit baptism. Not all those who are connected with the movement will agree with all that is in these pages; but the position taken does generally represent both the Pentecostal and Charismatic viewpoint. It probably hovers somewhere in the middle of the more extreme views taken by some on either side. The Pentecostal position on the baptism in the Holy Spirit, and on the gifts of the Spirit, depends on establishing four things -

1. that there is available to every Christian an *experience* known (among other titles) as “*Holy Spirit baptism*”.
2. that new birth (or regeneration) and the baptism in the Spirit are *discrete*;³ that is, they are separate and distinct happenings, though they may sometimes occur simultaneously.
3. that “glossolalia” (speaking in tongues) is the usual initial evidence that a person has been baptised in the Spirit.
4. that the miraculous gifts of the Spirit (the *charismata*) which existed in the early church are still available and should be occurring in the worship of the modern church.

The remainder of this book will try to establish those propositions.

(2) People who practise the various gifts of the Spirit (1 Co 12:7-11), known as the “*charismata*”, from the nearly identical Greek word.

(3) If you are unfamiliar with the word *discrete*, do take note of it now, because it will occur frequently in a couple of the following chapters.

A SUPERNATURAL VIEW

You will soon realise that I endorse the world-view of the early church, which recognised supernatural experiences, accepted the reality of miracles, and believed in God's personal involvement in human experience. I accept also that the scriptures give us an accurate presentation of the teachings and practices of the early church, and that what they did establishes the normative pattern for Christianity. As a corollary, I reject that essentially secular theology in which there is no place for miracles. When one has *seen* a miracle it is hard to say that they don't happen!

I am of course aware of the arguments against seeking an absolute paradigm in the early church. There are necessarily many places where the modern church, in its practice and emphasis, must part company with the first Christians. However, I am satisfied that the same general practices and beliefs, or at least those that are revealed in scripture, and which led those first Christians to such resounding success, are equally relevant to our time. The success story of the current world-wide charismatic movement certainly supports this view. (There are today at least 50 million members in the various Pentecostal denominations, after less than 100 years of witness. To those must be added the many millions more who belong to the "neo-Pentecostal" or "charismatic" movement, which is located in the older denominations.)⁴

A ROSE BY MANY NAMES

This study adopts the position that the following and other similar terms are all more or less synonymous:

- *baptism in the Spirit*
- *gift (singular) of the Spirit*
- *infilling of the Spirit*
- *fullness of the Spirit*
- *promise of the Father*
- the Holy Spirit falling "*on*" or "*upon*" someone.

They all refer basically to the same experience: that "*clothing with power from on high*", which every Christian should receive subsequent to his or her conversion to Christ.

In recent years the custom has become widespread of omitting the definite article, and of speaking about "*Holy Spirit baptism*", or even "*baptism in Holy Spirit*". Others prefer the older phrase, "*the baptism in (or of) the Holy Spirit*". Since the original Greek text of the scriptures

(4) At the time of writing this book Pentecostals were the largest single group in the Protestant family, ahead of Anglicans, Baptists, and Lutherans. According to church statistician David Barrett, the total number of Pentecostals and Charismatics worldwide is in excess of 250 million, with a projected growth by the end of this century to 500 million. (Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements, ed. Burgess & McGee; Regency Reference Library; Zondervan Publishing House; 1990.

sometimes includes and sometimes omits the article, this varied terminology must be allowed. Possible there is no more reason to speak of “*the* baptism in *the* Holy Spirit”, than to say “*the* baptism in *the* water”. You will probably find all the variations scattered through these pages. I feel no more need to be rigidly consistent than did the apostles. However, “*Holy Spirit baptism*” at least has the advantage of agreeing with the usage, “*water baptism*”.

A PROPOSITION ON PREPOSITIONS

Concerning the alternative prepositions, “baptism *with* the Spirit . . . *of* the Spirit . . . *in* the Spirit”, one commentator has written -

The Greek preposition ‘en’ may be translated by any one of these terms. The expression is likely to depend on whether one considers that water-baptism should be administered by immersion or effusion. Those who practice immersion speak of ‘the baptism *in* the Spirit’, presumably because they think of the Spirit as the element into which the person is plunged.

As it happens, not all immersionists do use the term “in”, for I know many who prefer “with” or “of”. Once again, and for the same reason given above, you will probably find a variety of usage in these pages.

ONLY HOLY SPIRIT BAPTISM

Perhaps I should also say that this study is not a comprehensive discussion of the work of the Holy Spirit in the believer or in the church. It is not even a comprehensive discussion of the baptism in the Spirit. Many important aspects of the work of the Holy Spirit have been omitted. This study is mainly intended to be a presentation of what might be called the distinctly charismatic aspects of the activity of the Holy Spirit in the believer.

NO DOGMATICS HERE

One lesson that the history of church dogmatics should have taught us is not to be overly dogmatic! There seems little doubt that the early church did not trouble itself with the task of trying to create a universal and truly systematic theology. John (for example) did not have exactly the same understanding of the gospels as Paul had; James and Peter saw things from a different perspective; Peter wrote that in Paul’s letter there were “*some things hard to understand*”! Further, the early church itself experimented with various methods of structuring Christian life and witness: they once drew lots; they temporarily forbade eating certain meats and blood; they possibly attempted to institutionalise “*foot-washing*”; they experimented with “*baptising for the dead*”; they even dabbled with a primitive form of communism. Clearly, they did not find in the teachings of Christ nor of the apostles a fixed ecclesiology.

Given that background, my purpose in writing this book has not been to establish a definitive theology on Holy Spirit baptism, as though this were the only aspect of the Spirit’s work revealed in the New Testament, or as though this is the only way to put together the relevant New Testament data. My purpose is more practical. I simply maintain that a charismatic emphasis and experience was widespread in the early church, and that this charismatic element still has a valid place in the church. This study is an attempt to understand the working rules and the nature of the charismata as they appear in the New Testament.

Clothed With Power

I am deeply grateful to others who have preached and written in favour of the charismatic experience, and to those who have preached and written against it; for by friend and foe alike my mind has been stimulated. To use them saying a little out of context, I freely admit that I have "*nothing which I have not received*" - from allies, or antagonists; from those who have ministered to me, or to whom I have ministered; but most of all, from the Spirit himself. I hope I am not being presumptuous in believing that it was he, the Holy Spirit, who "*bade me go*" and tell what I have learned, that it might help others.

CHAPTER ONE

THE PROMISE OF THE FATHER

The Bible speaks about a distinct spiritual experience that it calls “*baptism in the Holy Spirit*”. John the Baptist shouted to the crowds -

I baptise you with water as a sign of repentance. But someone is coming after me who is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not fit to carry; he will baptise you with the Holy Spirit and with fire. (Mt 3:11; and see also Mk 1:8; Lu 3:16; Jn 1:26; Ac 1:5; 11:16)

What that experience is, how it relates to the new birth, how to receive it, what effect it has - those are the themes of this book.

The story begins where it should, at the beginning; for since the dawn of time the servants of God have been familiar with the power of the Holy Spirit, and they have depended upon that power to equip them for the work God has given them to do. The words of Micah are typical -

I am filled with power by the Spirit of the Lord. (Mi 3:8)

But the prophets themselves predicted that one day there would be a new and more wonderful outpouring of the Holy Spirit, linked with the appearing of the Messiah in Israel. The prophecy of Joel is the best known -

This is what will happen in the last days: I will pour out my Spirit upon every nation, and your sons and your daughters will prophesy . . . When that time comes, even upon servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit . . . and everyone who calls upon the name of the Lord will find deliverance. (2:28-32)

Christ finally came. The fulfilment of the predicted outpouring was identified with him (Jn 1:33-34; 14:15-17) and enacted on “*the day of Pentecost*” (Ac 2:1-4, 14-18,32-33).

(I) TWO REMARKABLE CONTRASTS

The distinguishing mark of the people of God in the days of the old covenant was possession of the “*law*” and of “*the oracles of God*” (Ro 3:2). But the distinguishing mark of the people of God

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in the new dispensation was to be possession of the Spirit (Ac 2:17-18).⁵ This altered mark of identity is the primary difference between the old and new eras (2 Co 3:6-11, 17-18).⁶ John the Baptist himself highlighted the giving of the Spirit as one of the most outstanding aspects of Christ's ministry. Notice also, that these references all require that possession of the Holy Spirit must be as knowable as possession of the law. That is, Holy Spirit baptism cannot be a mere invisible and inseparable adjunct to salvation, or to some other Christian experience. It must be able to stand alone, and to have such a solidity that the believer will know beyond doubt, and by personal experience, whether or not he or she has received this promise of the Father.

A second unique factor in the present era is the *universal availability* of the fullness of the Holy Spirit. Formerly only a chosen few servants enjoyed the presence and unction of the Spirit; but now the promise is open to everyone - none of the people of God are excluded. The prayer of Moses (Nu 11:26-30) and the prophecy of Joel are now fulfilled (2:28-29; and see also Lu 11:9-13; Ac 2:28-39).

So there is a clear distinction between the old dispensation and the new, marked by the difference in Holy Spirit baptism offered to the people then and now. That difference is shown by the statement, "*the Spirit had not yet been given because Jesus was not yet glorified*" (Jn 7:37-39; 16:7). We cannot take those words to mean that the Holy Spirit was not available in any sense. Obviously, Jesus himself ministered in the power of the Spirit (Mt 12:28); so did John the Baptist (Lu 1:15); and we may assume that the disciples also preached and healed in the power of the Spirit (Lu 9:1-2). So the statement must mean that there is a *new and special sense in which the holy Spirit has been given* since Christ ascended back into heaven. This new gift of the Spirit is the distinct property of the Christian dispensation. It is specifically linked with the death and resurrection of Christ, and it belongs only to those who are members of the church built by Christ. Further, possession of this gift creates a demarcation between the "world" and the "church" (Jn 14:17).

The promised outpouring of the Spirit began on "*the day of Pentecost*" (Ac 2:1-4), and it is probably involved in an initial company of about 120 men and women (Ac 1:15). The events of that day occurred in direct fulfillment of "*the promise of the Father*" (Ac 1:4; 2:33), an intriguing phrase that apparently refers to the Old Testament prophecies concerning the outpouring of the Spirit. The prophets foresaw this outpouring, which was to take place in the "*last days*" (that is, during this Christian era). Thus the Pentecostal effusion stands as a marvellous fulfillment of Bible prophecy, as a powerful witness of the end of the old dispensation and the beginning of the new, and as dramatic proof that the long-awaited Messiah of Israel - see Peter's great Pentecostal sermon in *Acts 2:14-40*.

Abundant references in the Book of *Acts* and in the Letters make it plain that being baptised in the Holy Spirit was the normal experience of people in the early church, and should be the normal experience of Christians today. But at this point questions like the following arise:

Is Holy Spirit baptism invariably conterminous with the new birth?

Is it possible to be a Christian and yet not have the baptism in the Spirit?

Can Christians assume that the fullness of the Spirit automatically becomes theirs at conversion, or should they pray for it as a separate experience?

(5) See also *Joel 2:28-32; Matthew 3:11; Luke 3:16*.

(6) Notice how Paul calls this age, not the "gospel era" (as we might be prone to say, but "the dispensation (or era) of the Spirit".

How can a Christian know if he or she has been baptised in the Spirit?

Is there a special sign of this experience?

I hope to answer those questions; but first, I want to ask another one -

What values does the Pentecostal experience bring to the church today?

In other words, if the church accepts the Pentecostal message, what will it gain? Does it really matter if the Pentecostals are right or wrong? The remainder of this book will show the benefits that baptism in the Spirit can bring to an *individual* Christian; but I would like to suggest here four values that the Pentecostal movement offers the *church* in general.

(II) THE VALUE OF THE MOVEMENT

(A) RESTORATION OF POWER

During a time of world-wide spiritual decay the Pentecostal movement has been one of the great success stories in the history of the Christian church. The past decades have witnessed a steady erosion in numerical strength of the major denominations in relation to the size of the population - even worse, some denominations now have less churches and a smaller membership than they had fifty years ago. Few church groups are even keeping pace with population growth, let alone exceeding it. But among the few the Pentecostals have burgeoned in less than a century into a worldwide movement numbering scores of millions of adherents.

Even more amazing is the fact that this phenomenal growth (unparalleled in church history) has been achieved despite bitter opposition and (in the early years of the movement) even fierce persecution. Every attempt to stifle the first Pentecostals failed; their success remained unhindered; and despite a lack of almost every natural advantage, within less than a generation they established their testimony around the globe. Never before has the church witnessed mass evangelism so successfully practised. No other period of church history been so prolific in producing evangelists and pastors capable of preaching constantly to audiences numbering scores of thousands.

Surely it is past time for the Christian church as a whole to re-discover in the Pentecostal movement the secret of the missionary success of the early church, and to reverse the decaying trend of recent decades into a mighty evangelical advance by adopting that secret themselves.

(B) RESTORATION OF EXPERIENCE

After centuries of comparatively arid theology the Pentecostals are making a vital contribution to the church by restoring a form of Christianity that throbs with rich and varied personal experience. It is a way of life that is "felt" as well as "taught", and the people of God have been crying out for it for generations.

Jesus, speaking about the day when the disciples would enjoy their own personal Pentecost, promised them, "*In that day, you will know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you*" (Jn 14:20). Now this "*knowing*" was not the kind that comes from education, but from experience. It was not a doctrine they were taught but an event that happened. It was not a matter of theology but of vital reality. No one reading the New Testament can imagine that the early Christians had only what the average Christian in the average church today possesses! It is apparent on every page of scripture that those first churches were alive with the experience

of God's personal presence and with the flow of his miracle-working power. And this came to them through their appropriation of the Pentecostal baptism in the Holy Spirit. On the "day" they were filled with the Spirit doctrine became tangible fact, and they *knew* that they were truly united with the Father, through Christ the Son, by the power of the indwelling Spirit.

(C) RESTORATION OF THE PATTERN

The Pentecostals have been able to take hold of New Testament statements that for centuries were thought to be either legendary or historical curiosities, and to translate them into a dynamic spiritual force for our time. This has compelled people everywhere to take a fresh look at the New Testament. Suddenly, the biblical data on the behaviour of the early church is no longer mysterious; suddenly it speaks to us with new and compelling power. Scholars who had previously ignored a considerable portion of the New Testament are being alerted to their error, and they are now taking seriously passages which they had formerly discounted.

Everything described by the apostles has been repeated in the modern Pentecostal revival. Every gift of the Spirit, every supernatural phenomenon, known to the early church has been part of the Spirit-filled church today. The New Testament is no longer an anachronism, but is found to have as much relevance and impact today as it had in its contemporary world. Every part of it speaks to our time. Every verse is applicable in some way to the modern church. Chapters on the gifts of the Spirit and on other "Pentecostal" phenomena, which for centuries were obscure and all but meaningless, now throb with life. The early church in all of its blazing glory has been born again!

The Pentecostals have endeavoured, as nearly as possible, to recapture the scriptural pattern, both in their personal experience and in their corporate life and worship. Not that they desire to emulate the first Christians in every respect - such as in the superficial structures of their churches, their patterns of social behaviour, their mannerisms in worship, and so on. There is no value in copying earlier generations in matters such as those; nor is it possible to do so. The records are not complete enough to show us exactly how the early believers assembled and worshipped. Necessarily there are many things in the worship style of every modern church (including the Pentecostals) that belong to our way of doing things, which would not be recognised nor understood by the early church. We have our special customs and practices just as they had theirs (cp. 1 Co 11:16).

Yet it does remain essential for us to adhere, as they did, to those things that re, or should be, binding upon the church in every generation. There are certain vital principles in scripture that the church forsakes at its peril. There are certain things the church must cleave to and practise if it is to remain successful in its mission of fully presenting the gospel to the world. For their re-discovery of at least some of these things, and for their successful practice of them, the Pentecostals deserve to be commended.

(D) RESTORATION OF VITAL WORSHIP

One of the major sources of the evangelical success of the early church lay in the sheer impact of its worship services. The world had never before witnessed a worshipping company like those first Christians. They worshipped God as though he were truly present - right there among them!

The ancient world, of course was quite familiar with the concept of worship. They were a vastly religious people. Their cities abounded with temples, shrines, and altars. Every part of their daily life was interlaced with prayers, hymns, libations and religious ceremony. But it was empty of spiritual power. Their worship was a thing of ritual, of ceremonial observance; they had no real sense of personal relationship with the gods before whom they bowed.

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Even in Israel the situation was scarcely better. The Jews worshipped the living God, but there was little life in their worship.

Then the Christians appeared. Small groups of worshipping people, with such an awareness of God in their worship, such a flow of life, such spiritual dynamic, that their neighbours were stunned. The world took notice! They were bound to admit "*that God is really among you (Christians)!*" (1 Co 14:25).

The secret in this power in worship was simply the presence of the charismata. Whenever the early Christians came together their meeting was characterised by a rich use of the supernatural gifts of the Holy Spirit (1 Co 14:26). These gifts brought the voice of God into their assemblies ; these gifts added a touch of the divine to every act of worship; these gifts lifted their worship into a spiritual dimension that the world had never before seen. As long as these gifts remained prominent, their worship could not lapse into dead formality, nor become lifeless ritual.

Today - when real worship has become a lost art in many churches; when people say prayers, but do not pray; when they sing hymns but do not praise; when they do penance but find no peace; when they listen but hear no prophecy - the Pentecostals appear to have rediscovered the worshipping power of the early church.

ADDENDUM

ON CREATING THEOLOGY

Have you ever realised that the early church apparently failed to create a theology of Holy Spirit baptism, and certainly did not do so in relation to the charismata. That is one of the major reasons why a Pentecostal experience of Holy Spirit baptism soon vanished from the church, and the charismata along with it. Without an adequate theological base no experience can be long sustained in the church.

How does theology develop? Always in the same way: it is a result of someone thinking about and then defining an encounter he or she has had with God. For that definition to be valid, three things must be true: it must define the new encounter in a way that

- harmonises with previous truth;
- describes the whole experience;
- universalises it (so that it becomes available to all Christians)

If the definition fails in any of those three points, then the spiritual experience the thinker has had must remain either a personal or singular encounter with God, or perhaps be branded false. If the definition accords with the three demands, then it becomes valid “theology” - a piece of universally true knowledge about God and about human experience of the divine.

The creation of a charismatic theology of Holy Spirit baptism has been one of the great achievements of the Pentecostal movement in this century. Because of it, the restored experience of the Day of Pentecost has spread rapidly across the face of the earth and embraced millions of people. The Pentecostals were the first churches in history to join glossolalia with Holy Spirit baptism in a way that has made the experience universally and continually repeatable.

Pentecostal doctrine has its weaknesses; but we must cling to it at least until someone produces an alternative that is equally successful in creating a framework in which the full ministry and giftings of the Holy Spirit can flourish.

It cannot escape notice that wherever the Pentecostal link between glossolalia and Holy Spirit is abandoned, the remaining charismata dwindle away from the modern church as quickly as they did from the early church.

One more comment on the idea that all great thought is ultimately based upon human experience, hence all great theology is based upon personal encounter with God. Thomas Carlyle, the 19th century Scottish author, wrote a brilliant essay on “History”. In it he discusses the fact that general conversation is overwhelmingly occupied with narration of what people have *done*, rather than with what they have *thought*, so that history is the very stuff of life. He said -

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Our speech is curiously historical. Most men, you may observe, speak only to narrate; not imparting what they have thought, which indeed were often a small matter, but in exhibiting what they have undergone or seen, which is a quite unlimited one . . . Cut us off from Narrative, how would the stream of conversation, even among the wisest, languish into detached handfals, and among the foolish utterly evaporate! Thus, as we do nothing but enact History, we say little but recite it: nay, rather, in that widest sense, *our whole spiritual life is built thereon*. For, strictly considered, what is all Knowledge too but recorded Experience, and a product of History; of which Reasoning and Belief, no less than Action and Passion, are essential materials?⁷

“Our whole spiritual life”, said Carlyle, depends upon an accurate recital of the history of one’s meetings with God. If my experience of God can be so defined that it becomes repeatable among the people of God everywhere, then a new piece of theology has been created. If not, then my telling of it remains no more than a personal testimony.

The Pentecostal revival began nearly a century ago with various groups of people who testified that they had experienced an outpouring of the Holy Spirit and had spoken in tongues. Those testimonies were soon related to the New Testament, and expanded (for the first time in Christian history) into a doctrine of the glossolalic baptism in the Holy Spirit. The truth of the new doctrine was confirmed by its ready repetition in the lives of millions of people. The Pentecostal movement was born, and became, and remains, “the Third Force in Christendom”!

(7) Italics mine.

CHAPTER TWO

BORN AND BAPTISED

Many people believe that Holy Spirit baptism is an invariable accompaniment of the new birth. *"It can be taken for granted,"* they say, *"that Christians receive the gift of the Spirit at the moment of their conversion."* But is it right to say that being *"born again"* and being *"baptised in the Spirit"* are one and the same thing? Is it truly impossible to have one experience without the other? Must we agree that Holy Spirit baptism is linked with regeneration as closely as heat is with fire?

We maintain that a person can receive Christ as Saviour without receiving him as Baptiser in the Spirit; one can be born again without being filled with the Spirit (in the meaning of the Day of Pentecost). It is my purpose now to show that the scriptures reveal this clear distinction between the work of the Spirit in regeneration and his activity in the Pentecostal experience.

The full process of conversion to Christ and of entrance into the church involves three steps:

- confession of Christ as Saviour;
- baptism in water;
- baptism in the Holy Spirit.

This full process may be called "Christian initiation", and I will use that expression to describe these three steps. In the practice of Christian initiation there would normally be a close connection between conversion, water baptism, and Spirit baptism. Yet they each remain distinct experiences, and they *can* be separated from each other in time and place. Proof of that claim begins with the example of the first disciples; for scripture shows that they were able to, and did, experience the new birth long before the day of Pentecost; in other words, regeneration is not unique to Christian experience, but was part of the old dispensation - ⁸

(8) In this book I am using the terms new birth, regeneration, salvation, conversion, more or less interchangeably.

(I) THE EXAMPLE OF THE FIRST DISCIPLES

(A) REGENERATION IN ISRAEL

It is sometimes suggested that the “new birth” was unknown in Old Testament days; therefore, the disciples could not have been “born again” until after the resurrection of Christ. Many people suppose that the New Testament era and the new birth both came into existence on the day of Pentecost. That view, of course, lends support to the contention that the new birth and the baptism in the Spirit are conterminous.

However, there are several ways of demonstrating that regeneration was essential under the old covenant, just as it is under the new. Across the ages the experience of believing people has been the same: they have found eternal life through personal union with God by the Holy Spirit -

(1) The Old Testament saints were familiar with the truth of “justification by faith”; but since justification without regeneration is inconceivable, believing the one, they must have experienced the other (see Ps 32:1-2, Ro 4:1-8; Mi 6:6-8).

Those passages of scripture, and many others, show that justification and regeneration are two sides of the one coin. “**Justification**” expresses the *forensic* aspect of salvation - that is, the legal transaction that takes place in heaven when God declares the sinner reconciled to himself by virtue of the atonement. “**Regeneration**” expresses the *practical* aspect of salvation - that is, a personal experience of peace, and new life; it is the result of the Holy Spirit bringing the sinner to a new birth into the family of God. But the two are inseparable; it is impossible truly to have either regeneration or justification without the other.

(2) Language such as that found in Psalm 51 (see especially verses 10-12) can only be construed as the testimony of a man who has found in God an experience completely analogous to what we call the “new birth”. And what is true of this Psalm is true of the greater part of the psalms and prophets - we use those songs and oracles in Christian worship because they exactly echo our own experience.

The conclusion seems irresistible that the saints of a former era enjoyed an experience of regeneration that was essentially the same as that enjoyed by every “born again” Christian.

(3) The hall mark of the Old Testament saints was love for the law of God, an attribute that is beyond the reach of an unregenerate man (Ps 119:1 ff.; 1 Co 2:9-16).

(4) The great hope of the Christian - resurrection from the grave - is the same as that held by the saints of old; which indicates that their relationship with God was fundamentally the same as ours (cp. 1 Co 15:54-44 with Ho 13:14; Is 51:11; etc.)⁹

(9) This remains true even though the hope of immortality was dim during Old Testament times. Nonetheless, as Jesus showed the Sadducees, the promise of resurrection was deeply embedded in the Hebrew scriptures. In his time, most devout Jews were profoundly convinced of the survival of the soul beyond death, and rejoiced in hope of the resurrection and of a reward in the heavens. No fundamental difference exists between their hope and ours.

(5) The close relationship between redeemed Israel and the church shows that the people of God in both dispensations share a similar identity. The following references clearly uncover this common identity:

- **Ephesians 2:12-22**

The Ephesians, in their unsaved state, were “*alienated from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise*”, they were “*far off*” and “*divided*” from Israel, the people of God. But now, in Christ, they have been “*brought near*”; the “*dividing wall of hostility*” has been “*broken down*”; they are no longer “*strangers and sojourners*” (in Israel), but “*fellow citizens with the saints (of Israel) and members of the household of God*”. In place of “*the two*” groups (Israelite and Gentile), Christ has “*created in himself one new people*”. In other words, salvation has come to the gentiles through their incorporation into the covenants God made with Israel, which confirms the common source of the salvation experienced by the saints in both dispensations.

- **Galatians 6:15-16**

Paul calls the church “*the Israel of God*”, a description which would be disrespectful unless he had believed that the redeemed of Israel and the redeemed of the church are one equal company.

- **Romans 11:11-12, 17- 24**

The Gentile church does not exist as an entity separate from Israel; on the contrary, it depends for its very life upon its union with Israel, the “*natural olive tree*”. The conclusion is irresistible that redeemed Israel and the church share a common life in Christ; in other words, both companies have entered the covenant by means of the new birth.

(6) Jesus expressed surprise that Nicodemus was ignorant of the necessity of the new birth as a pre-requisite for entrance into the kingdom of God (Jn 3:3-10, especially vs. 10). Remember that this interview took place under the Old testament dispensation (the new dispensation began with the resurrection of Christ; Ro 1:4; 1 Pe 1:3), which shows that regeneration was just as essential to the old economy as it is to the new.

There are, of course, aspects of the new birth new revealed to us in Christ that were unknown in the former time; see *1 Peter 1:10-12*. But this cannot alter the fact that if people in the former age were redeemed at all it could only happen by being “*born again*”.

Christ was emphatic: then, as today, “*flesh and blood*” could not inherit the kingdom of God; entrance into the kingdom was open only to those who had been “*born from above*” by the Spirit of God.

(7) From those and similar arguments we conclude that the new birth was an integral part of the old dispensation. Therefore statements made about the disciples before the day of Pentecost rightly show that they had enjoyed this experience - see *Luke 10:19-20; 24:46-48, 52-53* (and cp. Ro. 10:9-10; 1 Pe 1:3); *John 15:3; 17:14-16; Acts 1:3*; etc.

The language used in all those references, and many others that could be quoted, is completely harmonious with Christian experience. No difference can be seen between their condition and that of people today who confess Christ as Saviour. The conclusion is inescapable: the disciples were truly regenerate before the day of Pentecost. Thus the contention that the new birth and Holy Spirit baptism are invariably conterminous falls down in tatters.

(B) THE NEW BIRTH IN PROPHECY

(1) Against the above conclusion some may raise an objection: the Old Testament itself predicts at least a more intensive and far-reaching experience of regeneration as part of the promised blessing of the new covenant - see *Ezekiel 36:25-27; Jeremiah 31-34*; etc; and cp. *Hebrews 8:10-12*. This being so, it could be asserted that while the disciples may have been "born again" in the *old* sense, they were not "born again" in the *new* sense until the day of Pentecost. Hence the *Christian* experience of the new birth must be effected by means of the baptism in the Holy Spirit - that is, Holy Spirit baptism and Christian salvation are the same event.

In confirmation of this claim, *Acts 11:17* is often quoted, a passage which in some translations conveys the impression that the gift of the Spirit comes simultaneously with believing on Christ.

The objection can be answered as follows-

(a) The phrasing of *Acts 11:17* is ambiguous. Commentators differ on whether to apply the very "*believe*" to the new Roman converts or to Peter and his friends. They also differ on whether the verb should be translated "*when we believed*" or "*who have believed*". Obviously, this verse by itself cannot be cited as proof that the giving of the Spirit is an inseparable accompaniment of the new birth. It must be interpreted in the light of what actually happened in the lives of the disciples; but the gospels and *Acts* clearly portray them as regenerate believers before the day of Pentecost. The Pentecostal event was a "*clothing with power*" (*Lu 24:49*); it did not create the disciples as sons of God (which they already were), but equipped them as servants (*Ac 1:8*).

(b) We may freely concede that the new era does offer a far richer experience of regeneration than was possible in the old era, and that Holy Spirit baptism is an integral part of this heightened experience; but this enlarged distinction between the salvation experience by the saints of old, and the reality of our experience today. "*Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets*" will not be second-class citizens in the kingdom of God - we will "*sit down*" with them, not they with us! (*Mt 8:11; Lu 13:28-30*). The promises we believe, and by which we are saved, are the promises that brought them life, just as our faith brings life to us (*Ro 4:3,6-9, 16, 23-25*). With us, they too will rise in the "*first resurrection*" to share the glorious inheritance of God (*Jn 5:19-29*). The new covenant brought with it many new things, but it did not change the basic pattern of salvation by faith: in both eras, the righteous have been justified by faith, which enabled God to give them an inner re-birth by his Spirit (cp. *Ha 2:4; Mi 6:8*).

(c) We allow that the "church" (in the Christian sense of the word) did not exist until at least after the resurrection of Christ (cp. *Mt 16:18-21*); and many commentators believe that the church actually came into being on the day of Pentecost. However, it must be remembered

(i) that the redeemed and holy core of national Israel also formed a "church" (*Ac 7:38; Ep 2:12-13,19-20*; and cp. *Jn 10:14-16*, where the original "*fold*" is redeemed Israel, to which the "*other sheep*" are brought);

(ii) that there is a distinction between the total company of the regenerate people of God and the Christian church. The Christian church consists of the assembly of the redeemed people of God in this era; but this church is only a "*branch*" which is inextricably bound to the original "*root*" of the patriarchs and prophets (*Ro 11:16-18*). In other words, the church as a regenerate body is grafted onto the body of previously regenerate Israel, so that both companies now united form the total "*Israel of God*"

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(Ga 6:16; and cp. He 12:22-24.) In its outward expression the Christian church may not have existed before Pentecost; but in its inner reality the church, as the redeemed people of God, has existed since Adam and Eve by faith embraced God's covenant promise. The saints of old *looked forward* to Christ, believed, rejoiced, and were saved (Jn 8:56); we *look back* to the cross, believe, rejoice and are saved. The prophet in his vision saw the "*ransomed*" of both "*coming to Zion with singing, and with everlasting joy upon their head*" (Is 51:11).

If these things are so, then it is wrong to argue that the disciples could not have been born again until the church was formed at the day of Pentecost. Had Matthew, or Peter, or John, or any of them, died before the day of Pentecost they would have been no less redeemed, no less a part of the heavenly assembly, than those who went on to share the Pentecostal event. To argue that they were only conditionally regenerate before and until the day of Pentecost, after which the new birth and the baptism in the Spirit became conterminous, has no basis in either reason or scripture. In fact, that argument actually concedes the point: the disciples, and all the saints before them were pragmatically born again, without benefit of the Pentecostal effusion. Therefore, the new birth by the Holy Spirit can occur without the corollary of Holy Spirit baptism!

(d) If it is still argued that no one can be a "Christian" apart from membership in the (Christian) church, I reply that the claim is true today only in an outward sense. In the deeper sense of the word, all who have believed God and who have had their faith reckoned to them as righteousness have been "Christians". For example, what can be said about the extraordinary cry of Thomas: "*My lord and my God!*" (Jn 20:28)? If a Christian is a person who acknowledges Christ as risen from the dead and as Lord (Ac 16:31; Ro 10:9-10), then Thomas, before Christ had even ascended, and certainly before Pentecost, was a Christian!

(e) *John 20:22* shows that the disciples were regenerate *before* the day of Pentecost -

(i) Some commentators try to connect this passage *with* the day of Pentecost; they say that it is actually a capsule description of the Pentecostal event. Their argument improbably requires us to believe

- **first**, that John is careless about his chronology, and that he portrays Pentecost as occurring *before* the ascension;
- **second**, that John's *prediction* of Pentecost (in 7:39; 14:16,20; etc.) obliges him also to describe its fulfilment.

In reply we say

- **first**, that John displays special care in his chronology at this point in his gospel, shown by the clear sequence of days described in 20:1,19,26; and
- **second**, a prediction does not necessarily require a description of its fulfilment - for example, Matthew also predicted Pentecost (3:11), yet he did not feel it necessary to record the actual event.

Further, John himself expressly states that the Holy Spirit could not be given (in the Pentecostal sense) until after the ascension of Christ (7:39; 16:7). The Spirit could not come until *after* Jesus had "*gone away*"; but Christ was still very much *present* on the occasion described in Jn 20:22! Then again, Christ was still tangibly present eight days later (vs.26), and only some time after that (yet still prior to Pentecost) was he seen no more (vs. 29).

So it is vain to argue that *John 20:22* describes anything other than a giving of the Spirit that preceded, and greatly differed from, the Pentecostal effusion. In fact, subsequent to the

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occasion described in *John 20:22*, and immediately prior to his ascension, Christ was still predicting that new and dynamic (Ac 1:8, *dunamis*) outpouring of the Holy Spirit.

(ii) Such factors, then, demand that Jesus' act of "*breathing upon*" his disciples must be applied in some way to the regenerative work of the Spirit, but not to Holy Spirit baptism. Perhaps we may also see here

- a graphic demonstration that Jesus was alive from the dead (do we not establish the presence of life by the act of breathing?);
- an act parallel to that in *Genesis 2:7*, as though Christ were signifying that the disciples were now truly a new creation (cp. 2 Co 5:17);
- an act by which Jesus commissioned the disciples as heralds of the gospel (Jn 20:23).

(2) So then, despite the fact that the first disciples were truly "*born again*", and that in this sense they had already "*received the Spirit*", Christ still commanded them to "*stay in the city*" until they were "*stay in the city*" until they were "*clothed with power from on high*" (Lu 24:49). Within the teaching of the four gospels there is not one suggestion that the new birth and the baptism in the Spirit are invariably conterminous. On the contrary, everywhere those who have been converted are urged to go on and receive the *separate* gift of the Holy Spirit (cp. Lu 11:13; Jn 7:39; Lu 24:49).

What about those who argue that the gospels could do no other than urge people to wait for the Spirit because the Spirit had not yet been given? That may be true of, say, *Luke 24:49*; but it cannot be true of *Luke 11:13*. The latter passage surely describes a promise that is universally and perpetually given to the children of God. As "*children*", and only after they have become "*children*", should they ask for the gift of the Spirit.¹⁰

(II) TWO DISTINGUISHING FACTORS

So then, we are back where we began: the two factors that distinguish the new age from the old (as Joel points out in 2:28,32) are -

(1) Not salvation (or the new birth) itself, but rather the extension of the offer of eternal life freely to everyone: "*whoever calls upon the name of the Lord will be saved.*" The covenant has now broken its national boundaries and is freely offered to the whole world.

(2) The prayer of Moses is at last fulfilled: the universal outpouring of the Holy Spirit now enables all "*the Lord's people to be prophets*" (Nu 11:29; 1 Co 14:31). This second factor - *the world-wide effusion of the Holy Spirit* - is the chief sign of the new dispensation; but I will say more about that later.

(10) I can hardly take seriously another suggestion, that *Luke 11:13* stands within the dispensational framework of the old covenant and became invalid after Calvary; a suggestion which leads its proponents to the absurd proposition that because the Lord's Prayer (vs 1-4) is set in the same framework it too has no validity today as a form of prayer. I take it that the prayer and the promise are both as applicable to people today as they were to the people to whom Jesus first spoke them.

CHAPTER THREE

DISCRETE AND DIFFERENT

I have shown that the first disciples were truly “Christian” prior to their reception of the dynamic gift of the Spirit on the day of Pentecost. So there is no impossibility about a person being born again but not baptised in the Spirit. However, someone might say:

The disciples had no choice but to wait until the day of Pentecost to receive the full measure of the Spirit; therefore their example is not one that we should follow. Why should we wait now that the Holy Spirit has already been given?

We reply: the pattern set by the first disciples was followed by the *entire early church*, and is therefore established as the norm for all Christians. If we are “*born of the Spirit*” then we should also pray to be “*baptised in the Spirit*”.

From the moment of conversion the Holy Spirit is with each newborn Christian, influencing him and giving him many proofs of the grace of God in his life (cp. Lu 24:52-53); but this activity of the Spirit has one chief purpose: to prepare the Christian to go on and receive “*the promise of the Father*” (Ac 1:4; 2:33).

However, what will happen if people believe that “*the promise of the Father*” is synonymous with conversion, and if they believe that the initial signs of the presence of the Holy Spirit are all that they require? They will reckon that nothing remains beyond a gradual increase of what they already have. The true design of the Holy Spirit will then be sadly frustrated, and they will suffer an unnecessary measure of spiritual poverty.

We can surely have apostolic power only if we go to the same source and receive in the same manner as the apostles. When were they “*clothed with power from on high*”? Only after the Holy Spirit had come upon them in a special endowment subsequent to the new birth.

But what about those flourishing Christians who have never experienced a distinct baptism in the Spirit? They are people who by personal faith and strength manage to appropriate a remarkable measure of the grace of God. They have never spoken in tongues, yet they maintain a successful Christian witness. Let us commend them for their achievement. But most Christians who fail to receive the Pentecostal gift in the Pentecostal way (as a separate endowment from God) will be yearningly aware of a great gulf between *their* Christian experience and the vibrant life portrayed in the New Testament. My intention, then, is to show

that the six accounts of Holy Spirit baptism in *Acts* (2:1-4; 4:31; 8:14-15; 9:17; 10:44-48; 19:1-6) are valid paradigms of the Pentecostal teaching that:

- *Holy Spirit baptism is an experience separate from subsequent to the new birth; and*
- *the common sign of Holy Spirit baptism is glossolalia.*

One of those accounts (the first outpouring in Jerusalem, *Acts* 2:1-4) has already been mentioned; here we look at four of the later accounts. These accounts contain what we could call "**The Primary Proof**" of a discrete baptism in the Holy Spirit, which is the theme of this chapter. The next will consider a further set of reference that comprise "**The Secondary Proof**".

PRIMARY PROOF

(A) THE SAMARITANS

- see *Acts* 8:5-6,12,14-18.

Wonderfully ingenious efforts have been made to avoid Luke's plain statement that the Samaritans did not receive the gift of the Spirit until some time after their conversion and baptism in water. One writer cunningly argues that the Samaritans were not truly converted until the apostles laid hands on them. Another claims that the Samaritans did in fact receive the Spirit at their conversion, or at least at their baptism. Why then did Peter come down and pray for them? Certainly not to help them receive Holy Spirit baptism, but only to impart to them some additional charismata!

Still another builds an astonishing argument to prove that Luke records the *separation* of water-baptism from Spirit-baptism only to demonstrate their *union* - they occurred apart to prove that they belong together! He adds that it is wrong to "*confuse what Luke records with what Luke teaches.*"

All such claims no matter how skilfully contrived, make nonsense of scripture. If Luke did not mean what he says, then why didn't he say what he meant? We can do without such theological sophistry. One must admire the ingenuity of the arguments, but never yield to their persuasion.

What lies behind such tortuous efforts to change the obvious meaning of scripture? I suppose the scholars, being already convinced that conversion and/or water-baptism are inseparable from Holy Spirit baptism, are determined to make Luke agree with them.

Happily for us, Luke refuses to be coerced. With a cheerful disregard for theological nicety he describes a mixed-up world in which people have quite diverse experiences. Sometimes they are converted, baptised, and filled with the Spirit all together. Other times they are baptised and filled with the Spirit much later than their conversion. Then they may come to conversion and baptism, but not be filled with the Spirit until long after. Or they may be converted and filled with the Spirit before their baptism. Sometimes Luke records their baptism but not their infilling by the Spirit; or he records their infilling by the Spirit, but not their baptism; or he records neither their infilling by the Spirit nor their baptism! All of which is a great offence to some theologians, who labour mightily to reduce the confusion to a systematic pattern!

However, any interpretation so distant from the face-value of scripture that it lies beyond the grasp of an ordinary reader must be viewed with suspicion. Luke wrote *Acts* to instruct his friend Theophilus (1:1), who may have been well educated, but was certainly not trained in church dogmatics! I am satisfied that not only what Luke says, but all that he *meant* to say, lies clearly

enough in his pages to be understood by any thoughtful and reasonable perceptive person. At least, interpretation should not require the verbal contortions some scholars have practised. If there is apparent confusion in the story-line of *Acts*, it is only because God does not work in conformity to a rigid pattern; he has many ways of reaching people, of revealing Christ in them, and of fulfilling his purpose in them.¹¹

What then can we learn from the story of the Samaritans?

Having heard of the great success of Philip's ministry at Samaria, the apostles in Jerusalem at once sent Peter and John to investigate the new work. We are not told precisely why they were sent; but we *are* told that when they arrived Peter and John began to pray for those new converts to receive the Holy Spirit.

Now, this was extraordinary behaviour - unless we accept that it was customary for people in the early church to receive the Holy Spirit only *after* special prayer had been offered. How else could the apostles have been justified in assuming that the Holy Spirit "*had not yet fallen on any of them*"? The apostles apparently believe that receiving the gift of the Holy Spirit was something quite different from receiving Christ as Saviour and from being baptised in water; for it is plain that the Samaritans -

(1) were ***truly converted***: they gave close heed to Philip when he "*preached Christ*" (vs. 14); they "*received the word of God*" (vs. 14); they were filled with "*much joy*" (vs.8). Surely in any other context but a doctrinal argument there would be no question about the genuine conversion of these people!

(2) were "***baptised, both men and women*** . . . *in the name of the Lord Jesus*" (vs. 12,16). If any doubt remained about their conversion, it must now be dispelled (cp. Mk 16:16).

(3) were ***not baptised in the Spirit*** until many days (or even weeks) later, when Peter and John arrived from Jerusalem. It takes a piece of scholarly casuistry (which by its devious subtlety shatters the plain meaning of scripture) to avoid the obvious inference: it was not uncommon for people in the days of the early church to receive the Holy Spirit *subsequent to their conversion to Christ*.

However, I do not want to imply that the distinction between conversion, baptism in water, and receiving the gift of the Spirit was so great that the apostles considered a long delay between each of those events to be unimportant. On the contrary (see Ac 2:38), faith in Christ, baptism in water, receiving the gift of the Spirit, were all treated as integral parts of a single act of Christian initiation. The omission of any of them (especially of water baptism or of Holy Spirit baptism) left the new convert deficient in his or her experience. (The omission of repentance and faith, of course, meant that the "convert" was no convert at all - cp. Simon, Ac 8:13, 18-24.)

The close connection between conversion, baptism, and the gift of the Spirit is emphasised by Luke's use of the word "*yet*" - "*(the Holy Spirit) had not yet fallen on any of them . . . they had only been baptised*" (Ac 8:16). There was obviously a strong expectancy that, being baptised, the Samaritans should soon experience the effusion of the Spirit; and to this end the apostles hastened to pray for them. So the witness of *Acts* points to a powerful bond between the three

(11) I do not mean that there is no pattern in *Acts*. There is; for God does not author confusion (1 Co 14:33). The pattern is there; the underlying principles are consistent; but the outworking of that pattern and of those principles is not so fixed and immutable as the cool logic of Western theology would like to have it! The theological ruins scattered across the centuries are proof enough that the Bible is little amenable to any effort to lock it into a rigid and final mould.

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parts of Christian initiation; but it cannot be established that they *always* occurred simultaneously, or even always in close sequence.

Notice also the statement: "Simon say that *the Spirit was given through the laying on of the apostle's hand*" (vs. 18). In the context of *Acts*, it has been well observed that

this one sentence is enough to show that the baptism in the Spirit is not imparted to the believer as a natural consequence of either the new birth or of baptism.

The gift of the Spirit was normally given through special ministry by the leaders of the church - specifically, by prayer and the laying on of hands.

The Samaritan incident is followed by the story about an Ethiopian dignitary (vs. 26-39). Some ancient writings insert into verse 39 words, "*the Spirit of the Lord fell upon the eunuch, and the angel of the Lord snatched away Philip*". That clause, if true, confirms that Holy Spirit baptism is an experience separate from and subsequent to the new birth. Even if the clause was not written by Luke, it still demonstrates that at least some ancient authorities saw nothing objectionable in the idea that Holy Spirit baptism follows after conversion and water baptism.

(B) THE APOSTLE PAUL

- see *Acts 9:17-19; 22:6-16; 26:12-20*

Ian Cockburn gives the following reasons for suggesting that Paul was converted at the time of his encounter with Christ on the road to Damascus -

- he was convicted of sin (Ac 9:8;26:14).
- he believed in the resurrection of Christ (Ac 22:14; cp. Ro 10:9).
- he called Jesus "*Lord*" in the true sense (Ac 22:10; cp. 1 Co 12:3).
- he was obedient (Ac 9:6,8;22:10,11).
- he was commissioned by Christ (Ac 26:16-18).
- when Ananias came he did not preach the gospel to Paul, presumably because it was not necessary (Ac 9:17;22:14-16).
- Ananias called Paul "*brother*" (Ac 9:17;22:13).
- Ananias prayed for Paul that he might be filled with the Holy Spirit; but the unregenerate cannot be filled with the Spirit (Ac 9:17; cp. Jn 14:17).

Hence Paul appears to be a clear example of a person who was first converted; three days later he was filled with the Holy Spirit; and later still baptised in water. However, the contrary *can* be effectively argued: that while Paul's conversion certainly began with the dramatic events on the highway, it was not consummated until possibly the time of his baptism (cp. 22:16). The three days of blindness, fasting, and prayer, would then have been a time of deep spiritual conflict for Paul, after which Ananias came and brought him to a total commitment to Christ. This commitment (it is said) was accompanied by Holy Spirit baptism and followed by water baptism.

The omissions and differences in each of the three accounts of Paul's conversion make the question difficult to resolve. Luke evidently did not think it important to pinpoint the exact moment of Paul's conversion. The apostles felt no obligation to stick to a rigid pattern. Rather, an impression remains that each of the events of those dramatic three days were essential parts of Paul's Christian initiation. They were all necessary components of his acceptance of the awesome task given to him by God.

However, three happenings *are* clearly stated: Paul's encounter with Christ; his infilling with the Holy Spirit by the laying on of hands; and his subsequent baptism in water. Paul's example may provide only limited proof that the new birth *precedes* Holy Spirit baptism; but there remains a strong witness that Holy Spirit baptism is a *separate* entity, which can be imparted by laying on hands. Two things are noteworthy -

(1) Ananias was not an apostle, nor even an elder, yet he was able to lay hands on Paul and to impart to him the gift of the Holy Spirit; which shows that all believers may so pray for one another.

(2) Ananias did not think it strange that God told him to lay hands on Paul, and to impart the Holy Spirit to him.

If it is true, as some teach, that since the day of Pentecost every believer automatically receives the fullness of the Spirit at conversion, surely Ananias would have queried this seemingly unnecessary act. But he appears (and so does the historian, Luke) to have accepted the command as quite natural.¹²

(C) THE ROMANS

- see Acts 10:44-11:18

Here is one of those dismaying places where Luke refuses to write what some preachers would like him to write: for as surely as the Samaritan passage enables the Pentecostal to wax eloquent, while his opponents struggle to soften the blows, so this passage enables our opponents to rise high while we flee for cover! However, before our adversaries claim a rout, let us consider a few matters -

(1) I think it is artificial to argue, as many Pentecostals do, that Cornelius and his friends were actually converted either before Peter arrived at Caesarea, or at least (in response to Peter's preaching), just prior to the Holy Spirit coming upon them. Such arguing seems forced; it arises from the same motive that besets many of our doctrinal adversaries: the compulsion to make scripture conform to a set pattern. Why try to deny the obvious? The conversion of these Romans, and their baptism in the Spirit, occurred simultaneously (cp. 11:14-15).

(2) But must that really mean that the two events are *always* conterminous? Plainly, other references in *Acts* show that it means nothing of the sort. And even in this even we see a sharp distinction between baptism in water and the gift of the Spirit. Although Peter baptised the new converts as soon as possible, baptism did not in this case *lead* to the gift of the Spirit (as elsewhere), but rather flowed from it.

So then, while Spirit-baptism and water-baptism are closely related, the relationship is not one of dependence. Either can precede the other, and each can achieve its basic spiritual purpose without the other. Conversion, water-baptism, and Spirit-baptism, stand together as important yet definitely separate parts of the full process of Christian initiation. Suppose a Christian possesses only the first part (conversion)? He or she may be deficient in their experience, but they are still Christians (Ro 10:9-13). Should they then be content? Hardly, or possessing the

(12) The suggestion made by some commentators that the reference to "laying on of hands" is actually an oblique way of describing the act of baptising Paul in water, is surely just another piece of casuistry. It ignores the fact that the laying on of hands also brought healing to Paul before "he rose and was baptised").

first two (conversion and water-baptism) should then rest satisfied? I hope not! Let us rather go on in prayer until the full gamut of initiation into Christ has been accomplished in us: conversion; water baptism; and Holy Spirit baptism.

(3) Whether or not the Holy Spirit was given to the Romans instantaneously with their conversion, cannot detract from Luke's vivid description of the giving of the Spirit as a definite and observable event. One commentator, for example tries to draw attention away from this vital fact by focussing on the glossolalia, not on the giving of the Spirit. He declares that the disciples were "*amazed*", not because God had given the Holy Spirit to the Romans, but because this giving was attested by the sign of "*glossolalia*" (which, he says, had not occurred since the day of Pentecost). But Luke doesn't agree. He says quite explicitly: "*they were amazed, because the gift of the Spirit had been poured out even on the Gentiles*" (vs. 45). The source of their astonishment was not the glossolalia but the giving of the Spirit, which was revealed by the glossolalia.

Now, the outpouring of the Spirit on those Romans was significant, because it bore witness to their genuine conversion. If they had not become regenerate (even if only at that moment) they could not have received the gift of the Spirit, for the Spirit is given only to God's children (Lu 11:13; Jn 14:16-17). But a sign and the thing signified are not the same thing. If the giving of the Holy Spirit is a *sign* of conversion it cannot be the *same thing* as conversion. And so here: seeing that the Romans had received the Holy Spirit, Peter knew at once that they must also have become part of the regenerate people of God, and "*he commanded them to be baptised*". But notice again: they were not baptised because they had received the Holy Spirit, but because the giving of the Spirit proved they had believed in Christ (11:17).

Peter's comment is illuminating: "*who was I that I could withstand God?*" He admits that a mere profession of faith by the Romans would not have been enough to persuade him to baptise them. But then God himself attested the genuineness of their conversion by the outpouring of his Spirit, and Peter could no longer resist. Knowing that they had received the gift of the Spirit, and therefore must be truly saved, he could not refuse to baptise them in water. But the inference remains that their conversion and their reception of the Spirit were not the same thing, even if they occurred at the same time.

(4) So then, whichever way you look at it, the Caesarean event portrays Holy Spirit baptism as a clear, distinct, observable experience; one that is knowable, unlike the new birth, which is essentially unknowable. Even the disputed statement in 11:17 speaks of two separate entities: "*the gift (of the Spirit)*", and "*believing in the Lord Jesus Christ*". Saving faith is inward, and cannot be observed except by its long-term results; but Holy Spirit baptism is immediately observable. The latency of salvation and the saliency of the baptism in the Spirit make them separate events, even if they sometimes occur in the believer simultaneously.

Have you noticed that those who equate baptism in the Spirit with conversion are flaccid in their portrayals of that baptism? How vague their words are, in contrast with the solid pungency, the vivid objectivity, that Luke uses in his descriptions! And surely the apposition of Spirit-baptism and water-baptism in 11:16 strongly implies that the former is an event as separate and distinct as the latter? Even the use of the word "*baptism*" suggests that the giving of the Spirit is an event as conspicuous as a plunge into water!

We have now looked at the first three descriptions found in *Acts* of people receiving the gift of the Holy Spirit *after* the Day of Pentecost: the outpourings at *Samaria*, *Damascus*; and *Caesarea*. This brings us to the fourth account -

(D) THE EPHESIANS

- *Acts 19:1-6; Ephesians 1:13*

I have plodded through many weary pages of argument by authors who cannot accept the simple witness of this passage. How did the Ephesian disciples receive the gift of the Spirit? Plainly, in a distinct and dramatic experience that was subsequent to their conversion and water-baptism.

(1) SOME STRANGE OPINIONS

Yet one writer insists that these “disciples” were followers of John the Baptism, not of Christ. Another declares that their water-baptism and Spirit-baptism are so conjoined that these must be regarded as one even with no intervening delay. Another contends that the Greek structure of Paul’s question (“*Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?*”) implies no time gap between belief in Christ and reception of the Spirit. Another seizes hold of *Ephesians 1:13* and argues that the participle translated “*have believed*” is in the same tense as the verb “*were sealed*”, thus implying that the “*believing*” and “*sealing*” occurred together. Still another maintains that “*the laying on of Paul’s hands*” was actually part of the baptismal ritual, and that the conversion, baptism, and Spirit-baptism of the Ephesians all occurred together. This latter author dismisses as an annoying irrelevancy Luke’s reference to the charismata that followed Spirit-baptism! Then there is the author who cheerfully ignores Luke’s record, and states enthusiastically that the Ephesians were gloriously filled with the Spirit at the point of their conversion, before their water baptism! He does mention verse 6, but claims that Paul laid hands on them, not so that the Holy Spirit might fall upon them (for, says he, they were already filled with the Spirit!), but only so that they might receive the charismata as a special sign to pique the Jews!

(2) A BETTER VIEW

To such laboured efforts I answer -

(a) In the context of the Book of *Acts* the word “disciples”, when it is left unqualified (as it is here), must surely be taken to mean disciples of Christ. At any rate, Paul accepted these people as Christians, for he took it for granted that they had “believed”. His question, “*Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?*” would be an absurd one to address to unbelievers. These “disciples” were probably converted under the ministry of Apollos, who, though he was himself imperfectly instructed in the gospel, was certainly a Christian (Ac 18:24-28).

(b) When Paul came to them he recognised that they were disciples (of Christ), but he noted a lack of spiritual dynamic in their worship. He at once attributed this deficiency to a lack of the Holy Spirit; hence his question about their reception of the Spirit. When they confessed ignorance of the Holy Spirit (or better, according to several commentators and translators, ignorance of the giving of the Holy Spirit) Paul queried their water baptism. Had they been baptised properly they would have known that the Holy Spirit *had been given*.

Why is that so?

They could not have been ignorant of the *existence* of the Holy Spirit; for quite apart from the witness of the Old Testament concerning the Spirit of God, there was the witness of their own mentor, John the Baptist. “*John’s baptism*” specifically bore witness to the Holy Spirit: “*I baptise you with water for repentance, but he who is coming after me . . . will baptise you with the Holy Spirit and with fire*” (Mt 3:11). Being baptised with “*John’s baptism*” the Ephesian disciples must have been aware of his prediction of the outpouring of the Spirit; but they did not know that the

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prediction had long since been fulfilled. Hence their declaration: “*We have not even heard if the Holy Spirit is (given).*”¹³

Herein lies the essential difference between John’s baptism and Christian baptism:

- John’s baptism was a sign of repentance and of faith in the coming Baptiser in the Spirit, Jesus;
- but Christian baptism, while it is also a baptism of repentance (Ac 2:38) , is above all a confession of faith that Christ *has* come, and that the promised Comforter has already been given.

Thus Christian baptism is an act of preparation to receive the gift of the Spirit (Ac 2:38). The Ephesians were presumably aware that Christ had come (through the preaching of Apollos), but they were not yet aware that the Holy Spirit had been given.

Paul (vs. 4) reminded them of the true significance of John’s baptism. He then told them that what John had promised had now been fulfilled, upon which they were at once “*baptised in the name of the Lord Jesus*”. Only then did “*Paul lay hands on them and the Holy Spirit came on them.*”

(c) Consider again the question, “*Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?*” Barry Chant writes -

The word translated ‘*did you receive*’ and ‘*when you believed*’ are both in the aorist tense, which denotes completed actions in the past, although the time of the actions may be indefinite. The use of the aorist tense here does not prove that both actions were simultaneous. The real point lies not in the fact that both verbs are in the same tense, but that they each express a different form of the verb. ‘Receive’ is a finite form of the verb; ‘believe’ is a participle. This construction is very common in the New Testament, and it may be continually translated by two verbs, with the action of one (the participle) immediately preceding that of the other.

In this case, the action of the participle (‘*having believed*’), precedes the action of the verb (‘*did you receive?*’) Compare Acts 9:39 where a similar construction occurs. This sentence is literally, ‘*Having arisen, Peter went together with them.*’ Obviously Peter did not ‘go’ while he was ‘arising’ - the act of going followed the act of arising.

Possible translations of Acts 19:2 are -

- (lit) *having believed, did you receive the Holy Spirit?*
- *did you receive the Holy Spirit after you believed?*
- *did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?* (But only if “*when*” is understood to mean ‘immediately after’ not ‘at the same time’; cp. ‘did you dry yourself when you had a bath?’ . . . ‘did you wash your face when you cleaned your teeth?’¹⁴

(13) Note: this is the literal translation. In Greek, the grammatical form is the same as that used in *John 7:39* - “*for the Holy Spirit was not yet (given)*”. In both cases the word “given” is understood.

(14) Unpublished lecture notes.

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However, no matter how the question is translated, the fact remains that Paul speaks of two different things: believing in Christ; and receiving the Holy Spirit. Merely asking the question surely indicates that “believing” is possible without “receiving”. If one is impossible without the other, the question is meaningless. If I ask, “Did you laugh when you were tickled”? I am plainly stating that while there may be a close connection between tickling and laughing, it is still possible to be tickled and not laugh. In the same way, Paul’s question shows that a person can believe in Christ, yet not be filled with the Spirit (that is, in the dynamic sense of *Acts 1:8*, with *charismata*).

(d) Concerning *Ephesians 1:13*, one scholar writes -

This verse is decisive proof that the Holy Spirit is received at the inception of the Christian life, without any reservation on the part of the Divine Giver. The verse may be literally translated: ‘..in whom also, on believing, you were sealed with the Spirit of the promise, the Holy One.’ There is no time sequence in the tenses used to express the hearing, the believing and the sealing; the tenses are all the same. This verse teaches that the gifts and power of the Spirit are all given to the believer at once upon his or her union with Christ.

Apart from the fact that the Greek construction in the verses is the same as that in *Acts 19:2*, and therefore definitely allows that the “sealing” followed the “believing”, arguments such as those are irrelevant. History cannot be bent to accommodate grammar; grammar must yield to history - and the simple fact is, no amount of verbal juggling can alter the sequence of events in *Acts 19:1-6*. The Ephesians, being already believers in Christ, were instructed by Paul (especially toward receiving the fullness of the Spirit), whereupon they were baptised in water. After that hands were laid on them and the Holy Spirit came upon them dramatically and unmistakably. The conclusion is surely inescapable: the experience of the Ephesians palpably reveals the discrete nature of Holy Spirit baptism - it is an experience which can occur (and ordinarily *does* occur) separate from and subsequent to the new birth.

CHAPTER FOUR

MORE STRONG EVIDENCE

The primary evidence of the discrete nature of Holy Spirit baptism is found, as we have seen, in the historical passages of *Acts*. But what *occurred* there in the experience of the early church, is richly *confirmed* by the teaching statements of the New Testament. Opponents of this doctrine often state (as though the matter is too obvious to be disputed) that the letters know nothing of a discrete baptism in the Spirit; they say that the letters everywhere assume that Christians have all received the fullness of the Spirit. Hence, the claim is made that the historical passages in *Acts*, which appear to show a separation between regeneration and Holy Spirit baptism, must be interpreted in the light of this “clear” teaching in the letters. In other words, if *Acts* does appear to separate the new birth from the giving of the Spirit, it is only to demonstrate more forcibly that they in fact belong together! Against such wondrous sophistry one is left almost speechless! But not quite, as the next few paragraphs will show, in which we consider the *secondary* evidence of a discrete baptism in the Holy Spirit.

SECONDARY EVIDENCE

(I) READ SCRIPTURE WISELY

(A) AN IMPORTANT PRINCIPLE

(1) It is surely more reasonable to interpret a doctrine in the light of what actually happened than to manipulate the event to fit the doctrine. History is fixed. Doctrine cannot be used to re-write what happened; rather, doctrine must be formulated in the light of what happened, and to provide an interpretation of it.

(2) If the letters appear to accept that all Christians possess the fullness of the Spirit, that is simply a reflection of what was pragmatically true of the early church. Generally speaking, it could be supposed of the early church (as it can be of truly charismatic churches today) that its members had all been filled with the Spirit in the sense of *Acts 1:8*. But despite this, there are still numerous references in the letters, and in the gospels and *Acts*,

which clearly imply a discrete baptism in the Spirit. There are also suggestions that not all of those who were accepted as Christians had enjoyed this experience.

(B) THE CHILDREN'S GIFT

(1) *Passages that speak about the "gift" of the Spirit, or that use the word "gift" in connection with the Spirit, show the discrete nature of Holy Spirit baptism -*

(a) Luke 11:13

The children of the Father normally receive the Holy Spirit only when they *ask*. Some try to evade the plain implication of this verse by giving it a dispensational setting; they say it was applicable only before Pentecost. But would anyone presume to make the same claim about the parallel passage in *Matthew 7:7-11*, or about its contextual setting, the *Sermon on the Mount*? It is clear to me that in both passages Christ stated principles that have always been applicable to God's people. They cannot be restricted to the days of the old covenant. The same must be said of his comments on the gift of the Spirit.

(b) Acts 5:32

The Holy Spirit is given on the basis of *obedience* - and one aspect of this obedience is response to the command to ask for the gift in faith. That was particularly true of the people about whom Peter was actually speaking - the 120 disciples who were filled with the Spirit on the day of Pentecost (Ac 1:15; 2:1-4). It is commonly assumed that on the day of Pentecost the whole church was baptised in the Holy Spirit. On the contrary, although we are told that at least 500 people ("*brethren*") saw Christ after his resurrection and before Pentecost (1 Co 15:6); not more than 120 of them were in the upper room. The remainder either ignored or were unable to obey the Lord's instruction to "*stay in Jerusalem*".

So upon those who obeyed the command, and upon them alone, the Holy Spirit fell. The remainder either did not receive the Pentecostal gift at all, or else prayed and received at a later date. So unless one is prepared to quarrel with Paul and claim that these people (some 380 of them) were not Christians, then it is clear that even in the first days of the church the fullness of the Spirit was not enjoyed simultaneously by all of its members.

(c) John 7:37-39

Christ refers to "*believers*", and he describes them as still being consumed by thirst - a thirst that could be satisfied, not simply by virtue of their faith in Christ alone, but only by the distinct giving of the Holy spirit. The passage cannot mean that from the day of Pentecost onward all believers, either in conjunction with their reception of Christ or their baptism, would automatically receive the Holy Spirit. The record given to us in *Acts* shows that this did not happen.

An alternative translation of the verse brings out more strongly its true meaning: "*all who believe in me, let them drink*"; or, "*let those who believe in me drink*". The drinking and the believing are not conterminous; the drinking follows the believing, and is set before the believer as an option, which each person is free to accept or refuse.

(d) Acts 2:38-39

Peter states three things the people had to do: repent; be baptised; receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. That sequence is just the one followed at Samaria and Aphesis. Why did Luke record them in such detail at the beginning of *Acts*? His purpose was probably to establish the normal pattern for full Christian initiation. While this pattern was often departed from, it still remained a paradigm for all true evangelical ministry and Christian experience. Some may say that the

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words “*you shall receive*” imply that all those who repented and were baptised would also, without exception, automatically receive the gift of the Spirit. Against this, consider the following

(i) Peter was preaching about a promise that could be “seen” and “heard” (vs. 33; and cp. vs. 1-4). That was the gift the people expected to receive. An invisible, intangible, imperceptible corollary to conversion would hardly have satisfied them - yet that is what the proponents of the “conterminous” view would have us believe.

(ii) The construction of the sentence, “*repent . . . be baptised . . . and you shall receive*,” inescapably separates the reception of the Spirit from the reception of Christ. Baptism will normally be interposed. And baptism also must be separated from the gift of the Spirit. Conversion and baptism are closely linked, and should normally be followed by the infilling of the Spirit; but not necessarily so. It seems then that no appeal can be made to *Acts 2:38* for the belief that water-baptism and Spirit-baptism are identical. There is an unmistakable distinction between the human action of getting baptised and the divine action of giving the Spirit. *Acts 22:16* shows that baptism should be followed by prayer for the Spirit (“*calling on his name*”; cp. 8:15-16) - in fact, baptism may even be seen as the first part of that prayer; but it is not the answer to it.

(iii) “*The promise*” (of the Spirit, vs. 33) was to “*every one whom the Lord our God calls*”. In other words, to those who are called by God a further promise is given, that they may receive the fullness of the Spirit spoken of by the prophet Joel.

(iv) The phrase “*you shall receive*” is in Greek future indicative tense, and it may be translated either as an indicative or an imperative. Greek grammar, like English, lacks a true future imperative form - the imperative context, or (in the spoken word) through accent. For example: “You will come!” may be either a prediction or a command. If the Greek clause is translated as an imperative it will read this way: “*Then you must receive (the gift of the Holy Spirit)*”. That translation plainly describes the giving of the Holy Spirit as an experience discrete from either conversion or water-baptism.

(2) Passages that speak about the gift of the Spirit being received by faith demonstrate the separation of this gift from the new birth.

See *Galatians 3:2,14b*. “*The promise of the Spirit*” is synonymous with “*the baptism of the Spirit*” - cp. *Luke 24:49; Acts 1:4-5;2:33*. This promise is “*received by faith*”. Notice that the phrase “*receive by faith*”, when applied to salvation, or to any spiritual blessing, never refers to an automatically given gift. It always occurs in a setting

- of hearing the promise of God;
- of accepting that promise as true for the person hearing it; and
- of appropriating the promise by the prayer of faith.

- therefore it must have the same sense here.

(3) References to the “outsiders” (see 1 Co 14:16,2,24) suggest a group of early believers who had not received the gift of the Spirit.

Who are these “outsiders” (Greek, *idiotai*)? They are not unbelievers, for Paul makes a distinction between an “outsider” an “unbeliever”. Therefore, they must be believers, at least to the extent of having enough of the grace of God to be able to say “*the Amen*” (vs. 16). Paul’s phrase, “*the Amen*”, means more than the saying of a mere word; it suggests a more or less extended congregational response. Although this response may have followed a set form, it was more likely a free and spontaneous act of worship. In any case, it represents some kind of vocal worship activity by the members of the congregation. It was also an activity in which “outsiders” could and did participate, **except when praise took the form of glossolalia**. Then

they were unable to speak any “Amen!”, for speaking in tongues was outside the range of their experience. So there were two groups of people in the church at Corinth who lacked the gift of tongues: unbelievers; and these “outsiders” or *idiotai*. Various translators confirm the idea that the latter group, the *idiotai*, were at least in some sense believers in Christ -

- RSV - “outsiders”; or, in the margin, “*him that is without gifts.*”
- AMPLIFIED N.T. - “*he who is not gifted with tongues;” “the ungifted;” “the uninitiated.*”
- WEYMOUTH - “*one who lacks the gift.*”
- PHILLIPS - “*those who are ungifted.*”
- TAYLOR - “*a new Christian who doesn’t understand these things.*”
- BERKELEY - “*one who is not gifted with tongues.*”

- and several other translators give similar meaning.

Paul speaks of two kinds of *idiotai*; those who were already members of the congregation (vs 16); and those who were visitors to the church (vs 23,24);

- **the first group** were people who knew about the gift of tongues and were not offended by it, except it brought them no personal edification;
- **the second group** were people who had obviously had never before encountered glossolalia, so they could be expected to react badly to a wrong use of the gift.

The first group may have been seeking the gift (cp 12:31a), while the second knew nothing about it. Nonetheless, in both cases Paul is describing a company of people in the church (distinct from unbelievers) who had no personal experience of charismatic gifts. But since such gifts are always associated (in the New Testament) with Holy Spirit baptism, it must be inferred that they had not yet been “*clothed with power (dunamis) from on high*”. See *Luke 24:29; Acts 1:8* and note that *dunamis* means specifically “*miraculous power*”; it is closely linked with charismatic manifestations (1 Co 12:10,28; He 2:4; etc). Hence, in the New Testament, lack of all such gifts is assumed to mean also lack of the Holy Spirit baptism (cp. the Samaritans and the Ephesians).

It seems then that in the *idiotai* we have an example in the early church of Christians who were not yet baptised in the Spirit. Perhaps, like the Ephesians, some of them had not even heard of the coming of the Holy Spirit. Communications and doctrine were not so well established then as they are now.

(II) STILL MORE PROOF

If the propositions presented above, and in my previous chapter, are accepted, then you will readily find further proof of a discrete baptism in the Spirit will be seen in the following -

(1) JOHN 4:14; 7:38-39

There is a valid distinction between a “well” and a “river”, although both may contain the same water. In this case, “well” appears to be analogous to the new birth, while “river” is analogous to the baptism in the Spirit. The inference is that those who have discovered the “well” should then search for the “river”.

(2) ROMANS 8:9-11

Paul outlines a series of spiritual experiences, beginning with regeneration, and its resultant of inner righteousness (vs 9-10). He then describes a further relationship with the Holy Spirit which leads to a quickening of the mortal body (vs 11). I take it that this second relationship refers to the baptism in the Spirit. Regeneration brings life to the human *spirit*, but leaves the *body* “dead”. But Holy Spirit baptism brings the believer into a new quickening of his or her entire being. These verses are really a summary of the previous chapters of Romans. Having discussed (in chapters one to seven) the legal aspects of our salvation, Paul now shows how we can translate this imputed righteousness into a life of active holiness: it is by the baptism in the Spirit, and by living and walking in the Spirit.

Some commentators would object that vs 11 refers to the future resurrection of the body rather than to a present quickening. No doubt that is partly true. However, taking the earlier chapters of Romans as the background to 8:12-14, and remembering that the Holy Spirit is nowhere else spoken of as the agent of our resurrection, it seems better to relate this passage to a quickening of our daily life now - hence, to the baptism in the Spirit.

(3) 1 CORINTHIANS 12:13

Paul speaks about, and separates, two things: regeneration (“*By one Spirit we were all baptised into one body*”); and Holy Spirit baptism (“*We were all made to drink of one Spirit*” - cp. *John 7:38-39*).

(4) 1 JOHN 3:24; 4:13

John expresses himself in a way that shows a definite separation between the new birth and Holy Spirit baptism : “*we know* (that is, we have tangible evidence) *that he abides in us, because he has given us his Spirit.*” The second gift is proof of the first. What else can he mean except that the gift of the Spirit should be an experience “knowable” in a way that the new birth, by itself, is not “knowable”. Therefore, Holy Spirit baptism must be sufficiently distinct from the new birth to provide believers with indisputable personal proof that Christ is abiding in them. (Note: John’s use of the word “*given*” indicates that he is referring to the baptism in the Spirit - cp. “*gift*” in *Acts 2:38*).

(5) 2 CORINTHIANS 1:22; 5:5

Surely Paul’s words become meaningless unless the giving of the Spirit is an event whose happening is beyond doubt. Of what use is an intangible, invisible, unknowable “seal”? An ethereal, insubstantial, imperceptible “deposit” would offer no practical guarantee of further “instalments” to come! A similar passage, describing the subjective assurance the believer can gain from the special presence of the Holy Spirit, occurs in *Romans 8:15-16*. This passage also would be meaningless if the ministry of the Spirit were indistinguishable from the new birth. (Also, cp. “*seal*” with *Ephesians 1:13*, which refers to *Acts 19:6*, and hence to a discrete baptism in the Spirit.)

(6) MARK 1:8

John’s passionate words convey a strong impression that the baptism in the Spirit is an experience as definite, unequivocal, and conspicuous as baptism in water. Some might say that this aspect of the promise was wholly fulfilled on the day of Pentecost But look at *John 1:33* where the same promise is repeated but the present participle (*ho baptizon* - “*he who baptises*”)

is used, implying a distinctive and continuing ministry. A similar construction is found in *John 1:29* (*ho airon* - "he who takes away") in relation to the saving work of Christ: "he takes away sin". It describes a separate and ongoing work of Christ. So also with the expression, "he baptises in the Holy Spirit." (See these same two characteristics in *Ezekiel 36:25-27*; *Titus 3:5-6*; *Galatians 4:4-6*; etc.) Since both of these aspects of the ministry of Christ are mentioned separately, with a strong emphasis placed on each of them, it is natural to suppose that they will occur explicitly (even if sometimes simultaneously) in the believer's experience. The record in the book of *Acts* certainly supports that conclusion.

(7) JOHN 14:17; LUKE 11:13; GALATIANS 4:4-6

If "the world cannot receive" the Holy Spirit, and if God has sent the Holy Spirit into our hearts only "because you are sons," and if "the children" must ask the Father for the gift of the Holy Spirit, then it is plain that this is an experience which we can enjoy only after we become Christians. Pragmatically, of course, as I have already stated, the two experiences *may* occur simultaneously.

(8) ACTS 4:31

The phrase "they were all filled with the Holy Spirit" is identical to *Acts 2:4*. The implication is that this was a further effusion of the Spirit, similar to that which occurred on the day of Pentecost. But there is one significant difference. Formerly the 120 were in a house; but now "the company of those who believed" (vs. 32) were assembled in "a place." The Greek word does not usually denote a house, but rather a large open space - such as a space set apart for open-air prayer (cp *Ac 16:13*). Such a place would be needed to contain the now large numbers of the church (cp *4:4*). It is probable that on this occasion a great many of the new converts received their initial infilling of the Holy Spirit. If so, then we have clear evidence of people receiving Holy Spirit baptism some time *after* their conversion to Christ.

(9) ACTS 15:8-9

Peter cites as proof of the true conversion of the "Gentiles" the very observable, tangible, and charismatic baptism in the Spirit received by Cornelius and his household (see *10:44-46*). Their experience, says the apostle, was identical to that of the 120 on the day of Pentecost. In both cases, the "giving" of the Holy Spirit was a "witness" that their hearts had been "cleansed by faith." Now compare the similar phraseology in the following references: *Romans 5:5*; *1 Thessalonians 4:8*; *Hebrews 6:4*.

In the *Acts* passage, the giving of the Holy Spirit is cited as visible proof of the outpouring of God's love; in *Thessalonians* as proof of the authority of God; and in *Hebrews* as proof of the folly of apostasy. In each of those three references the argument turns to air unless the "proof" is as tangible as that cited by Peter in the *Acts* passage.

In other words, like the disciples in Jerusalem and at Caesarea, the "Romans", the "Thessalonians", and the "Hebrews", must all have experienced a palpable, and (probably) charismatic baptism in the Spirit. How could a baptism in the Spirit, itself impalpable, and indistinguishable from the new birth, be cited as "proof" of the new birth or of any other unseeable blessing?

What kind of relevance can those verses have for us, if their plain meaning is denied? When the apostles refer to an autonomous "gift" of the Holy Spirit, and give it a confirmatory value, they have in mind the Pentecostal event. Their words are empty of value for us unless we too can receive that gift in the concrete and knowable manner that characterised its reception in bible days. I can find no evidence that the early church knew anything of an impalpable baptism in the Spirit - unheard, unseen, unfelt, unperceived in any immediate or tangible sense. Yet those who argue against a discrete baptism in the Spirit, and who attempt to portray that gift as an

indispensable corollary to the new birth, are reduced to just such an ethereal form. Their arguments rest more upon the demands of a pre-determined dogma than upon the simple witness of the Bible.

(10) GALATIANS 3:5

The Greek text reads: *“he who supplies the Spirit to you, and works miracles among you.”* There is no mention of God. So the reference may be to a person who ministered the Holy Spirit to the Galatians by prayer and the laying on of hands, with the confirming evidence of *“miracles”* (that is, the charismata). If this is so, then Paul is describing a continuing ministry in the church that parallels the experience of the Samaritans and the Ephesians - that is, of Holy Spirit baptism *“supplied”* by laying on hands, and with a charismatic witness.

(11) GALATIANS 4:6

“Because you are children, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into your hearts.” This statement clearly distinguishes between the act of becoming *“children”* and the act of receiving the Spirit. The giving of the Spirit was dependent upon the Galatians *first* entering the family of God. The terminology used by the apostle also demands that the giving of the Spirit be seen as a conscious experience one so powerful that it compels a vocal response. Seeking a compressed description of this response, Paul uses an extraordinary and passionate phrase. He says that the Spirit-filled believer cries aloud *“Abba! Father!”* In the face of such a vivid picture, it is a mystery how the church ever developed a theology of an indistinct and imperceptible baptism in the Spirit, an event that is indiscernible from the new birth. (Note also the sense of Paul’s potent experience of the Spirit conveyed in *1 Thessalonians 1:5-6*.)

(12) 1 CORINTHIANS 6:15,19

Some commentators maintain that these verses contain parallel analogies, both of them referring to the believer’s union with Christ through the new birth. However, it seems more logical to argue that Paul is strengthening and enforcing the first analogy (*“your body is a member of Christ”*) by calling upon a second (*“your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you.”*) The first refers to the new birth, and the second to the baptism in the Spirit. If this is so, then these two analogies may be seen as describing two distinct facets of the work of the Holy Spirit in the believer’s life, with the second having special value as an empirical seal upon the first.

Paul strengthens this distinction between the indwelling of the Spirit that results from regeneration, and the separate work of Holy Spirit baptism, by the explanatory clause *“which you have from God”* (vs. 19). These words echo the descriptions in *Acts* of a discrete (and charismatic) baptism in the Spirit - e.g., *“the promise of the Father”*, *“the gift of the Spirit.”* Paul appears to have added them to his statement (1 Co 6:19), in order to clarify his reference to *“the Holy Spirit within you”*. He wanted there to be no doubt that he was referring to the *baptism* in the Holy Spirit as distinct from the work of the Holy Spirit in *salvation*. Furthermore, the phrase *“within you”*, echoes Christ’s use of similar terminology in his promise of a discrete and charismatic baptism in the Spirit (Jn 14:12,16-17).

That this is in fact Paul’s meaning is confirmed by his earlier undeniable reference to a charismatic (hence discrete) infilling of the Spirit in 1:5,7 (where *“speech,” “knowledge,”* and *“spiritual gift”* all refer to the charismata).

(13) TITUS 3:5-6

Commentators find it impossible to agree on the meaning of what Paul wrote here. His general intention is plain enough; but when the passage is called upon to support a theological

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argument, the emphases drawn from it are inevitably shaped by the pre-suppositions of the arguer. I too plead guilty. Given the views presented above, only one interpretation of the passage is valid. I acknowledge that other interpretations are possible; but to me the following explanation is the best -

(a) The passage concludes with the words, “*The saying is sure*” (vs. 8a); which suggest that it was originally an early Christian hymn - possibly a baptismal hymn. In any case, the passage is certainly an attempt to summarise the elements of full Christian initiation; hence we would expect to find the three things mentioned by Peter (Ac 2:38): conversion, water-baptism, Spirit-baptism.

(b) Translators and commentators (at least, those I have checked) appear to separate or merge these three elements, or to change their relationships, according to their own personal bias. No doubt I can be accused of doing the same. Nonetheless, I would like to set the passage out as follows, in a more or less literal rendering -

. . . he saved us,
through the washing of the new birth,
and a renewal of the Holy Spirit,
which he poured out on us richly,
through Jesus Christ our Saviour . . .

Now, the “*washing*” and the “*renewal*” may be regarded as separate operations; or, they may be seen as describing different aspects of the one salvation event. For the following reasons, I feel they should be viewed separately -

(i) The proposition “*through*” (*dia*) occurs only once, and therefore governs both phrases; but this does not mean that they are synonymous, or that they simply describe the same thing in different ways. If such were the case, the word “*and*” (*kai*) would rather have the sense of “*even*” or “*namely*”, and the second clause would be merely epexegetic¹⁵ of the first. Some commentators insist that this in fact is so. But other authorities maintain that the structure of the Greek, plus the significant difference in the meaning of the two clauses, both prevent *kai* from here fulfilling an epexegetic purpose. In other words, though they are no doubt closely related within the context of full Christian initiation, “*the washing of the new birth*” and “*the renewal of the Holy Spirit*” are distinct and separate Acts.

(ii) If there is an epexegetic clause in the passage, it is surely “*which he poured out on us richly*” - for that clause defines the meaning of “*the renewal of the Holy Spirit*.” It shows that Paul is speaking of the “*renewal*” that took place when God “*poured out*” the Holy Spirit. Now, his use of that expression is significant, because the Greek word used here (*ekcheo*) occurs only three other times in the New Testament, and always in connection with the Pentecostal effusion - see Ac 2:17, 18, 33. Such a clear allusion to Pentecost strongly implies that Paul, Titus, and Paul’s other associates (cp. “*us*”), had all enjoyed a baptism in the Spirit identical to that received by the 120 - that is, a discrete and charismatic outpouring. (Further allusions to the day of Pentecost can be seen in the phrase “*on us*” - cp Ac 2:17; and “*through Jesus Christ*” - cp. Acts 2:33.)

(iii) Regeneration is a once-only act, and must logically (if not experientially) precede “*renewal*”, which is a continuing act. The Greek word (*anakainosis*) occurs in only one other place, *Romans 12:2*, where it obviously has a continuing

(15) A technical word meaning “a further explanation, by the addition of a word or words”. It comes from a Greek word that means to explain in detail. There are many occurrences of the form in the New Testament.

sense. It can also be argued that “*renewal*” is nowhere else described as a “*washing*,” thus reinforcing the distinction between the “*washing*” of regeneration and the “*renewal*” of the Holy Spirit.

(14) HEBREWS 6:1-2

He mentions “*instruction about baptisms*” and “*the laying on of hands*” (note that “baptisms” is plural.) Surely the simplest of those clauses, the one that best harmonises with the remainder of the New Testament, is to say that they refer to **(a)** to water-baptism; and **(b)** Spirit-baptism, in association with prayer and the laying on of hands. If so, then it is interesting to notice the distinction the apostle draws between the “*foundation*” (repentance and faith toward God) and that which is built onto the foundation: “*instruction about baptisms, the laying on of hands. . .etc.*” Both “baptisms” (in water and in the Spirit) are to follow the act of commitment to Christ.

Using different words, the apostle appears to make a similar statement in verse 4: repentance and enlightenment (in Christ) are followed by “*tasting the heavenly gift, partaking of the Holy Spirit, and tasting the powers of the age to come*”. The three latter clauses all echo the Pentecostal outpouring - cp. the words “*heavenly gift. . .of the Holy Spirit*” with *Acts 1:8*; and remember also the familiarity of the Hebrew Christians with the charismata (He 2:4).

Hence, lying behind this passage is an implied background of Christian experience identical to that expressed in *Acts 2:38* - first, repentance and faith in Christ; followed by water-baptism; which led to a charismatic baptism in the Spirit, given by the laying on of hands.

CHAPTER FIVE

SEALED FOR EVER

If I had chosen to give a theological title to this chapter it would have been: “*Empirical Bases for a Discrete Baptism in the Holy Spirit.*” Aren’t you glad I changed my mind? Yet it would have been an accurate title, for it shows that there is a practical side to our argument. It answers the question: does it really matter whether or not Holy Spirit baptism stands apart from the new birth?

Many people (as we have seen) argue strongly for a baptism in the Spirit that is invariably conterminous either with regeneration or water-baptism, and they scorn any possibility of a discrete experience. I hope that I have shown successfully the error of that belief. While Holy Spirit baptism *may* occur simultaneously with regeneration or water-baptism, it cannot be proved that it is an *inseparable* accompaniment of either one of those events. And even when the gift of the Spirit comes in conjunction with the new birth or water-baptism it still remains an individual event, discrete in its nature and purpose from any other Christian experience. This discrete character of Holy Spirit baptism is not only written in the Book of *Acts*, it becomes essential to the experience itself when that experience is rightly understood. My purpose now is to support this view with some

(I) EMPIRICAL EVIDENCE

(A) CHRISTIAN INITIATION

The place of Holy Spirit baptism in Christian initiation is vitally important. When the church confuses this event with the new birth it inescapably suffers a great loss. Am I saying that the Holy Spirit has no part to play in the new birth? Of course Not! No Pentecostal would hesitate to affirm that every truly “born again” person possesses the Holy Spirit (in the sense of having come into a vital relationship with Christ through the agency of the Spirit; or in the sense of being “*born from above*” by the Spirit.) And insofar as the Christian possesses the Spirit at all, that possession must be complete, for there can be no such thing as receiving only a part of the Holy Spirit (cp. “*In Christ the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily, and you have come to fullness of life in him*” (Cl 2:8-10). This regenerative aspect of the indwelling Spirit is unquestionably imparted through the new birth and ratified by water-baptism. However, the regenerative work of the Spirit is a more or less indistinguishable part of salvation, at the most

marked by indirect evidence (e.g. “joy” - Lu 24:52-53; Ac 8:8; Ro 14:17). One could say that the disciples entered into this phase of the Spirit’s ministry when Jesus breathed on them and said “Receive the Holy Spirit” (Jn 20:22). But that did not prevent the Lord from setting before them a further dimension of spiritual experience. He commanded them, “Stay in Jerusalem until you are clothed with power from on high” (Lu 24:49). They obeyed; they stayed; they were “clothed”.

Jesus himself appears to embrace both dimensions of the Spirit’s work when he said (Jn 14:17): “The Spirit dwells *with* you, and will be *in* you.” I not suppose that “with” and “in” should be taken in a crude literal sense; they appear rather to express differing degrees of relationship. Previously the disciples had known the Spirit only in his regenerative capacity; but now (through the experience at Pentecost) they are given the *dunamis* of the Spirit (Ac 1:8). It is this “dynamic” infilling of the Spirit (with its charismatic overtones) that we Pentecostals call “the baptism in the Holy Spirit.”

(B) A VARIED EXPERIENCE

Someone may object: if every Christian already possess the (fullness of the) Spirit as a natural consequence of the new birth, then surely the Pentecostal dimension is superfluous?

But we cannot ignore the evidence of *Acts*. As we have seen, those who had believed in Christ, and who had been baptised in water, were still expected to receive the gift of the Spirit. Hence Luke, in *Acts 2:38*, portrays Christian initiation in three parts: the initiate repents; the church baptises; the Lord gives the Holy Spirit. This was no doubt intended to be a more or less standard pattern, although it could be often disrupted, as Luke himself take care to show -

The Jerusalem Pentecost: these people had not received Christian baptism, nor did they receive the laying on of hands. The Holy Spirit came upon them in a spontaneous effusion in response to collective prayer.

The Second Jerusalem Pentecost (Ac 4:31): a group of new converts, recently baptised in water (Ac 2:41), were filled with the Spirit in a spontaneous effusion in response to collective prayer.

The Samaritan Pentecost: they received the Holy Spirit only after Peter and John had laid hands on them at a time probably several weeks subsequent to their baptism in water.

The Pauline Pentecost: he was converted, and a few days later was visited by Ananias who laid hands on him to restore his sight and to impart to him the gift of the Holy Spirit. Ananias then baptised him in water.

The Roman Pentecost: they were filled with the Spirit in a spontaneous effusion that occurred simultaneously with their conversion and prior to their baptism in water. No special prayer was offered, nor was there any laying on of hands.

The Ephesian Pentecost: they received the gift of the Spirit only after Paul had instructed them, baptised them, and laid hands on them.

Apollos: he had apparently not had Christian baptism, yet he evidently know the baptism in the Holy Spirit (Ac 18:24-25).

(II) A UNIQUE PURPOSE

Why such varied experiences? The determining factor appears to have been the special place occupied in each initiate's experience by Holy Spirit baptism. It highlights two things:

- the discrete nature of Holy Spirit baptism, as a personal experience that must be personally received; and
- the freedom of the Holy Spirit to move, like the wind, as he pleases (Jn 3:8).¹⁶

The variable giving of the Spirit also seems to be related to the basic two-fold purpose of the gift of the Spirit in the believer: to clothe with power; and to provide a visible seal on the work of God in the believer (cp. Ac 2:33, "*this which you see and hear*" -

(A) TO SEAL CONVERSION.

The scriptures show that the early church saw Holy Spirit baptism as the "seal" of God upon the process of Christian initiation. Without it, the new Christian was reckoned to be incomplete. It is this aspect (the giving of the Spirit as the seal, or witness, or proof of a genuine conversion) that seems to have occasioned the great variety in the manner in which the Spirit was bestowed. It is also here that the discrete character of Holy Spirit baptism is most observed - for a sign is not the same as the thing signified, a seal is not the same as the thing sealed, a guarantee is not the same as the thing guaranteed. Tears are the sign of grief, and laughter of joy; yet those tears are not the grief, nor is laughter the joy. Just so Holy Spirit baptism must be separated from the thing it signifies. In other words, the seal placed on salvation must be something distinct from salvation itself.

The confirmatory aspect of the baptism in the Spirit is described in many places:

- **Acts 2:33**, where it attests the resurrection and ascension of Christ;
- **John 14:20**, where "*that day*", the day of the Pentecostal effusion, brings an experimental knowledge of our union with Christ;
- **Romans 8:16; 2 Corinthians 1:22; 5:5**, where the giving of the Holy Spirit must be a knowable experience, distinct from salvation;
- **Ephesians 1:13-14**, which refers back to a discrete and charismatic giving of the Spirit (Ac 19:1-6);
- and see also **1 John 2:20,27; 3:2** (a very clear reference); **4:13; 5:7**; etc.

Those references all argue for a discrete baptism in the Spirit; for only by separating the giving of the Spirit from the giving of salvation can the one be a witness of the other.

(16) Note that our theologies, including the one in this book, are designed to regulate, not the Holy Spirit, but the church!

(B) TO CLOTHE WITH POWER

The major reference here is *Acts 1:8* (which is essentially a repeat of *Luke 24:49*). The language used by Christ compels a belief that the coming of this “power” upon the disciples would be a knowable event, one that they could not mistake. One moment they would lack it; the next they would have it. They would then be “clothed” with power, and unable to doubt it! Further they would “know” it had happened, not by reason of a mystical faith-appropriation, but because of an explosive, dynamic, personal *experience*.

Notice how such an experience differs radically from salvation, which, unlike the “clothing with power”, is not based, and cannot be based, upon personal experience. On the contrary, salvation must depend upon simple faith, without any necessary additional personal or emotional experience. Salvation is essentially a *forensic transaction* in heaven. By contrast, Holy Spirit baptism is essentially a *personal happening* on earth. The one is a giving of pardon; the other is a clothing with power. The one is an impartation of life; the other is an equipping for service. The one requires no tangible response; the other cannot be known apart from experiential proof.

So it can be said that the unique two-fold purpose of Holy Spirit baptism requires an experience discrete from both the new birth and water-baptism.

(III) PRE-CONDITIONS AND EVIDENCE

Having accepted that the discrete character of Holy Spirit baptism springs from **(a)** its unique place, and **(b)** its unique purpose in Christian life, two other corollaries at once appear -

(A) THE DOCTRINE OF CONDITIONS

God is sovereign in the bestowal of the Spirit. Subject to the limitations he has imposed on himself by his promise, he may give the Spirit spontaneously, or in response to fervent prayer; before or after water-baptism; with or without the laying-on of hands; etc. We have already seen some reasons for this seemingly erratic pattern. Here is another: ordinarily people receive the gift of the Spirit only after they have fulfilled certain conditions. Indeed, the fact that conditions *are* associated with Holy Spirit baptism settles beyond argument the discrete nature of the experience. For proof, notice the frequent juxtaposing of the words “give” and “receive” in connection with Holy Spirit baptism. The use of these words is enough to show that the gift is both discrete and conditional:

- “**give**” expresses the divine part of the transaction, and emphasises the free nature of the gift: it arises entirely out of the grace of God;
- “**receive**” expresses the human part, and emphasises the necessity for proper preparation and prayer on the part of the believer - factors which expose the discrete nature of this gift.

See *Luke 11:10-13*; *John 16:23-24* (where “that day” refers to Pentecost); *Acts 2:38*; *8:15*; *10:47* with *11:17*; *19:2,6*; *1 Corinthians 2:12*; *Galatians 3:2,5*. (Note: I am not denying that God may freely “give” the Holy Spirit without any conscious act of “receiving” on the part of the recipient. I am pointing out only that there is normally a fusion of the two, and that lack of human receptivity will generally thwart the divine giving.)

God will not ordinarily “give” unless the conditions are right for him to do so; we cannot ordinarily “receive” unless the conditions are right for us to do so. Furthermore, these two words are reciprocal to each other: if for some reason God chooses not to give, or the petitioner is unable to receive, then the promise will not be fulfilled.

The conditions which are usually pre-requisite for Holy Spirit baptism will be studied in more detail later; it will be enough here to state that they fall into two categories -

(1) UNCONSCIOUS (based on divine activity) -

Regeneration will be an indispensable precursor (or at least, accompaniment) of Holy Spirit baptism (Jn 14:17). So also is justification and adoption into the Father’s family (Ga 4:4-6). Faith, as a gift of God, will also be an essential pre-requisite; etc.

I call these “unconscious” conditions because there is nothing in the nature of the new birth that inherently requires it to be *experienced*. People can be born again without being consciously aware of it (they may lose the sense of being spiritually alive, or they may have no recollection of “experiencing” a new birth.) The sense of joy, peace, and the like, which often accompany salvation are an emotional reaction to our *belief* that we are born again. But they are not *essential* to the new birth. Salvation in fact lacks a substantive personal quality because it is not primarily an action of God on earth, but a legal transaction in heaven; its essential quality is forensic, not experiential (see *Romans* and *Galatians*).

The various aspects of salvation are part of the necessary set of pre-conditions that God must complete in us to bring us to that place legally and spiritually where we become fit recipients of Holy Spirit baptism. Some of these could be said to be “conscious” insofar as they involve a change of attitude, of belief, of purpose, and the like; but they are basically “unconscious”, because we cannot “feel” the processes by which they occur in us.

Since it can take some time for the Lord to complete this preparation in each individual, he does not commit himself to giving the Holy Spirit at any set point in Christian experience - hence Luke’s variable paradigm. Each believer must be forged into a desirable temple of the Holy Spirit, so God reserves the right to give the Spirit at regeneration, at water baptism, or at any other time, but especially in answer to believing prayer. The many differences between Christians preclude a standard pattern in the giving of the Spirit.

(2) CONSCIOUS (based on human activity)

By this I mean such activities as: hearing the promise, and believing it; baptism in water; prayer linked with the laying on of hands; abjuration of known sin; faith (as an active appropriation of the promise); etc.

None of those pre-requisites can be seen as payment for the gift (Ac 8:20-21); they simply create an environment in which it becomes proper for God to bestow the gift of the Spirit (in the same way, repentance and faith create an environment in which it becomes proper for God to bestow the gift of salvation.)

Clearly then, the doctrine of Holy Spirit baptism is one that will not allow itself to be imprisoned within a set of inflexible regulations. Jesus set this open pattern in his first comment on the ministry of the Spirit. He said it would be like the wind, which blows wherever it pleases! He stressed this exciting element of the unpredictable, the volatile, which is the essence of the Spirit’s working on earth. We can do no more than bring ourselves to the place where we become proper recipients of the Holy Spirit. Where there is no discernible reason why the blessing should be denied, there is then in scripture a general presumption that God will, *of his own free grace* (not because he is obliged to do so) pour out his Spirit upon the waiting heart.

Yet the Lord may require certain steps, of repentance, say, or something else, from one person while not from another; for the giving of the Spirit remains always linked to the fulfilling of his larger purpose in the Christian's life.

There *are* some things that God *is* obliged to do for every believer, in order to preserve his integrity - for example, to justify fully every person who trusts in Christ as Saviour, or to raise from the dead everyone who dies in Christ. But Holy Spirit baptism is not of that sort. Even when all known conditions have been complied with, we are still dependent upon his grace, we still need to pray, to wait upon God in humble trust and expectation. There is nothing surprising nor unusual in this. The same principle applies to any act of divine grace that (unlike justification, for example) must actually happen to the believer on earth - such as bodily healing, financial supply, answered prayer, and so on.

This concept prevents the church from either commanding God or bullying the saints. We should not condemn fruitless seekers, but rather encourage them to persevere in faith, knowing that in due course the promise will be theirs. But neither are we prevented from encouraging people to pray in expectation of a quick baptism in the Spirit. The promise is sure. It is there to be appropriated by all who want to live in the fullness of Christ.

(B) THE DOCTRINE OF EVIDENCE

The unique character of the promise of the Spirit requires a unique sign of its fulfilment. The Pentecostal says the sign is "glossolalia". There are four lines of proof (which are taken up in detail in the next chapter) -

(1) *The specific promise of a knowable experience requires a specific sign that is also knowable.*

In this, the baptism in the Spirit differs radically from both regeneration; and water-baptism. As I have already suggested, salvation, by its very nature, requires faith alone, with no other witness but the word God has spoken (Is 53:1; Jn 20:29-31; Ro 10:8-11; 1 Jn 5:10,13; etc.) Our justification is a legal transaction which takes place in heaven and has its sufficient witness before the throne of God - it needs no other divine attestation. Likewise, baptism in water carries its own witness, which lies in the very nature of the act, and it, too, needs no other sign. But the baptism in the Spirit, in itself an impalpable happening (for who can touch the Spirit of God?), is yet designed to have palpable ramifications on earth, and is therefore given in association with palpable signs. Such signs are implicit in the vivid and lively expressions used by the apostles -

- *baptised with the Holy Spirit and with fire* (Mt 3:11);
- *out of his heart shall flow rivers of living water* (Jn 7:38);
- *clothed with power* (Lu 24:49); and,
- *God also bore witness by signs and wonders and various miracles and by gifts of the Holy Spirit* (He 2:4).

(2) *The predictions of Israel's prophets demand that the evidence of the baptism in the Holy Spirit be supernatural utterance.* (Jl 2:28)

How else can the existence of the outpouring promised by Joel be proved except by the specific sign Joel himself gives, namely, "*prophecy*"?

(3) *The Book of Acts and the letters, confirm that this sign is in fact glossolalia.*

That is, within the context of Holy Spirit baptism, the early church defined "prophecy" in this context as referring to glossolalia.

(4) *The Pentecostal (or charismatic) movement largely stems from this concept of the baptism in the Spirit as a discrete experience attested by glossolalia.*

The phenomenal missionary success of the movement (unparalleled in church history) must provide powerful evidence of the substantial truth of its claim to have rediscovered the secret of the missionary success of the early church.

CONCLUSION

Dr. A.W. Tozer has written -

Neither in the Old Testament nor in the New, nor in Christian testimony as found in the writings of the saints . . . was any believer ever filled with the Holy Spirit who did not know he had been filled. Neither was anyone filled who did not know *when* he was filled. And no one was ever filled gradually!

I agree. And if it is a scandal, as some assert, to believe that the baptism in the Holy Spirit is separable from the new birth, or from water-baptism, that it is a discrete experience associated with palpable evidences, then I am content to be scandalous. However, I do not assert that the New Testament contains anything like a developed or formal theology built around this thesis. The references quoted above do no more than establish that the idea of a discrete baptism in the Spirit would not have been objectionable to the early church - but neither would the idea of a baptism in the Spirit conterminous with the new birth or with water-baptism. I doubt if the early church had anything like a formal theology of the Holy Spirit; and the idea of a systematic pneumatology probably never entered their minds. Any attempt to systematise rigidly the New Testament statements on the work of the Holy Spirit will founder on the rocky shoals of references that refuse to conform to the desired pattern!

Anyone who has spent, as I have, many entertaining hours pouring over the efforts of various scholars to force all the biblical references to say the same thing, will know how vain those efforts have proved. Even writers of vast erudition finally have to resort to deviousness in order to make certain references say what they would want them to say. I would only comment that some writers do so more cleverly than others. Perhaps someone will snort that I am not one of the latter! If so, accept my apologies - to not convince you is no sin; but to bore you would be insufferable!

Concerning the thesis presented here - I am satisfied that it reasonably represents a large body of New Testament teaching and also of early church experience. I do not deny that there are other references (and perhaps even some that I have used above) which more naturally establish the contrary view - that the baptism in the Spirit is an invariable accompaniment of the new birth of water-baptism. But I feel that this apparent ambiguity simply reflects the richness and diversity of method the Lord uses to fulfil his purpose of bringing men to salvation through Christ.

Certain basic things appear: Christian initiation begins with repentance; it continues through faith in Christ, independent of any self-righteousness; it is linked with baptism in water; it is sealed by the baptism in the Spirit, an experience which was often demonstrably separate from the former steps, and which was frequently (if not always) signified by the occurrence of charismata. The sequence in which these steps occurred, the measure of delay between them,

their inter-relationship, the terms in which they were explained - all these things show great variety, and I think it is futile, not to say misleading, to try to force them into a fixed mould. It is better that, like Paul when he came to Ephesus, we should simply meet people where they are, and try to lead them on into a more adequate encounter with Christ. Sometimes this will mean starting from scratch (like Peter did at Pentecost), and urging them to "*Repent. . .be baptised. . .receive the gift of the Spirit.*" At other times, they may need to experience a more adequate water-baptism; sometimes they will need Spirit-baptism, sometimes both. Any attempt to establish a rigid stereotype will finally only restrict the free moving of the Holy Spirit, and hinder his ability to meet people where they are, and to heal them at the point of their need.

CHAPTER SIX

INITIAL EVIDENCE - Part One

If you accept that Holy Spirit baptism is an experience discrete from the new birth, then you will look for some kind of definitive evidence of this experience. How can it be known whether or not a person has received "*the promise of the Father*"? Surely such an important matter cannot be left to the vagaries of subjective emotions, nor to the uncertainties of "take it by faith"?¹⁷

The Pentecostal position is simply this: God has indeed provided such a sign, namely, speaking in tongues (glossolalia). This position can be established by drawing on four lines of evidence -

(1) The witness of the Books of *Acts*, linked with the witness of the gospels and the letters, shows that glossolalia is the common sign of a person receiving the promised baptism in the Spirit.

(2) We believe that an event so remarkable as the infilling of the Spirit must be observable, dramatic, undeniable. It is reasonable to suppose that such an event can take place without some evident sign in the life of the recipient?

(3) Scripture shows it is not proper to think of Holy Spirit baptism as a codicil to salvation. This baptism is the subject of a specific promise of God, and, like every other promise of God, must be appropriated by a definite act of faith. The only approved

(17) Apart from the Addenda (which contain new material), this chapter is nearly identical to the parallel chapter in my book, "The Holy Spirit".

method for the appropriation of this promise is that used by the apostles, which almost without exception was prayer, followed by the laying on of hands, and by the sign of glossolalia.

The only experience that can guarantee we have received the same effusion as the apostles is the experience of the apostles - that is, an infilling of the Holy Spirit attested by glossolalia.

(4) We believe that glossolalia (which is a very apt symbol of the missionary purpose of Holy Spirit baptism- Ac 1:8) is the only sign that is capable of conveying an absolute assurance of the reception of the Spirit. The nature and purpose of this experience demands some form of tangible, unique and unmistakable evidence. Glossolalia alone meets every requirement.

If it is argued that no sign is required to confirm the reality of the new birth (which is a matter of greater importance than the baptism in the Spirit), I reply that salvation is dependent only on faith in the objective work of Christ on the cross, and on the forensic ramifications of that work. No sign is needed to establish what God has already done. It is enough simply to believe the biblical report: God has acted in Christ to reconcile us to himself, and to justify fully all who accept the gospel.

But Holy Spirit baptism is an intensely personal and subjective matter, related to the equipping of the believer with power for witness and for saintly living. Scripture by itself conveys no assurance to me that I have received this gift - but it clearly witnesses to a sign that *does* convey this assurance: *glossolalia*. The purpose of this lesson is to study the first of those lines of proof: the *Book of Acts*, supported by the gospels and the epistles, shows that glossolalia is the ordinary initial evidence of the baptism in the Spirit.¹⁸

(I) THE WITNESS OF THE BOOK OF ACTS

This claim (that the Pentecostal position can be proved from *Acts*) often produces a prickly reaction: "It is improper to find major doctrine in a book of history. *Acts* only reveals the historical *work* of the Holy Spirit; the *doctrine* of the Spirit must be gleaned from the letters, or from the teaching of Jesus, not from the purely narrative portion of *Acts*."

One writer succinctly presents his view in this words: "What is *described* in scripture as having happened to others is not necessarily intended for us; whereas what is *promised* to us we are to appropriate; and what is *commanded* us we are to obey."

Those writers supply the answer to their own objections -

(1) "The Book of Acts reveals to us the work of the Holy Spirit."

Surely, in showing us how the Holy Spirit operated in the early church, the Book of *Acts* reveals what should still be the normal activity of the Spirit in the church today! If the practice of the early church does not establish the norm for today, where shall we go to find our example - to Rome? to Orthodoxy? to one of the Protestant denominations? In their views on the baptism in

(18) By contrast, note some of the things that were not signs of Holy Spirit baptism: joyful praise and worship (Lu 24:52-53); visions of the risen Christ, rapturous joy, divine peace (Jn 20:19-21); miracles of healing, great joy, water baptism (Ac 8:5-8,12); radiant light, heavenly visions, the voice of God, religious prostration (9:3-8).

the Spirit these groups not only differ from one another but also within themselves! The corrected experience of the early church is our only safe example.

(2) “You can’t construct doctrine from the Book of Acts, apart from the letters.”

Agreed. Nor do we attempt to do so. The evidence of *Acts* on the manner of receiving the Holy Spirit is fully substantiated in the letters, as these pages show. Remember that the letters were mostly written during the span of time covered by *Acts*.

(3) “We should look for the purpose of God in the teaching of Jesus.”

It was Jesus who taught that we should ask for the Holy Spirit subsequent to accepting him as Saviour; and it was he who first linked glossolalia with Holy Spirit baptism - cp. *John 7:38; Mark 16:17; Acts 2:33*; and see my further comments below.

(4) “. . .And in the sermons and writings of the apostles.”

But do we not find sermons in *Acts* on the baptism in the Spirit? (cp. *Ac 2:14ff*). And isn't the book itself the writing of an apostle? Not all of *Acts* is history; a considerable part of it is clearly didactic, and much of this didactic portion deals with the work and ministry of the Holy Spirit. Basically, of course, the whole book, as indeed the whole Bible (*2 Ti 3:16*), is didactic in purpose.

In particular, *Acts* is a record of the continuing ministry of Jesus (*1:2*) through the power of the Holy Spirit (cp. *10:38*); and this Jesus is “*the same yesterday, today, and forever*” (*He 13:8*).

(5) “What is promised to us we are to appropriate.”

True. And we have the same “*promise of the Father*” as the early church had. The Book of *Acts* shows how they appropriated this promise. Is there any reason to teach that our appropriation of the promise should be different?

(6) “What is commanded we are to obey.”

One of those commands is “*receive the gift of the Holy Spirit*”; and, “*tarry until you are clothed with power from on high*”; and “*be filled with the Spirit*”.

Some commentators have tried to link the word ecstatic with glossolalia by using such expressions such as “*tongues of ecstasy*” or “*ecstatic speech*”. That association is not warranted. In at least two places Paul specifically precludes the idea of trance-like or uncontrollable glossolalia - see *1 Co 14:15, 32-33*.

What then are these “*tongues*”?

The relevant passages in *Acts* and in the letters show them to be simply an utterance in a language unknown to the speaker. This tongue is initiated by the Holy Spirit, who enables the believer to speak words he or she has never learned. In its first occurrence in the believer it is a supernatural gift and has no connection with an inherent ability to learn foreign languages. Nonetheless, the use of glossolalia always remains wholly under the control of the speaker.

The New Testament suggests four general uses of speaking in tongues:

- as the initial evidence of the baptism in the Holy Spirit;
- as a means of personal edification;
-

- as a means of addressing the church supernaturally (in conjunction with the gift of interpretation of tongues); and
- as a sign to unbelievers.

I am concerned here only with the first of those uses: glossolalia as the ordinary initial evidence of the baptism in the Holy Spirit -

(II) THE SIGN OF HOLY SPIRIT BAPTISM

(A) PRIMARY PROOF

(1) THE DAY OF PENTECOST (ACTS 2:1-4)

(a) Three remarkable signs were observed on that day: “a sound like the rush of a mighty wind. . .tongues of fire”, and “glossolalia”. Notice that the “wind” and the “fire” were only similitude’s; they were apparent but not real. But the glossolalia was a fact, and it remained a continuing evidence of the Pentecostal effusion.

To the disciples, the occurrence of glossolalia was indisputable proof that they had received the specific outpouring of the Spirit promised by the prophets and by Christ (cp. vs. 14ff).

(b) Notice that no further mention is made of the “wind” and the “fire”. The great crowd that gathered had no knowledge of them; their whole attention was focussed on the glossolalia. Peter, too, ignored the earlier phenomena and spoke only about the glossolalia. It was this marvel, and this alone, that proved the hour that had come for the fulfilment of the “promise of the Father”.

Note also that the “wind” and the “fire” preceded the filling of the disciples, while glossolalia was the immediate consequence of that filling.

(c) The people asked, “What does this mean?” And Peter answered, “This is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel. . .” The question was about “this” - that is, about glossolalia; and Peter’s reply focussed on “this” - glossolalia.

Regeneration may not be synonymous with the baptism in the Spirit, but glossolalia certainly is! Allow me to play on words a little. . .

Do you want “that” - the outpouring of the Spirit promised by the Father? Then you should also accept “this” - glossolalia, the sign of that outpouring, for “this” is “that”! If you have this then you also have that; but if you don’t have this then you may not have that, for this is that!

If I say, “This is that book I spoke to you about,” it is plain that this and that refer to the same thing: a certain book. So it is with glossolalia and the baptism in the Spirit. If you have one you have the other; they are inseparable. Glossolalia was synonymous with the outpouring of the Spirit on the day of Pentecost; it must still be so today.

Or put it this way: if you do not have this how can you be sure you have that? On the other hand, if you *do* have this, then you can be *completely sure* you have that. How can it be otherwise? For this is that!

The witness of Joel’s prophecy is particularly strong (Ac 2:17-21; Jl 2:28-32). Joel refers to “the last days”, a period of time synonymous with this gospel age (cp. He 1:2; 1 Pe 1:20; 1 Jn 2:18). Hence his prophecy is as valid today as it was at the beginning of the Christian era. There is

nothing in the prophecy that could rightly limit its application to the disciples on the day of Pentecost.

Joel refers to “*all flesh*”, which Peter interpreted to mean “*you*” (the contemporary generation), “*your children*” (the generation to come), “*all that are afar off*” (not only the Jews, but all nationalities), and “*everyone whom the Lord our God calls to him*” (all Christians of all time). In other words, the promise given to the people of Jerusalem that day is extended to every person today who obeys the command to “*repent and be baptised in the name of Jesus Christ*” (vs. 38-39).

And what was the promise? Hear Joel again: “*I will pour out my Spirit. . .and they shall prophesy.*” But Peter identified prophesying with glossolalia. So Joel is saying in so many words that glossolalia will be the distinctive sign of the latter-day outpouring of the Spirit. It marks this outpouring as different from all others. This is the sign that identifies the new age. And the sign is co-extensive with the outpouring: “*all flesh. . .sons. . .daughters. . .young men. . .old men. . .menservants. . .handmaids.*” Twice Joel says, “*They shall prophesy*”, that is, speak in tongues. The onus of proof to the contrary is upon those who appose the Pentecostal view; for our part, we are simply taking the promise at face value.

(d) Notice the clause, “*they began to speak in other tongues.*” Some have tried to maintain that the disciples spoke in tongues only on the day of Pentecost, as a special witness to the people in Jerusalem, and that after this the gift was withdrawn. However, Theodore Epp writes concerning the transitive verb “*began*”-

The imperfect tense, which denotes a continued or repeated, action is used. . .the people not only spoke with tongues on that particular day, but they continued to do so. . .speaking in tongues was an experience which was repeated again and again.

The gift remained with them as a daily witness that they had received the promise of the Father. It serves the same purpose today (cp. 1 Co. 14:18).

(2) CORNELIUS AND HIS HOUSEHOLD (ACTS 10:1-48)

(a) The reluctant Jews believed that the gentiles could be filled with the Holy Spirit only when they were faced with incontrovertible evidence of glossolalia. And on the witness of glossolalia alone Peter boldly declared that these Romans had “*received the Holy Spirit just as we have*”. He later reported that “*the Holy Spirit fell on them as on us at the beginning. . .God gave them the like gift as he did unto us, who believed on the Lord Jesus Christ*” (11:15,17).

In view of the present widely-held opinion that a Spirit-filled life can be recognised only by the development of Christian character, statements like those about Cornelius and his family are quite remarkable. On the evidence of glossolalia alone Peter was able to be adamant. The Romans had received an infilling of the Spirit identical in every way to that which the disciples received on the day of Pentecost! No other proof was required; no other sign was necessary.

The quite extraordinary influence of glossolalia as a witness to Holy Spirit baptism is shown by a further fact. On the strength of this sign alone the Jewish Christians were prepared to accept the gentiles as brothers, to abandon the synagogue and the law of Moses (Ac 11:1-18), and to enlarge vastly their whole missionary vision.

(b) Further evidence that glossolalia was the only verification the apostles sought of the baptism in the Spirit, is seen in Luke’s use of the Greek word *gar* (vs. 46, “for”). This word was used in an argument to assign a reason for a certain conclusion, or to explain a certain fact. And that is its significance here: “*We know beyond any doubt that God*

has given the Holy Spirit to these gentiles, for we hear them speaking in tongues". The "for" implies undeniable proof. Now, Peter's attitude is all the more striking when it is realised that these events took place perhaps as many as ten years after the day of Pentecost.¹⁹ Despite the passing of a decade, as soon as Peter heard the Romans speaking in tongues he accepted that they had received the fullness of the Spirit. That immediate response indicates that in the intervening years glossolalia had remained the common and expected evidence of Holy Spirit baptism. Peter and his companions expressed no surprise at the glossolalia itself - their surprise was wholly caused by the glossolalists being gentiles. Hebrew Christians a-plenty they had heard speaking in tongues; but never before had they heard glossolalia pouring from the lips of gentiles.

(3) THE DISCIPLES AT EPHESUS (ACTS 19:1-6)

(a) More than twenty years after the day of Pentecost, Paul came to Ephesus, and arranged to worship with a small group of Christians. He had been with them only a short time when he suddenly asked, "*Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?*"

He had no doubt that they were Christians, for "*they had believed*". Why then did he query whether they were baptised in the Spirit? Evidently because their worship was lacking in charismatic manifestations (1 Co 12:4-11; 14:26-33), especially glossolalia.²⁰ But as soon as he had laid hands on them, and glossolalia had occurred, Paul was able to affirm that now "*the Holy Spirit had come upon them*".

So two decades after Pentecost, the lack of glossolalia is taken as evidence that a group of Christians had not yet been filled with the Holy Spirit, while its occurrence is at once accepted as proof of the baptism in the Spirit. The conclusion is inescapable; glossolalia had been the constant evidence of the baptism in the Spirit throughout the whole period.

(b) Some have claimed that not all the Ephesians spoke in tongues, that some of them prophesied. However, there is no doubt that the phrase "*they were baptised*" includes the whole company; so there is no real reason to doubt that the phrase "*they spoke with tongues*" also includes them all. Presumably they all spoke with tongues and they all prophesied.

(Note: in view of Peter's use of the word "*prophecy*" to describe glossolalia (Ac 2:17-18), it is possible that "*prophecy*" here is also in some way synonymous with glossolalia).

(c) Paul refers to this incident in his letter to the Ephesians (1:13; 4:30; 5:18-20), where he speaks of them being "*sealed*" by the Spirit, and also commands them to be "*filled with the Spirit*". The word "*sealed*" is in the aorist tense; that is, it

(19) Allowing A.D. 30 as the date of Pentecost; A.D. 38 as the date of Paul's conversion; plus three years to embrace "the many days" of Ac. 9:23 (cp. Ga 1:18); which indicates A.D. 40 as the approximate date of Ac 9:31-32 ff.

(20) We know that lack of glossolalia was the cause of Paul's discontent, because as soon as he heard the Ephesians speaking in tongues he was satisfied. Also, why would lack of glossolalia have led Paul to ask about the Holy Spirit (and not glossolalia), unless he actually believed that the presence of glossolalia was evidence of the fullness of the Spirit. Glossolalia is not important for its own sake, but for the sake of the greater work it happens to signify Paul was not concerned about their lack of glossolalia, but about their lack of the Spirit - however, the one signified the other. Not hearing glossolalia, he assumed they were not filled with the Spirit; hearing glossolalia, he assumed they were filled with the Spirit.

describes an act that occurred once only, and was decisive. This is contrasted with the phrase “*be filled*”, which is in the present imperative tense, and indicates a continuous appropriation.

However, the latter text explains the nature of the earlier “*sealing*”. In effect, Paul is saying, “*Keep on being filled with the Spirit*”. Now, to “*keep on*” doing it, there must have been a time when it began. When was that? Obviously, when they were “*sealed*” at the time of Paul’s visit to Ephesus. But what happened then? “*They spoke with tongues and prophesied*”.

Notice the unmistakable link between their vocal response to the baptism in the Spirit then, and the vocal response indicated in Paul’s letter; “*Be filled with the Spirit, addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with all your heart.*” (‘Spiritual songs’ certainly refers to glossolalia; cp. 1 Co 14:14-15). So they spoke in tongues when they were first filled with the Spirit, and now they are exhorted to keep on being filled with the Holy Spirit, and to keep on “*speaking with tongues and prophesying*”. This effectively refutes the suggestion that the glossolalia brought on by Paul’s first visit to Ephesus was a special and temporary sign, given only to confirm that the gospel was to go to the Greeks. (A rather foolish idea, for it ignores the fact that the gospel had already reached them, that they were “*believers*” before Paul had ever set foot in Ephesus!)

On the contrary, Paul was merely dismayed to find a lack of charismatic gifts when he first visited them; and had he found a repetition of that lack on a subsequent visit, he would have been even more disturbed. “*Keep on,*” he says, “*and lose nothing of what God has given you by his Spirit.*”

(d) *Ephesians 5:18-21*. In this passage, the imperative “*be filled*” is followed by four present participles - speaking, singing, giving thanks, submitting. That is, the command to be filled with the Spirit is followed by a four-fold description of the immediate and continuing results of that infilling. Note how the first three of those results are vocal, and that at least one of them (as intimated above) is glossolalia.

If the command “*be filled*” is still valid, it is reasonable to suppose that the same vocal response will continue to result from obedience to that command (cp. also Cl 3:16-17).

(B) SECONDARY PROOF

(1) THE SAMARITANS (ACTS 8:5-20)

Nearly three centuries ago that grand old expositor Matthew Henry expressed the view of many scholars before and after him (including many non-Pentecostal scholars today) when he wrote -

It is said (Ac 8:16), ‘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 10:45, 46. This was both an eminent sign to those that believed not, and of excellent service to those that did . . . The apostles prayed for them . . . They laid their hands on them . . . (and) they received the Holy Ghost and spoke with tongues.

So, while Luke does not say in so many words, it is certain that the Samaritans did speak in tongues when the Holy Spirit fell on them. Proof can be found in the following -

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(a) The statement (vs. 16), that the Spirit had not yet fallen upon any of them, “demands that the reception of the Holy be an event that is plainly and immediately observable.” The same is true of other statements in this passage:

- *they prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit (and) they received the Holy Spirit*
- *Simon saw that the Spirit was given through the laying on of the apostle’s hands*

Such statements require a visible, definite descent of the Spirit, sudden, emphatic, obvious. Earlier, there was no doubt about their lack of the Spirit, for Luke dogmatically asserts, “*he was fallen upon none of them.*” But now there is no doubt about their reception of the Spirit for “*Simon saw that the Holy Spirit was given!*”

What evidence (or lack of it) enabled Luke to speak with such certainty? How was he able to say at once whether or not a person had been baptised in the Spirit?

This evidence was clearly not faith in Christ as Saviour, nor baptism in water, nor great joy in Christ, nor answered prayer, nor miracles of healing, nor a sweeping “revival”. The Samaritans had all of those things in abundance - yet Luke still boldly asserts that not one of them had received the Holy Spirit! Based on the witness of *Acts*, only one sign remains: glossolalia.

(b) The incident with Simon confirms this opinion. He had once held a position of great prominence in the district (vs. 9-11). But now he had lost his high standing. So he desired a sign that would surpass the miracles of Philip and restore his prestige. He saw that sign in the ministry of Peter and John. Something astounding happened to the people when the apostles laid hands on them. Simon was utterly amazed, and hastened at once to purchase this ability for himself.

What was this sign that so astonished the pagan prophet?

It could not have been miracles of healing, nor the expulsion of demons, nor some transforming inner experience of joy or peace, for those things had all occurred profusely under Philip’s ministry - yet Simon made no offer to Philip. But something must have happened, something dramatic and exciting, some immediate response that made Simon year for the skill to confer the gift of the Holy Spirit on others. Only one sign meets these requirements: glossolalia - extraordinary, arresting, supernatural, able to be received by young and old,, men and women alike (vs. 19). Those who deny this have the burden of demonstrating a suitable alternative.

(c) Peter said: “*May your silver perish with you, because you though you could buy the gift of God with money*” (vs. 20). Here is a strong indication that the ability both to receive and impart the Holy Spirit cannot be earned or bought in any way. One thing only is necessary: to have your heart right with God (vs. 21).

(2) THE APOSTLE PAUL (ACTS 9:1-19)

We are not told whether or not Paul spoke in tongues at the time he received the Holy Spirit, but we know that he had a fluent gift of tongues later in his life (1 Co 14:18). It is reasonable to assume that he first spoke in tongues when Ananias laid hands on him. If that is disputed, it must still be acknowledged that glossolalia was a result of Paul’s baptism in the Spirit.

Note also the things that were *not* an evidence of Holy Spirit baptism: a light from heaven, a voice from heaven, a miracle of blindness, convulsive falling to the ground, a disposition to prayer and fasting, prophetic insight (he had a vision of Ananias coming to him, vs. 12), a dramatic conversion. Paul had all those - but he was not baptised in the Spirit until after Ananias had laid hands on him!

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This proof of glossolalic baptism in the Spirit is continued in the next chapter.

CHAPTER SEVEN

INITIAL EVIDENCE - Part Two

If you really want to pile proof upon proof of a glossolalic baptism in the Spirit, then this chapter is for you. It builds upon the previous chapter by examining another dozen or so passages, so don't feel too guilty if you have an urge to hurry through them. But don't miss the ADDENDA at the end of the chapter. They contain some important material!

(C) SUBSIDIARY REFERENCES

(1) OLD TESTAMENT

The prophet (Jl 2:28-32) declared that a world-wide outpouring of the Holy Spirit would be characteristic of the period "*before the great and terrible day of the Lord comes*". This outpouring would be identified by the universal sign of "*prophecy*", which Peter interpreted to mean glossolalia (Ac 2:16-17). The conclusion seems inescapable that those who lack the *sign* of the experience lack the *experience*. Note too that the eschatological setting of Joel's prophecy, related as it is to the period immediately before the great and terrible day of the Lord comes (vs. 30-31), requires the prophecy to have a continuous fulfilment from the day of Pentecost until the end of this gospel age ("*the last days*"). In other words, at any time during this age the promise remains true that the servants of God can experience the outpouring of the Spirit, which will be marked by an outburst of "*prophesying*" - that is, by speaking in tongues.²¹

(2) NEW TESTAMENT

Directly, or indirectly, the following references all link glossolalia with the infilling of the Holy Spirit:

(21) Note: concerning Peter's definition of "prophecy" as "glossolalia", Irenaeus (A.D. 150?-202?) used the word in the same way. Writing about the events at Caesarea, he says: "Peter (would not) have given them baptism so readily, had he not heard them prophesying when the Holy Ghost rested upon them." In fact, of course, the people at Caesarea spoke in tongues (Ac 10:46).

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(a) **Matthew 3:11**. The “fire” spoken of by John the Baptist is an analogue for glossolalia; cp. *Acts 1:5; 11:16* along with the “*tongues of fire*” on the day of Pentecost that were transmuted into glossolalia.

(b) **John 7:37-39**. The sentence, “*From deep within him rivers of living water will flow*”, is probably a poetic description of glossolalia, which Paul described as flowing from the human spirit (1 Co 14:14-16).

(c) **Acts 2:41-43**. A renowned commentator argues from the silence of Luke in this place that, unlike the 120 disciples,

the 3,000 do not seem to have experienced the miraculous phenomena (the rushing, mighty wind, the tongues of flame, or speaking in other tongues). Yet they inherited the same promise and received the same gift (Ac 2:33,39). The 3,000 . . . received the forgiveness of their sins and the gift of the Spirit simultaneously. . . The fact that the experience of the 120 was in two distinct stages (that is, they were first born again, and subsequently baptised in the Spirit) was simply due to historical circumstances. They could not have received the Pentecostal gift before Pentecost. But on and after the day of Pentecost, forgiveness of sins and the ‘gift’ or ‘baptism’ in the Holy Spirit were received together.

To this I reply -

(i) The argument from silence is a perilous one. The mere fact that Luke does not record a charismatic outpouring upon the 3,000 does not prove that such an outpouring did not occur. Nor can Luke’s silence be construed as teaching that the 3,000 received a non-charismatic, non-evidential, baptism in the Spirit simultaneous with their conversion to Christ. Such an assumption is unwarranted. It is actually destroyed by the subsequent accounts in *Acts* of people receiving the Holy Spirit as an experience distinct from salvation.

(ii) But is Luke really so silent? After all, he himself tells us that the 3,000 “*continued in the apostles’ teaching, and in prayers*”, and that “*many wonders and signs were done by the apostles*.” In the context of *Acts* it does not require much imagination to see there a reference to “*teaching*” about “*the promise of the Father*”, and to “*prayer*” leading to an outpouring of charismatic²² gifts, which surely included glossolalia. The phrase “*by the apostles*” must also comprehend the act of laying on of hands. In this connection a saying of Dr. Silva Lake is significant -

Belief in Jesus (or in his name), baptism, the remission of sins, the laying of on hands, and the reception of the Holy Spirit, seem to have formed a single complex of associated ideas, any one of which in a single narrative might be either omitted or emphasised.²³

(iii) The 3,000 were plainly expecting to receive what the 120 had received. Without tongues how could they have known whether they had in fact received the same gift? Peter identified “*the promise of the Father*” as something they could both “*see*” and “*hear*”, nor did he give the slightest indication that their experience would differ from that of the 120. Further, the context of this incident shows that the “*promise*” was that spoken by Joel. But that promise included a pronouncement that all who received it would

(22) In these notes, “charismatic” and “charismata” are used to describe one or more of the supernatural gifts of the Holy Spirit (cp. 1 Co 12:7-11).

(23) I have lost the source of this saying.

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“*prophesy*”, which as we have already seen, meant glossolalia. So if the 3,000 did in fact receive the gift of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost, or on any subsequent occasion, that reception could have been known only by the occurrence of glossolalia.

(iv) See also *Acts 11:15* - “*When I began to speak, the Holy Spirit fell on them just as on us at the beginning.*” Notice that the word “*us*” includes Judeans (vs 1-3). But there were no Judeans among the 120 who were filled with the Spirit on the day of Pentecost (cp. 2:7)! But there were Judeans among the 3,000 (2:7,9,14). It is plain that at least some of the must have spoken in tongues when, some time after the initial Pentecostal event, they enjoyed their own Pentecostal baptism in the Spirit.

(d) ***Acts 4:31*** - “*The place*” spoken of here was possibly a large out-door area, and the people assembled there were gathered from the thousands of new converts mentioned in 2:41 and 4:4. Perhaps it was on this occasion that the 3,000, now taught in the apostles’ doctrine (2:42), received their personal Pentecost. In any case, this outpouring of the Spirit was plainly accompanied by charismatic manifestations, which surely included glossolalia (4:30; 5:12).

(e) ***Acts 9:31***. The statement “*they walked in the comfort of the Holy Spirit*” implies that the churches in Galilee, Samaria, and Judea all enjoyed a charismatic baptism in the Spirit -

(i) That statement, when applied to the Samaritans, certainly indicates a charismatic filling, because, as we have seen, the evidence is overwhelming that the Samaritans experienced glossolalia when they received the Holy Spirit. If the statement “*they walked in the comfort of the Holy Spirit*”, includes a charismatic baptism in the Spirit in the case of churches in Samaria, it is reasonable to assume that it includes the same in the case of the Judean and Galilean churches.

(ii) There is positive proof that the Judean churches had experienced glossolalia, and that this experience began with their baptism in the Spirit. Notice the word “*us*” in *Acts 11:15,17*, and compare it with 11:1-4. It becomes obvious that “*the apostles and the brethren who were in Judea*” had all received a glossolalic baptism in the Spirit.

(iii) So the statement “*walking in the comfort of the Holy Spirit*” includes glossolalia in the case of the Samaritans and the Judeans. But what about the Galileans? Well, we know that the 120 were all Galileans (2:7), that they identified their experience of glossolalia with the prophecy of Joel (2:16-17), a prophecy which extends to all of the “*servants*” of God. On their return to Galilee they could hardly do other than encourage their friends and neighbours (perhaps including the remainder of the “*500*” - 1 Co 15:6) to enter into the same experience. We also know that Jesus linked the expression “*comfort*” (paraklesis) with the Pentecostal outpouring - for he said that on “*that day*” the “*Comforter*” (Parakletos) would be given to the church *John 14:16,20,26*. So there are glossolalic overtones in the phrase “*comfort of the Holy Spirit*”. (See also the charismatic significance of paraklesis in *1 Corinthians 14:3*). Hence it seems reasonable to suppose that the expression “*they walked in the comfort of the Holy Spirit*” means that the people in Galilee, Samaria, and Judea, all enjoyed a glossolalic baptism in the Spirit.

(f) ***Acts 10:23***. Linked with the incident of Cornelius, there is indication of another group of people who had received the Holy Spirit (with glossolalia), namely, those who came with Peter from Joppa. Notice the words of verses 45-47 - “*the believers. . . who came with Peter were amazed. . . then Peter declared, ‘These people. . . have received the Holy Spirit just as we have.’*” That last phrase strongly indicates that the Jewish Christians in Joppa had received the Holy Spirit and had spoken in tongues. This is confirmed by the phrase “*for they heard them speaking in tongues*” - a phrase that would have no meaning unless the Joppa disciples had received the same evidence as Cornelius did of their personal

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infilling of the Spirit. If someone asks why there is no record of the outpouring of the Spirit upon the Joppa disciples, but such a full record of Cornelius, the answer lies in the dispensational aspect of the gentiles receiving the gift of the Spirit - the gospel was now being openly extended to the whole world.

(g) **Acts 13:52**. Barnabas and Paul were at Antioch for some twelve months (Ac 11:25-26). From Antioch they were “*sent out by the Holy Spirit*” (13:4) on a missionary tour that began at Seleucia and went on to include Cyprus, Paphos, Perga, Pisidia. As a result of their labours, “*the word of the Lord spread throughout the whole region*” (13:49). They travelled on to Iconium, Lystra, Derbe, Lycaonia and the region about, Pamphylia, and Attalia. In many of these places they met with severe persecution, but converts multiplied and many churches were established. Over the whole mission Luke writes the encomium, “*The disciples were filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit.*” So we have a record of a great number of new converts who received the gift of the Holy Spirit. But did they speak in tongues?

The occurrence of glossolalia is not recorded. But neither is there any mention of Christian baptism - yet it can be taken for granted that these converts were baptised in water. The lack of mention of glossolalia is no proof that it did not occur. However, it is stated that in all the places visited by Paul and Barnabas “*miracles, signs and wonders were done by their hands*” (14:3; 15:12; and cp. Ro 15:19). In the context of Acts glossolalia must have been a prominent part of such an abundance of charismatic manifestations. Mark also the manner in which those references echo the terminology used by Luke earlier in Acts - e.g. “*promise of the Father*” (cp. Ac 13:32-33 with 2:33); “*filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit*” (cp. 13:52 with 89:8,17); “*signs and wonders done by their hands*” (cp. 14:3 with 8:17; 9:17); etc. The earlier references include glossolalia, and it is a reasonable inference that the later echoes of them should also be read as including glossolalia. Indeed, Luke’s style in Acts reflects a saving of effort by not giving all the details of every incident. Rather, he uses certain set phrases to comprehend a variety of things. Hence, “*signs done by their hands*” is a concise way of describing (among other things) the giving of the Holy Spirit through teaching, prayer, the laying on of hands, and with glossolalia as the evidence of the Spirit’s effusion.

(h) **1 Thessalonians 5:19-20**. Again we see inspired utterance linked with the free-flowing of the Holy Spirit; and as previously intimated, “*prophecy*” includes glossolalia. This passage also shows that the immediate evidence of the presence of the Holy Spirit is not spiritual fruit but charismatic gifts. To despise these gifts is to quench the Spirit, and hence to hinder his working at all levels of the believer’s life. (Note: vs. 19 may also read, “*Do not quench the spirit*” - referring to the human spirit, not the Holy Spirit. In that case the charismatic connotations would be even stronger - cp. 1 Co 14:14-16,32,39. In any case, there is proof in either reading that the church at Thessalonica enjoyed a baptism in the Spirit that, if it was not proved by charismata, certainly resulted in charismata - cp. also 1 Thessalonians 1:5, “*in power (dunamis) and in the Holy Spirit*” with Acts 1:8).

(i) **1 Timothy 4:14**. The “*gift*” Timothy received was presumably the gift of the Holy Spirit, received through the laying on of hands and in conjunction with “*prophetic utterance*” (glossolalia). (See also 4:18 and 2 Ti 1:6-7). The word “*gift*” here is charisma, which is closely linked with the baptism in the Spirit.

(j) **1 Corinthians 1:4-7**.

Notice here -

(i) Some (non-Pentecostal) commentators assert that the phrase “*the grace (charis) of God*”, here and in other places, is actually a synonym for “*the Spirit of God*”. If that is so, then Paul is referring to the “*giving*” of a charismatic baptism in the Spirit. Certainly, Paul himself appears to give the expression this meaning when he defines the “*grace of God*” as an “*enriching*” with the charismata, viz. “*utterance*” and “*knowledge*” (vs. 5; cp. 1 Co 12:7-11), and “*spiritual gifts*” (vs. 7).

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(ii) Notice also the charismatic overtones in the word “confirmed” (vs. 6; and see Mk 16:20, where the same Greek word occurs). This “confirmation” is of course one of the major values of the Pentecostal baptism in the Spirit. The same kind of charismatic (or glossolalic) confirmation is implied in *Romans 8:15-16; 15:18-19; 1 Corinthians 2:4-5,12-13; 3:16; 6:19; 1 Thessalonians 1:5; Colossians 3:16; Ephesians 5:18-20; Hebrews 2:4*; and cp. *2 Corinthians 1:21-22; Ephesians 1:13*.

(iii) That the phrase “*the grace of God given*” is often synonymous with a charismatic baptism in the Spirit is supported by parallel references in other letters, where Paul seems to be describing his own (glossolalic, 1 Co 14:18) baptism in the Spirit - see *Romans 1:5* (he was commissioned an apostle by Holy Spirit baptism, Ac 9:17); *Romans 15:15-16; 1 Corinthians 3:10; 15:10; Ephesians 3:7-8*. Hence, in the following places also, it is reasonable to infer that “grace” means the baptism in the Spirit manifested by charismata (and specifically by charismatic “speech” or “glossolalia”) *Acts 4:33; 11:21-24* (“*the hand of the Lord was with them*” is probably synonymous with Mk 16:20 = the baptism in the Spirit with charismata); *14:3; Romans 5:2,5,17; 12:6; Ephesians 4:7; Colossians 3:16; 2 Thessalonians 2:16; 2 Timothy 2:1* (and cp. 1:6-7); *Hebrews 10:29* (and cp. 2:4); *1 Peter 1:10-11* (“*subsequent glory*” may refer to the day of Pentecost, cp. Ac 2:33); *4:10-11*.

(k) **Galatians 3:5**. Here there is clear reference to a Pentecostal baptism in the Spirit - “*miracles*” is *dunamis*, which relates to *Acts 1:8*, which relates to the day of Pentecost. Just as “grace” appears to be used frequently as a synonym for the charismatic baptism in the Spirit, so also *dunamis* appears to be often used in the same way. *Dunamis* occurs well over 100 times in the New Testament. Its general meaning is simply “power” or “ability”, but it is many times used in the specific sense of “miraculous power”, and in this usage it often stands for the supernatural baptism in the Spirit - *Luke 24:49; Acts 1:8; 4:33; 6:8; 10:38; Romans 15:13,19; 1 Corinthians 2:4; 4:20; 1 Thessalonians 1:5; 2 Corinthians 12:12; Hebrews 2:4*. Perhaps many of the remaining occurrences of *dunamis* also refer to, or include the idea of, the baptism in the Spirit and the charismata (as the vehicles of divine “power”).

CONCLUSION

We have now considered the various places where there is a record of people receiving the gift of the Holy Spirit. In three of these cases (the day of Pentecost, the household of Cornelius, the Ephesian disciples) Luke explicitly describes one common, immediate, audible sign of the baptism in the Spirit - glossolalia. The witness of those three passages is strong. They are the only places where we are specifically told what happens when someone receives the Holy Spirit. And the testimony of these passages is unanimous: all who were filled with the Spirit spoke in tongues.

We confidently affirm, then, that when the Bible speaks about the matter at all, it shows glossolalia as the one common sign of the baptism in the Spirit.

Added to the plain testimony of those three passages is the supporting testimony of the many other references quoted above. Taken together, they build a vigorous argument for the Pentecostal teaching of a discrete baptism in the Spirit confirmed initially by glossolalia. It has the added beauty of being an essentially simple argument, based on acceptance of the biblical evidence at face value.

Pentecostals have been often criticised for the supposed lack of theological depth in their writings on the baptism in the Spirit. But the plain fact is, this doctrine is one of those blessed truths of scripture, so simple that “*he who runs may read!*”

Can you doubt that any ordinary person, reading the Book of *Acts*, would conclude that there is a specific experience called the baptism in the Holy Spirit, which was usually accompanied by glossolalia? We simply go a step further and say that close examination of the evidence will lead to the conclusion that glossolalia was in fact always the evidence of the baptism in the Holy Spirit. At least, no exceptions can be proved.

It cannot be denied that glossolalia and other charismatic gifts occurred frequently in the worship and ministry of the early church. Nor can it be denied that where the Pentecostal teaching on the baptism in the Spirit is rejected, these gifts are conspicuous by their absence. The only places where they can be found at all are places where the Pentecostal teaching is received. That in itself is a strong indication of the truth of the Pentecostal position that glossolalia is the usual initial and immediate sign of the baptism in the Spirit. Those who reject this will surely be deprived of much that the Spirit of God desires to accomplish in their lives.

ADDENDUM

At the risk of repetition I feel it is necessary here to make two statements - one to the systematic theologian; and one to the Pentecostals. Like Elihu (Jb 32:2 ff), I feel the temerity of having to speak in the presence of the aged, the learned and the wise. Unlike him, I will not dare to claim divine inspiration! But hopefully you will find some sense here -

(A) SOME ADVICE TO OPPONENTS

(1) I have mentioned earlier that *Acts 2:39* was probably intended by Luke to set the normal pattern for Christian initiation. But the remainder of *Acts* shows immense variation in the outworking of this pattern. This deviation is an offence to some theologians, so they conjure amazingly complex arguments to show that the pattern is actually the same. Such arguments simply concede the point: taken at face value, *Acts* shows a flexible, not an inflexible outworking of 2:38-39. The problem is especially acute for those who hold the belief that conversion is made real only in water-baptism, and that water-baptism is invariably sealed by the (an automatically given) Holy Spirit baptism. Trying to fit all the *Acts* references into that theology involves some real juggling!

When dealing with Cornelius, the eager scholar can surge joyously ahead (with an embarrassed glance at the fact that water-baptism did not precede, but followed, the giving of the Spirit). But when he come to the Samaritan passage he is in troubled waters. Some claim that Luke separated the three initial events for the express purpose of proving they were not separated! Others argue that the Samaritans were not converted at all until Peter and John came to them and prayed for them (and this despite the demand of their own theology that repentance and baptism are invariably crowned by the immediate giving of the Spirit). Such sophistries we can well ignore. It is doubtful if they convince even their authors.

Why not just accept the record as it stands? Why not be content to show that within the broad framework he has himself laid down, God is free to deal variously with his people? Sometimes

the Holy Spirit baptism is given instantaneously upon conversion; sometimes it precedes, sometimes follows, water baptism; sometimes it comes with the laying on of hands, sometimes without; sometimes the three initiation events occur in close sequence, sometimes with a long delay between them. Admittedly, the ideal for which we should strive is that people should repent, be baptised, and be filled with the Spirit - with as little delay as possible. But the accidents of time, place, human responsiveness, ecclesiastical opposition, and even divine sovereignty may often interrupt this sequence.

(B) SOME ADVICE TO PENTECOSTALS

Similarly, Pentecostal also should beware. Despite all the evidence which can be collected, there is nothing in scripture which says that God must baptise in the Spirit only in association with glossolalia, or with other charismata. I do not doubt that God can give the Holy Spirit to any of his people without glossolalia occurring, and, I am sure that he has done so. The Pentecostal should assert only that in Bible days the giving of the Holy Spirit was normally accompanied by glossolalia and other charismata, that there is no reason why the same should not apply today, and that both the objective and subjective values of glossolalia should encourage every Christian to appropriate this confirmatory sign.

(III) WHY GLOSSOLALIA?

What possible reason could God have for making such a bizarre phenomenon as glossolalia the usual initial evidence of Holy Spirit baptism? Aside from reasons that focus on the personal values of speaking in tongues, let me suggest the following -

(A) UNIQUE TO THIS AGE

(1) Christian glossolalia is the one spiritual manifestation that is unique to the gospel age. Paul lists nine basic manifestations of the Spirit (1 Co 12:7-11). Eight of these occurred in Old Testament days:

- *“the utterance of wisdom* (Da 2:14)
- *the utterance of knowledge* (Da 2:28)
- *faith* (He 11:33)
- *gifts of healing* (cp. the miracles of Moses, Elijah, Elisha, etc.)
- *the working of miracles* (cp. the many mighty deeds recorded in the O.T.)
- *prophecy* (cp. the oracles of the prophets)
- *the ability to distinguish between spirits* (2 Kg 5:26)
- *the interpretation of tongues*, (Da 5:26, using a little imagination!)

(2) But the ninth gift, glossolalia, as a sign of the personal indwelling of the Holy Spirit, had its first occurrence on the day of Pentecost. All the miracles in the N.T. had their parallels in the O.T., except Christian glossolalia, which remains the one spiritual gift unique to the church. As such, it is ideally suited to be the specific sign of that baptism in the Spirit which is also unique to the Christian era.

However, those remarks do need some qualification> I used the term “Christian glossolalia” because it must be admitted that a number of O.T. passages do contain suggestions of ecstatic outpourings -

(B) OLD TESTAMENT GLOSSOLALIA

(1) See 1 Samuel 10:5-13; 19:18-24; 2 Samuel 6:13-17; 1 Kings 18:28-29; 20:35-37; etc. The popular suspicion that the prophets were “madmen” may also suggest that they used glossolalia (Je 29:26; Ho 9:7; and cp. also Is 8:19). Also see Numbers 11:24-25, where the prophesying referred to was almost certainly some kind of ecstatic speech.

(2) Assuming the last few verses of Mark are an original part of the gospel, then we find Jesus mentioning glossolalia to his disciples without any explanation, which suggests that they were already familiar with the phenomenon. Peter also, on the Day of Pentecost easily associated the occurrence of glossolalia with Joel’s promise that they would all “prophesy”, which suggests that Hebrew prophesying included the use of glossolalia. The Hebrew word for “prophesy” certainly had the same broad meaning as the equivalent Greek word - anything from frenzied and ecstatic utterances to sober and careful pronouncement.

(3) Notice also the mysterious references in Psalms to “my glory”, which may well be a synonym for glossolalic utterance (and the same may be true of the expression “sing a new song”) -

“Therefore my heart is glad and my glory rejoices” (16:9; and note that this Psalm was quoted by Peter in his sermon on the Day of Pentecost).

“Thou hast gifted me with gladness that my glory may praise thee and not be silent” (30:12)

“I will sing and make melody. Awake my glory! Awake, O harp and lyre!” (57:8)

“I will sing and make melody. Awake my glory! . . . I will give thanks to thee, O lord. . .” (108:1,3)

“Let the saints be joyful in (their) glory; let them sing for joy upon their couches” (149:5).

(4) See also Amos 7:14, which in Hebrew distinguishes between “a prophet” and “a son of a prophet”. The “prophet” was an individual person, especially called by God; but “the sons of the prophets” are thought by some commentators to have been groups of charismatic people, or members of a prophetic guild. Whether they exercised glossolalia or simply spoke ecstatically in their native tongue is unknown.

(5) However, if glossolalia did occur in O.T days, it differed from the Christian gift in that

(a) it was apparently ecstatic or trance-like, while the Christian gift may often involve little or no emotion and should never involve loss of self-control or of personal awareness; and

(b) the Christian gift is specifically delineated as the sign of the personal and universal effusion of the Spirit. It can be said now with confidence, “*You can all speak in tongues. . .you can all prophecy,*” (1 Co 14:4,31). But formerly, Moses could only voice an impossible yearning: “*I wish that all the Lord’s people were prophets!*” (Nu 11:29).

(C) FURTHER REASONS

(1) Morton T. Kelsey has suggested that glossolalia (as a special form of prophecy) was chosen to fulfil Joel’s prediction (2:28), because the ordinary gift of prophecy (exercised in the speaker’s native tongue) can be easily simulated.

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“Prophecy,” he writes, “(may be) artistically contrived and emotionally motivated speech. How can we be sure whether one speaking powerfully is motivated by ego prompting or is speaking from a deeper centre? Actually prophecy always remains open to doubt. But if there is any reality to glossolalia, there can be no doubt that something beyond the man takes hold of him. . . Tongue speaking is, therefore, at least important for its evidential value, in addition to giving expression to the religious feelings of the speaker.”

(2) The Holy Spirit is a person, and it is reasonable that the clearest and most immediate sign of his presence should be the one thing that is always the most prominent mark of personality - articulate speech. Dr Howard M. Erwin writes:

Speech is a unique manifestation of personality. It is, in fact, one of the most distinctly personal things men do. It is rightly regarded as evidence of personality. It is not accidental to personality. It is rather indispensable to human personality.

God, as a person, has always manifested himself in speech - e.g. he called to Adam and Eve in the Garden, he spoke to Abraham out of the sky, and to Moses out of the burning bush, and from the mercy seat; etc. If it be objected that the presence of God was then marked by intelligible speech, and why should he now use an unintelligible utterance, Paul suggests an answer in *Romans 8:26-27*; *1 Corinthians 14:2*.

(3) Glossolalia may be seen as the N.T. counterpart of the *shekinah* of the O.T. (Ex 40:34-38; Le 16:2; 2 Sa 6:2; Ps 80:1; Is 37:16; Ez 9:3; 43:4). Evidence of this appeared on the day of Pentecost when “*cloven tongues of fire*” rested upon each of the disciples. Those dancing flames were presumably a manifestation of the glory of God, similar to that which blazed between the cherubim of the ark of the covenant. But now the shekinah has been taken from the temple of stone and is placed instead within the bodily “temples” of the saints (cp. 1 Co 6:19-20). Those fiery tongues soon merged into the spoken tongues (glossolalia), and so became to the church what the shekinah had been to Israel - a tangible manifestation of the presence and glory of God.

(4) Glossolalia is a supernatural gift, it cannot be developed or duplicated by mere human skill or endeavour. Therefore it is an eminently suitable sign of that greater supernatural gift whose reception it marks - the gift of the Holy Spirit. Since it is supernatural, glossolalia requires the consecration of one’s whole body, mind, and spirit to the control of the Holy Spirit - which is a proper analogy of the faith and receptivity needed to be filled with the Spirit.

(5) One of the primary purposes of Holy Spirit baptism is to empower the Christian’s witness (Ac 1:8). It is fitting that the tongue, which causes so much hurt (Ja 3:1-13), should be purged by this marvellous operation of God. Mastery of the tongue, says James, brings perfection and strength to one’s entire life. Since it is the task of the Holy Spirit to guide us into a life of practical holiness, it is desirable that his work should begin with the control of our most “*unruly member*,” the tongue.

(6) Donald Gee writes -

The spirit of man often struggles with thoughts beyond the power of speech to express. In common talk we speak of being ‘too full for words’. It would appear that by enabling believers to speak with tongues the Holy Spirit does enable them to utter that which would otherwise remain unutterable. It is consistent with the whole idea of being nothing less than *filled* with the Spirit of God that men should be brought to a condition of unspeakable emotion. The only possible alternatives are ineffable silence or supernatural expression. Both are blessed, but God in his wisdom appears to have ordained the latter.

CHAPTER EIGHT

EMPOWERED FOR GOD

Jesus stands as the fulcrum of the two eras; he is the chief Person of the Old and of the New. All of the Old was consummated in him, and he has become the only standard of the New. His example is recorded for us to follow. He was *wet* the pattern that we too are called upon to follow (Ac 2:38-39); that is, he was *born of the Spirit* (Lu 1:35); *baptised in water* (Mt 3:13-15); and *baptised in the Holy Spirit* (Mt 3:16-17).

Before his incarnation Christ was equal with the Father and he embraced all the attributes of deity. But through an act Paul describes as his "*kenosis*"²⁴ (Ph 2:7), Christ stripped himself of all divine capability and limited himself only to such properties as are natural to a human being (Ph 2:5-8; He 2:17). Consequently, Jesus needed the same baptism in the Holy Spirit, and he obtained it on the same conditions, as we do. So necessary was this baptism, that without it he could not have accomplished the awesome mission given to him by the Father (Is 11:1,2; 42:1; 61:1).

Does that sound startling? Then remember the difference made in his state by the incarnation. Before his birth in Bethlehem Jesus, as the *Son of God*, had been with the Father from the beginning, and possessed all the majesty of deity, But then he came among us as the *Son of Man*, born of a woman, born a helpless infant. In the *former* condition he was with God, and was God (Jn 1:1-3), the creator and upholder of all things, in whom all fullness dwelt (Cl 1:16-19). In the *latter* condition he "*emptied himself*", and was "*made in the likeness of a man*" , becoming "*in all respects like his brothers and sisters*" (Ph 2:7-8, He 2:17). He retained his divine identity, but surrendered his divine powers.

True faith requires us to hold both aspects of Christ's nature in balance:

- because he was the *Son of God* Christ had in himself a value greater than that of the entire universe; hence he was able to make reconciliation for the sins of all mankind (He 1:2-3, 10-12);

(24) For further comment on the "kenosis" see the "Addenda" at the end of this chapter.

- but his death and resurrection have efficacy for you and me individually because he was also *Son of Man* - "*flesh of our flesh, bone of our bone.*"

Because of his real humanity and his complete sharing in human life, Jesus is able to succour us and to show us grace (He 2:14-18; 4:15-16; 5:7-9.) "*Truly, he did not take upon himself the nature of angels,*" for to have done so would have stripped his experience of any value for us. Even then his taking on human flesh would have brought us no benefit unless two other things followed:

- he could not support us in temptation unless he himself, as a man, had experienced temptation just as we do;
- nor could he help us unless he had overcome temptation in the same way that we have to.

So we are plainly told that he "*emptied himself*" and was "*in all respects made like his brothers and sisters.*" This means that not once during "*the time he lived among us*" did Christ draw on the attributes of his deity. He lived his whole life span only in such strength and ability as his humanity provided. He met life on the same terms that we must meet it.

He certainly could have drawn at any time upon the power of his deity; but had he done so even once his claim to be the Saviour of his people would have been immediately invalidated. "*Though he was a son, yet learned he obedience*" and only thus was he "*made perfect*" to be the author of salvation to fallen men and women. That is why he refused the subtle temptation of Satan in the wilderness, to feed himself by a miracle. "*If you are the Son of God . . .*" said the tempter, and so tried to draw Christ into a resumption of his deity, to move away from the confines and limitations of his humanity (Mt 3:3). But Christ ignored Satan's reminder that he was the Son of God, and responded instead with the sharp rejoinder, "*Man . . .*" (vs. 4) He meant that he would meet and conquer Satan, not as God, but as a *man*. Similarly, on another occasion, Christ stated that he could call on twelve legions of angels, but to do so would bread the scripture (Mt 26:53). So then, let us consider

(I) THE EXAMPLE OF CHRIST

As a man, then, Christ endured the same temptations we meet, and mastered them with the same weapons that are available to us (cp. He 2:14-18; 4:15-16; 5:7-9). Those weapons were basically three; *Prayer; the Word of God; and Holy Spirit baptism* (cp. Lu 3:21-22; 4:1,4,14). Without the use of those weapons, and especially without the baptism in the Spirit, Christ could not have properly fulfilled the mission of the Father. He was dependent upon the baptism of the Spirit to equip him for the service of God (see again Is 11:1-3; 61:1-2). The promise made through Isaiah was fulfilled at the beginning of the Lord's public ministry (notice that Jesus made no attempt to commence ministry until he had received this endowment of power; Mt 3:16-17; Mk 1:10-11; Lu 3:21-22; Jn 1:32-33; cp. also Is 42:1 with Mt 3:16-17).

Christ himself quoted the prophecy of Isaiah (61:1-2), and applied it to himself, after the Spirit had fallen upon him at Jordan (Lu 4:14-19). Only then do we read that he was "*full of the Holy Spirit*" (Lu 4:1); that he ministered "*in the power of the Spirit*" (vs. 14); and that he had the Spirit "*without measure*" (Jn 3:34, A.V.).

The results of this baptism were immediate and dramatic (Lu 4:14-15). Yet before that day of empowerment Jesus (by his "*kenosis*") had made himself just an average man (cp. Is 53:2). Aside from Holy spirit baptism there was apparently little that was remarkable about him: he merged easily into the crowd (Jn 8:59; 7:10-15,20); the authorities had to bribe Judas to identify him (Mt 26:48-49); he was known as "*Josephs son*" (Lu 4:22); at 30 years of age (by which age many men have achieved renown) he had attracted no attention (Lu 3:23). Even his name was

common: “*Jesus*” is an English transliteration of the Greek form of “Joshua”, a name that would have belonged to many Jewish boys in those days.

But after the heavens had opened to him, and the Holy Spirit had descended upon him, see the transformation that occurred -

(A) IN HIS MINISTRY

See Luke 4:16-22. These people had known Jesus since childhood (vs. 22b); they had often heard him speak in that same synagogue (vs. 16); but now his speech held a magnetic quality that enthralled them (vs. 20,22). Christ explained the transformation; “*the Spirit of the Lord is upon me!*” So too in Capernaum (vs. 31-32), and wherever he went (vs. 14-15).

(B) IN SPIRITUAL POWER

See *Luke 4:16-22*. How did Christ receive Holy Spirit baptism? Simply by utilising the same spiritual principles that we must employ:

- he recognised that obedience was an essential pre-condition (Mt 3:15, and cp. Ac 5:32);
- he claimed the promise of God by prayer (Lu 3:21; and cp. 11:9-13), which shows also that
 - he believed the promise of the Father (Is 11:1-3; 61:1);
 - he knew the hour had come for the fulfilment of the promise;
- he yielded to the leading of the Spirit (Lu 4:1,14 and notice that Christ did not come in the “*power*” of the Spirit until after he had permitted the Holy Spirit to lead him into the wilderness (cp. also He 10:7);
- he stayed faithful under testing (Lu 4:1-3 and cp. Ep 6:10-11, 17, 18);
- he maintained his unction through faith in the scripture.

Notice especially how Jesus released the anointing of God into his ministry by boldly claiming that the Word of God had been fulfilled in him, and that he had been filled with power from on high (Lu 4:16-21, 28-30). He chose also what must have been (from a human standpoint) the most difficult time and place to make this announcement; his home-town synagogue, filled with his relatives and neighbours, But for that very reason his firm declaration of scripture gained extra force, releasing in him the marvellous energy of the indwelling Spirit.

If Christ was baptised in the Holy Ghost prior to the commencement of his public ministry, it could only have been because the successful fulfilment of his ministry depended on him being “*full of the Holy Spirit*”. In this, as in all things, he set the example that we are to follow (1 Pe 2:21).

If it was essential for the Lord to be equipped with power, how much more do we need this endowment! Jesus had every natural advantage; his physical and mental strength were not dulled by inward corruption (cp. Lu 2:40-52). Yet still, in his own ministry he conclusively demonstrated the value and need of Holy Spirit baptism. Our greater need is suggested by a comparison between the descent of the Spirit upon Christ and the experience of the disciples on the day of Pentecost:

- to Christ, the Holy Spirit came as a dove, the symbol of peace, purity, and gentility;
- to the disciples, he came with great noise, fire, the startling manifestation of glossolalia, which led to confusion, fear, mockery, astonishment.

All this because the Holy Spirit comes into direct conflict with the corrupted spirit of man - cp. *Matthew 3:11-12; Galatians 5:17*. The same pattern is often repeated in our own time.

So we see that Christ was born of the Spirit (Mt 1:20); his ministry was performed in the anointing of the Spirit (Lu 4:18); he suffered and died in the enabling of the Spirit (He 9:14); he was raised from the dead by the Spirit (Ro 1:4; 8:11); and in his ascension he received the Holy Spirit from the Father to be given to the church (Ac 2:33). There was a vital relationship between Christ and the Spirit throughout the whole of his life and ministry. And that relationship continues through the "*clothing*" of the church (the "*body*" of Christ) by the Spirit with "*power from on high*". If he is our master, then we should be delighted to follow in his steps. Let us then claim the promise of the Father just as he did and in the power of the Spirit complete all that the Father has given us to do.

(II) PERFECTING CHRISTIAN CHARACTER

Jesus taught that those who were baptised in the Spirit would enjoy higher privileges and greater proximity to God than did the people who accompanied him in Palestine. If we were asked to choose between Holy Spirit baptism and the physical presence of Christ most of us would choose the latter - yet Jesus insisted that this would be the wrong decision. In the baptism in the Spirit we are able to derive greater benefit than the disciples had who heard Jesus in person, and saw him, and touched him. We could scarcely accept this as true if Jesus himself had not expressly declared it (Jn 16:6-7).

Those first disciples enjoyed marvellous privileges (Lu 10:23-24); but these blessings cannot be compared with the richer glory that the Comforter brings to us (Jn 7:38-39). Hence we are told that the wealth enjoyed by the humblest Spirit-filled believer today surpasses anything ever known by kings and prophets of the past (cp. 1 Pe 1:10-11). The apostle speaks of "the sufferings of Christ" and then of "the subsequent glory". The latter phrase apparently describes the Holy Spirit sent from heaven" (vs 12); and this is such a glory that even the angels desire to search and know its measureless wonder.

A charming illustration of these things is found in the lovely story of Isaac and Rebekah (Ge 24:58-67). Abraham (the Father) sent his servant (the Holy Spirit) into a far country (the world) to find a bride (the church) for his son Isaac (Christ). The servant gave her gifts (charismatic manifestations and spiritual graces), and brought her safely to her new home (heaven). As Rebekah was dependent upon Abraham's servants to bring her joyfully to Isaac and home, so are we wholly dependent upon the Holy Spirit to guide us in our earthly pilgrimage and to bring us enriched into the kingdom of God. Much of this ministry can be realised through the work of the Spirit in regeneration; but some aspects of the ministry of the Spirit are specifically related to the Pentecostal event, and cannot be fully realised apart from that event. Every aspect of the work of the Spirit in the believer's life can be strengthened by the baptism in the Spirit (cp. Ro 8:11-17).

This pragmatic work of the Spirit in perfecting Christian character and in enabling the believer to experience in daily life the blessings of salvation is the theme of the next chapter.

ADDENDA

(A) DID CHRIST SPEAK IN TONGUES?

(1) Arnobius (c. 300) apparently thought so -

Was he one of us, who, when he uttered a single word, was thought by nations far removed from one another and of different speech to be using well-known sounds and the peculiar language of each?²⁵

(1) Don't copy the enthusiastic naivete of some of the early Pentecostals who thought that the Aramaic phrases in the gospels were glossolalia! (Mk 5:41; 7:34; 15:34).

(3) Jesus may have spoken in tongues, because glossolalia was not unknown in the Old Testament times (see the Addendum to the previous chapter). However, he probably did not do so, for the following reasons -

(a) Christ lived in the O.T. dispensation, and therefore probably enjoyed only the evidences of the Spirit's indwelling that were commonly available at that time. As shown earlier, glossolalia is the distinctive evidence of the Christian baptism in the Spirit. At this point, some are disposed to quote *John 13:16, 15:20*, as proof that since Jesus did not speak in tongues there is no need for us to do so. However, the objection is naive. Christ is closely linked with glossolalia, for he himself was the author of that which was "*seen and heard*" (Ac 2:32-33); he also spoke about glossolalia on several occasions:

- Mark 16:17; John 7:38 ("*rivers*" is analogous with glossolalia);
- *Acts 1:8* ("*power*" = "*dunamis*" is analogous with glossolalia);
- *Acts 1:4* ("*the promise of the Father*" included glossolalia - see 2:33.²⁶

(b) Glossolalia is designed to "*edify*" the Christian, and is a sign of our "*partial*" knowledge and immaturity (1 Co 14:4; 13:8-12). But Christ was a perfect man and had no need of these fragmentary evidences.

(25) Against the Heathen, 46. He was probably confusing Christ with the Day of Pentecost.

(26) Note that Jesus himself said that the disciples had "heard" of the promise from him. This "hearing" apparently included a prediction of glossolalia, else how would the disciples have recognised the day of Pentecost as being the fulfilment of the "promise"? Peter's ready quotation of Joel perhaps indicates that Christ had previously applied Joel's oracle to the "promise", and that he had already interpreted "prophecy" to mean "speak in tongues".

(c) Glossolalia is designed to help us in our ignorance of correct prayer, and in our infirmities (Ro 8:26-27). Christ had no infirmity, and he enjoyed perfect communion with the Father (Jn 11:41-42).

(d) Glossolalia is a sign of our former rebellion (Is 28:11-12 with 1 Co 14:21-22); but Jesus always did his Father's will.

(e) Glossolalia is given to purge our ordinary speech (Ja 3:2-12); but Jesus was without offence.

(f) Glossolalia is one of the gifts of the Spirit given to equip the church as the "body" of Christ for the task God has given it to fulfil (1 Co 12:7-11). Hence Christian glossolalia could not be given until the church was fully formed on the day of Pentecost.

(g) Glossolalia is the distinctive evidence of Holy Spirit baptism which (according to Joel's oracle) marks the beginning of the latter days (the Christian era) in contrast with the former days.

(B) ON THE "KENOSIS"

Concerning the condition of Christ during his incarnation the church has in the main held to one of two options:

- he surrendered all his divine attributes before he came down from heaven to earth, and therefore was actually void of them during his earthly life (although they remained in the possession of his persona as the eternal Logos in heaven); or
- he surrendered only the independent use of his divine attributes; but otherwise remained in full possession of them (in conjunction with his persona as the eternal Logos in heaven).

I accept the first view, and this book is in harmony with that opinion. However, the contrary idea would not significantly affect the doctrine presented here. For whether or not Jesus of Nazareth he retained on earth full possession of the divine attributes of the Logos in heaven, it would still have been essential for Christ to fulfil the Father's purpose by praying for the Holy Spirit to fall upon him from above (Lu 3:21).

Perhaps surprisingly, Christians have never been able to reach agreement on the meaning of the *kenosis* of Christ. But this much at least seems clear: in his struggle against sin and Satan, and in his obedience to the Father's will, in which he acted as representative Man, Jesus in practice used only those resources that are properly available to any godly man or woman.

Standard Christian theology has always held that the presence of a divine nature in Christ did not in any way falsify or compromise his humanity. Although Jesus (in adult life) was fully aware of his divine identity, he voluntarily chose to act within the confines of a human nature.²⁷

How then was he marked as the Son of God? If he did only what a man can do, using nothing beyond the resources that are available to all humans, how could this divinity ever be shown? Answer: his divine nature was revealed through the following:

(27) This remains true, whichever view of the kenosis is adopted.

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- the many prophecies that were fulfilled in him, revealing his unique call, special anointing from heaven, and his heavenly identity
- his sinless birth, which was the only possible explanation of his sinless life
- the repeated testimony of the Father, at his birth, at his baptism, and on several other occasions
- the authority he claimed for his teaching, and the claims he made about himself as part of that teaching
- his measureless possession of the Holy Spirit, and the expression through him of all the ministry gifts (apostle, prophet, evangelist, teacher, shepherd)
- the testimony of the demons who on several occasions cried out his real identity
- above all, his claim that no one could kill him against his will; he alone had power to lay down his life and to take it up again (Jn 10:18), which he demonstrated in his resurrection (Ro 1:4).

None of these things (save the last) impinged upon the reality of his humanity, nor gave him resources beyond what are available to other servants of God (the Word, faith, the power of the Holy Spirit, prayer, and the authority that came from his knowledge of his mission and his heavenly identity).²⁸

(28) There is a more extended discussion on the “kenosis” in my book “Emmanuel”.

CHAPTER NINE

LIKE THE ANGEL OF THE LORD

On that day the Lord will place a shield around the inhabitants of Jerusalem so that the feeblest among them on that day will be like David, and the house of David will be like God, like the angel of the Lord marching at their head.

With those bold similes, Zechariah (12:8) draws a graphic picture of the people of God in the latter days, when God had “*poured out his Spirit*” (vs. 10) upon them. So mighty would be that “*clothing with power*” that the feeblest of the saints would be like David of old for prowess, and the strongest would be (a breathtaking phrase) “*like God*” or, (he tempers his extravagance a little) “*like the angel of the Lord*”; (cp. 1 Jn 4:17 - “*as he is so are we in this world.*”²⁹ But this oracle is only one of many that foretold a great outpouring of the Spirit in the “*latter days*”:

- there are promises of rest, peace, joy, and beauty by the Spirit (Is 28:11-12; 32:15; 44:3-5; 49:9-10; 59:20-61; Ez 11:19; 34:2; 36:26-27; 37:11-14; 39:29; Ho 6:3; Zc 10:1);
- there are promises of dynamic power (Jl 2:28; Mt 3:11; Lu 3:16-17).

So let us discuss the baptism in the Spirit in the old and new dispensations, and outline more fully the work of the Spirit in the modern believer’s life.

(I) HOLY SPIRIT BAPTISM IN ISRAEL

In the old dispensation, as in the new, the Holy Spirit was active in renewing the spiritual life of the people: *Genesis 6:3; Nehemiah 9:20; Psalm 51:10-12; 143:10-11; Isaiah 63:10-14*; and cp.

(29) Parts of this chapter parallel material found in *Chapter Six* of my earlier book (now out of print), [The Holy Spirit](#); but the material is in the main changed and expanded.

also *1 Samuel 10:6*. However, while it is true that redemption came to the saints of old Israel, as to us, by the regenerating influence of the Holy Spirit, this fact was not widely understood. For example, the term "*Holy Spirit*" is found only three times in the Old Testament, but scores of times in the New Testament. The Christian sees the primary task of the Spirit as bringing a rebirth to all who believe the promise of God, and as creating in them true holiness. But in the Old Testament, the emphasis lies more on the aspect of *dunamis* - "equipped with dynamic power". Hence we find -

(A) THE HOLY SPIRIT EQUIPPING FOR SERVICE

Jacob - wrestled with God and received a quickening of divine strength, which caused him to be called Israel, for "*as a prince he had power with God and man*" (*Ge 32:27-28*).

Joseph - was "*a man in whom was the Spirit of God*" (*Ge 41:38*).

Moses - was a man in whom God has "*put his holy Spirit*" (*Is 63:11*). When did this take place? When Moses saw the glory of God in answer to his earnest entreaty (*Ex 33:18-23*). After this magnificent experience the face of Moses so shone with the splendour of God that he was constrained to cover it with a veil (*Ex 34:28-35*). Moses recognised also that, without the continued anointing and presence of God in his life he could not possibly fulfil his great task (*Ex 33:14-15*).

Bezaleel - was a man "*filled with the Spirit of God, in wisdom, in understanding, and in knowledge, and in all manner of workmanship*" (*Ex 35:31*).

The Seventy Elders - were given of the Spirit that rested on Moses, and they prophesied (*Nu 11:17,25*). This situation is closely parallel to that of the New Testament. There was a spontaneous outpouring on the chosen apostles and disciples on the Day of Pentecost, but thereafter the Holy Spirit was usually given by the laying on of hands. So, too, with Moses and the elders. The seventy were not sufficiently close to God in fellowship or faith to receive the Holy Spirit from his hand: the gift had to be channelled through Moses. However, this pattern, as in the New Testament was not inflexible, as seen in the next example.

Medad and Eldad - prophesied in the camp and some tried to prevent them; but Moses said, "*Would God that all the Lord's people were prophets, and that the Lord would put his Spirit upon them!*" (*Nu 11:27-29*). We learn that only selected persons received the baptism of the Spirit in those days, and that none could prophesy who lacked this baptism. Moses' words were also prophetic of the greater outpouring that was to come.

Balaam - had the Spirit of God come upon him, and he saw visions of the Almighty (*Nu 24:2-4*).

Joshua - was a man in whom "*was the Spirit*" (*Nu 27:18*).

Othniel - judged Israel and went out to war when the Spirit of the Lord came upon him (*Jg 3:10*).

Gideon - had a unique experience when "*the Spirit of the Lord took possession of him, and he sounded the trumpet*" (*Jg 6:34*).

Jephthah - passed over Gilead when the Spirit of the Lord came upon him (*Jg 11:29*).

Sampson - enjoyed a powerful anointing of the Holy Spirit (*Jg 13:25; 14:6-9*).

Saul - was told by Samuel, "*The Spirit of the Lord will come upon you mightily and you will prophesy. . .and be turned into another man*" (*1 Sa 10:6*).

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The Messengers - all prophesied when they came into the revival meetings of Samuel and the prophets! (1 Sa 19:18-23). This was a special act of God to save David's life and to powerfully demonstrate to Saul that David was divinely elected.

David - when he was anointed with oil by Samuel, was also "*mightily*" anointed by "*the Spirit of the Lord from that day forward*" (1 Sa 16:13).

Solomon - dedicated his temple and the glory of God came down (1 Ch 5:13-14).

Elisha - was formerly an unknown farmer, but after he received a "*double portion*" of the Holy Spirit he became the most renowned man of his day. He gained this position solely because, being called to God to succeed Elijah he refused to part from Elijah until he had been clothed with power from on high (2 Kg 2:1-15).

Zerubbabel - was told, "*Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, says the Lord of hosts*" (Zc 4:7).

Micah - declared, "*Truly, I am full of power by the Spirit of the Lord*" (Mi 3:8).

All the prophets, in fact, were anointed by the Holy Spirit, and spoke as they were moved by the Spirit (Ne 9:30); 1 Pe 1:11; 2 Pe 1:21). They knew that what they spoke did not come from their own invention (Ez 13:2-3) and they also knew that, while they could prophesy only when the Lord chose to anoint them, they could nonetheless prepare themselves to receive his word (2 Kg 3:15).

Final examples of the Holy Spirit falling on people in the old dispensation can be seen in Elizabeth (Lu 1:39-45); Mary (Lu 1:35,46-55); Simeon (Lu 2:25-32); Anna (Lu 2:36-38); and John the Baptist (Lu 1:15-17).

(B) A SUMMARY OF THE FORMER BAPTISM

We could summarise the experience of the Holy Spirit baptism under the old covenant as follows:

- it was a definite event, with observable results in the life of the recipient (e.g. 1 Sa 10:6);
- not all the godly enjoyed this experience, nor could they all receive it (e.g. Nu 11:17-29);
- they knew that this experience was essential for the proper accomplishment of a divine commission (Ex 35:31);
- proper spiritual preparation was usually an essential pre-requisite, although there were occasions (such as Balaam) when God acted sovereignly to give someone a temporary quota of power (2 Kg 3:15);
- the outstanding result of this baptism was spiritual power and supernatural ability (Mi 3:8);
- the most common spontaneous response to this baptism was prophesying (1 Sa 19:18-23; this strange incident was apparently a special act of God to save David's life, and a powerful demonstration that David was divinely elected);
- the Holy Spirit could be given through the influence and prayers of others who were already Spirit-filled (e.g. Moses and the elders, Elijah and Elisha);

- this anointing brought differing gifts and opportunities to differing persons, and not all received this baptism in the same measure (e.g. the special gifts of Bezaleel, and Elisha's "double portion");
- it was recognised that the Holy Spirit came upon men and women to increase righteousness and to bring glory to God.

(C) SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES

There are many points of similarity between Holy Spirit baptism in the old dispensation and in the new. But there are also many differences. These differences, leading to the greater fullness and blessing that we can enjoy today are suggested by John (7:39), Peter (1 Pe 1:10-12), and the writer to the Hebrews (11:39-40).

(1) There is a difference in PROFUSION

Formerly the anointing was for a privileged few: now it is said that the Holy Spirit will be "*poured out upon all people*", and "*you may all prophesy*", and "*upon my servants and upon my handmaidens I will pour out my Spirit,*" and "*we are all. . .changed. . .by the Spirit of the Lord.*"

(2) There is a difference in POWER

In the former times the glory of God was only partly revealed, the manifestations of his power was spasmodic. But now the promise is given that those who believe will become actual depositories of divine power after the Holy Spirit has come upon them (Ac 1:8). Now the least of our blessings will make us like the angel of God (Zc 12:8). Under the impact of this mighty baptism even the lame among the saints will be mighty over the enemy, their sin will be removed, sickness will hold them no longer (Is 33:23). Into the wilderness and desert places the streams of living water will flow, the dumb will sing, the weak will be made strong (Is 35:6). Now there will be a continual confirmation of God's word with signs following, evil spirits will be compelled to yield before the mastery of the saints; even the very children among them ("*your sons and your daughters*") will be more than conquerors (Mk 16:17-18). But all this, of course, is contingent upon us actually asking for and receiving this "*clothing with power from on high*" (Lu 24:49).

(3) There is a difference in PROMISE

To us is given an unlimited promise of ever-increasing fullness. Here this new baptism in the Spirit far surpasses that of old. Elisha indeed sought for and received a double portion of the Spirit of Elijah. But his experience was unique, and extraordinary event that was not once repeated in all the centuries of Israel's history. Yet how feeble is even that double gift compared with the promise we have received, which says that we can be constantly "*changed from glory to glory*" (2 Co 3:18).

Ezekiel pre-figures this marvellous increase, this unlimited promise of ongoing glory, in his fascinating vision of the living waters that proceeded from the altar of the temple (Ex 47:1-5;12). Jesus called on this vision in Jn 7:37-39 - "*The Scripture says that rivers of living water will flow out of your inner being!*"

Clearly then, the best days of the church are yet to come! And this coming would be all the sooner if the church would ask for, and obtain, the fullness of the Holy Spirit. Today all believers should be strong in the Lord and in the power of his might: they should be able to do all things through the strength of the indwelling Spirit of Christ; there should be no spiritually infirm children of God in this gospel age! Every believer should receive this all-empowering baptism!

(4) There is a difference in PURPOSE

Commonly in the former days the power of God was expressed in judgement more than blessing. For example: the curse on the household of Abimelech; the plagues in Egypt; the leprosy of Miriam; the plagues that smote Israel; the one hundred soldiers slain by Elijah with fire from heaven; the plague that smote the Assyrians; and many similar instances.

While it is true that a few similar judgements were inflicted by the Holy Spirit in *Acts* (e.g. 5:1-11; 12:23; 13:6-11), his overwhelming purpose today is to bring mercy, healing, and salvation. That is why Jesus rebuked his aggressive disciples (Lu 9:54-56), and why he chose also to describe the Spirit under the lovely title, the "*Comforter*".

(5) There is a difference in PERMANENCY

There were repeated occasions in the old dispensation when no prophet could be found in Israel, and when no one enjoyed the anointing of the Holy Spirit. And even when the Holy Spirit did fall upon someone, that person did not carry a continuous anointing. The unction of God was frequently given and just as frequently removed. Long periods often intervened between the times the Holy Spirit fell upon the prophets. Not even the most godly among them possessed the Holy Spirit as a permanent and uninterrupted gift.

But now our bodies have become a continual habitation of the Spirit (1 Co 6:19). the promise of Christ is: "*I will give you another Comforter, and he will abide with you for ever*" (Jn 1:16). and again we read, "*The anointing that you received from him remains in you*" (1 Jn 2:27). The promise is reinforced by the expression "the gift of the Holy Spirit". The fullness of the Spirit is not *loaned* but *given*! The idea is one of permanent and personal ownership. Once filled with the Spirit we should never doubt that we remain in possession of all that is implicit in the promise of the Father.

(6) There is a difference in PROPAGATION

The mercy of God of old was practically restricted to Israel - few of the gentiles entered into the covenant of God. But now, under the anointing of the Holy Spirit, the church is to receive power to be witnesses of the gospel in every nation and to every person (Ac 1:8; 28:9; Mk 16:15-20).

(7) There is a difference in PROCLAMATION

Formerly the Spirit of God in the prophets caused them to thunder out the law. Now the same Spirit causes us to proclaim the gospel and graciously to invite all to come and drink freely of the water of life (Re 22:17). In those days the Spirit imposed upon Israel a ministry of death engraved on stones (2 Co 3:6); but now the same Spirit testifies about the liberty of the gospel (vs. 17) and bears witness within our hearts that we are the children of God (1 Jn 5:10; Ro 8:16).

(8) There is a difference in PHENOMENA

Signs, wonders, and miracles, were often the results of the baptism of the Holy Spirit under the old covenant, and this is no less so under the new. In fact, we are told that supernatural results should be the common sign of this infilling in the church (Mk 16:15-20; Ac 4:29-31; Ro 15:18-19; He 2:3-4; etc.)

However, the surpassing greatness of the latter day baptism is seen in the vast improved frequency and availability of these supernatural signs. Now the promise is not confined to the chief prophets alone, but to all “*those who believe*”; now the apostle is able to say, “*I want you all to speak in tongues*”, and “*you may all prophesy*”. Further, whereas Moses was given only two signs (the rod that became a serpent, and the leprous hand), Christ described five signs that will follow his believing church (Mk 16:17-18). Even more, Paul lists nine specific gifts that the Holy Spirit is willing to manifest in the church (1 Co 12:7-11).

(II) THE BAPTISM IN THE SPIRIT IN THE CHURCH

The prophecy of Joel (2:28-29) shows three things:

- that the new age would be characterised by a universal offer of salvation and by a worldwide outpouring of the Spirit;
- that the universal offer of salvation would follow the outpouring of the Holy Spirit;
- hence the new age began on the day of Pentecost rather than on the day of Christ’s resurrection.

The ascension of Christ is the link between the two eras, for it stands as the seal of God upon Christ’s perfect fulfilment of the old covenant. It was also the act that led irresistibly to the giving of the Spirit (Ac 2:32-36). So, the “*last days*” began at Pentecost, and have continued until today. Hence all of the blessings promised for the people of God in the “*last days*” must be freely available to us now - especially the blessings that are inherent in Holy Spirit baptism. What are these blessings, these promises, which every Christian can obtain in conjunction with the fullness of the Spirit?

(A) THE LAST DISCOURSE

In his last talk with his disciples Jesus gave the best outline in scripture of the ministry of the Spirit - see John chapters 14-16. The list of promises is truly marvellous: rich comfort and a heavenly home (14:1-3); supernatural power and answered prayer (14:12-14); personal experience of union with Christ (14:20); peace (14:27); an “*abiding*” life (15:4); a repeated promise of answered prayer (15:7); fruitfulness (15:16); joy and answered prayer (16:23-24); victory (16:33); and the like.

Notice however that those promises were all set within the context of “*that day*”. What was “*that day*”? No other than the Day of Pentecost. The promises all find their finest fulfilment in the giving of the Holy Spirit - see 14:16-18,20,26,28; 15:26; 16:7,13,16,23,26. The emphasis is clear: while many of these promised blessings actually have their origin in the new birth, the specific purpose of the baptism in the Holy Spirit is to bring them into full realisation in the Christian’s life.

If Christians lack these rich benefits it will be either

- because they have failed to receive the gift of the spirit; or
- they have failed to “*walk*” in the Spirit (cp. Ro 8:14-17; Ga 5:16,22-23).

(B) ADDITIONAL PROMISES

With the background now established, we can enter into a more comprehensive survey of the many promises that are inherent in Holy Spirit baptism, or else require that experience to bring them into full realisation in the believer's life -

(1) **The promise of purity**

- see *Matthew 3:11-12; Luke 3:16-17*

(2) **The promise of all that is "good"**

- see *Luke 11:11-13*

(a) A father gives food to his children because they need it for life. For the same reason God will give his children the gift of the Holy Spirit.

(b) But notice, the promise is "to those who ask him" (cp. vs. 5-10). Also see *Matthew 5:6*, which by itself is sufficient to prove that the fullness of the Spirit is not given always on conversion, but that converted persons should hunger for that fullness and earnestly ask God for it.

(c) Matthew records a similar discourse to the one just quoted from Luke. But whereas Luke has Jesus saying that God will "give the Holy Spirit", Matthew writes, "how much more will your heavenly Father give good things to those who ask him" (7:7-11). No doubt both promises were made by Jesus, either on one occasion, or at separate times, each being recorded by a different evangelist. But in that one phrase, "**good things**", Christ confirmed the immense value of Holy Spirit baptism:

- abundant life, strength, peace, understanding, comfort, wisdom, faith, victory
- in fact, all the "good things" Christ obtained for us at Calvary.

They are all made potentially available to every believer through the Cross; but it is the special task of the Holy Spirit to bring them into practical realisation in our daily lives. He begins to do this through the new birth, but especially when the believer seizes the Pentecostal promise.

(3) **The promise of an eternal indwelling**

- see *John 4:1; 14:16; 1 John 2:27; and cp. Revelation 7:17.*

(4) **The promise of knowledge by the Holy Spirit**

- see *John 14:20,26; 15:26; 16:13*

This is knowledge inaccessible to the world. Herein lies the greatness of Holy Spirit baptism: it is the one gift of God the world cannot receive (Jn 14:17). From the terms used in his last conversation with his disciples, and from comparison with *Acts 2:33*, we know that Christ was

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not speaking about the new birth. Rather, he was describing the blessings that would result from Holy Spirit baptism.

(5) **The promise of comfort**

- see *John 14:18,26*.

(6) **The promise of a realised union with God**

- see *John 14:20*.

The phrase “*at that day*” can only refer to the day when the Comforter, who has been “*with*” the believer since regeneration, comes “*into*” him or her Holy Spirit baptism occurs (Jn 3:24).

(7) **The promise of partnership in evangelism**

- see *John 16:8-11*.

(8) **The promise of divine instruction**

- see *John 14:2; 15:26; 16:13; 1 John 2:27*.

(9) **The promise of revelation of Christ**

- see *John 15:26; 16:13-15*.

As we have seen, it is legitimate to conclude, since the Lord keeps returning to the theme of the coming of the Holy Spirit, that all of the promises he gave during this conversation are closely linked with the Pentecostal outpouring. Hence we discover a long list of blessings that either stem from or at least are greatly enhanced by Holy Spirit baptism. They include:

- abiding in Christ (15:1-3; cp. “*purges*” with Mt 3:11-12)
- answered prayer (15:7,16)
- fruitfulness in saving souls (15:8,16,27; and cp. Ac 1:8)
- separation from the world (15:19; cp. 14:17)
- brotherly love (15:12); and so on.

(10) **The promise of peace**

- see *John 4:27-28*.

That the words “*come again*” refer to the descent of the Spirit at Pentecost can be seen by comparison with vs. 16-19, especially the words, “*I will come to you,*” and, “*You will see me again.*”

(11) **The promise of unwavering faith**

- see *John 14:29*.

(12) **The promise of joy**

- see *John 16:16,22*.

That the words, “*You will see me again,*” and, “*I will see you again,*” refer to Pentecost appears from a comparison with 14:16-18.

(13) The promise of answered prayer

- see *John 16:23-24; 26-27*.

The phrase “*that day*” refers to the day of Pentecost. (And see also *Ro 8:26-27*).

(14) The promise of victory

- see *John 16:33*; and cp. *Romans 8:11-17*.

(15) The promise of emulating the works of Christ

- see *John 14:12-1*.

The phrase “*I am going to my Father*” is coupled with the outpouring of the Holy Spirit that followed Christ’s ascension (*Jn 16:7; Ac 2:32-33*).

(16) The promise of an eternal inheritance

- see *Ephesians 1:14; 2 Corinthians 5:5; 1:22*.

(17) The promise of redemption of the body

- see *Romans 8:23*.

Holy Spirit baptism is the guarantee of that future “*redemption*”.

(18) The promise of strength

- see *Ephesians 3:14-21*.

Here are marvellous promises of strength, assurance, increase, and inner power! But they do not happen of their own accord. They are all contingent upon us being sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise after we believe (*Ep 1:13*). Where that baptism is lacking there must be some deficiency in the outworking of the promises.

(19) The promise of revelation of God’s treasures

- see *1 Corinthians 2:9-16*.

(20) The promise of an ever increasing glory

- see *2 Corinthians 3:17-18*.

In the days of the old covenant, the glorious presence of God was made visible by the phenomenon known as the “*shekinah*”. It was seen first in the pillar of cloud and fire (*Ex 13:21-22*), and later in the dazzling light that shone between the wings of the cherubim that overshadowed the ark of the covenant (*Ex 40:34-35; Le 16:2; 2 Sa 6:2; Ps 80:1; 99:1; 132:7-8; Is 37:16; Ex 9:3*). But after the temple veil was torn down the centre, followed by the dissolution of the old economy, the “*shekinah*” was withdrawn from Israel. In its place God gave the baptism of the Holy Spirit. this was shown by the tongues of fire on the Day of Pentecost. Now our bodies are the true temples of God, and the “*shekinah*” is placed in us by Holy Spirit baptism (cp. *1 Co 6:19-20; 2 Co 6:16*). And just as the “*shekinah*” in ancient Israel was made visible in various ways, so our “*shekinah*” has its tangible manifestations - the charismata, and notably glossolalia (*1 Co 12:7-11*).

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Many additional references could be quoted, but let me comprehend them all by quoting from a book written around the middle of the 19th century. It had a great influence in preparing the way for the current Pentecostal outpouring - ³⁰

“We may take the apostles as examples, and contrasting their intellectual, moral, and spiritual states before and after Pentecost, we are staggered to observe a transformation that was scarcely ever paralleled in the previous experience of men.

“How many times Jesus had sorrowed at their darkness, how many times the Lord had expressed amazement at their lack of faith, how often he had rebuked them for their limited and dull vision; what a great love they had still shown for the world; how little real courage; how small a love for each other; and how like the ropes of sand were all their resolutions.

“But then came Pentecost! The Holy Ghost came upon them! In a moment they became truly ‘crucified to the world’ and the world to them; their weak hearts became strong in the glorious beauty and perfection and might of the Risen Christ, so that they became a spectacle of wonder to the world, and to angels, and to men!

“From that day on they had a clear vision of the kingdom of God; the truth of the gospel blazed in their hearts; with a splendid unction they gave witness to the resurrection in great power. Their preaching brought the world on its knees before God. Peter the reed became a rock of faith and courage and strength. James and John vindicated their right to be called ‘sons of thunder’. In all things they all became truly more than conquerors through him that loved them.

“POWER was one of the most striking characteristics of this baptism! All who received it were ‘endured with power from on high’. Such was the power they wielded that the world stood in awe before them, devils fled from their presence; ‘no man durst join himself to them’; rulers, priests and kings were overcome by them. They planted the gospel in all nations. Their sound went into all the earth, and their words unto the end of the world. They were called the men ‘who turned the world upside down.’

“UNITY was another distinctive characteristic of this baptism. Before its descent, ambition, jealousy, and disputation amongst themselves about who should be the greatest, and even anger towards one another, often divided their hearts. Now they were all ‘one in Christ Jesus’, and nothing could interrupt their mutual love, fellowship and cooperation.

BOLDNESS was a marked effect of this baptism. No power in heaven or earth could induce them to ‘deny the Lord that brought them’. They witnessed for the Lord Jesus everywhere. Nothing could trouble their peace in God, their assurance of hope, their everlasting consolations, their triumphs of faith and their fullness of joy.

“SELF-CONTROL and a settled inward calm possessed the apostles after they had received the Holy Spirit. so they were able to say: ‘Being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we endure it; and being defamed, we entreat:’ ‘none of these things move me;’ ‘I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ’s sake; for when I am weak, I am strong.’”

(30) The Baptism of the Holy Ghost, by Dr. Asa Mahan. In the same book, of which I have an original copy, there is a section titled “The Enduement of Power” by a famous colleague of Asa Mahan who also believed in a discrete baptism in the Spirit - the evangelist, Charles G. Finney.

CONCLUSION

Asa Mahan's observations may be a little idealistic, for the New Testament gives a rather more realistic report of the early (Spirit-filled) Christians, describing their follies as well as their virtues. Nonetheless, it is substantially true that whatever success the early church enjoyed in "*turning their world upside down*" came as a direct result of Holy Spirit baptism. Without that "*clothing with power from on high*" they could not possibly have fulfilled their evangelical mandate. To the extent that the church today appropriates by faith the fullness of the Spirit, to that extent will the example of the early church be repeated in our time. The purpose and the value of Holy Spirit baptism is summed up by Christ in Acts 1:8 - "*You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you.*" Notice the two key words -

(1) "**Power**". Here is the "dynamic" (dunamis) aspect of the experience - incorporating spiritual strength, charismatic gifts, divine ability, fruitful evangelism, and all that is required for the Holy Spirit to enable the believer to work the works of God.

(2) "**Holy**". In the New Testament the Spirit of God is specifically designated "holy" - not only because this is the natural attribute of the Spirit, but because the inculcation of holiness in the lives of the people of God is one of his major tasks in this present era. If *forensic* righteousness is imputed to us through the new birth, then *practical* righteousness is imparted to us by Holy Spirit baptism. Or, to express it differently, Holy Spirit baptism is given to enable us to appropriate in daily life all that became lawfully ours through the new birth. What is given to us judicially by the cross is wrought in us experimentally by the baptism in the Spirit.

I do not mean that without the baptism in the Spirit a Christian cannot experience the benefits that are inherent in the Cross; only that *dunamis* (divine enabling) stems in particular from Holy Spirit baptism. A Christian who lacks this infilling will therefore suffer restrictions on his or her ability to appropriate all that God wants him to receive. Nor do I mean that merely receiving the baptism in the Spirit will automatically produce practical holiness and spiritual power in a believer. The New Testament sadly testifies to the spiritual failure of many in the early church who were filled with the Spirit but who did not go on to "walk" effectively in the Spirit. I mean only that if we do not begin where God wants us to begin, with the baptism in the Spirit, then we cannot continue properly in the way God wants us to continue.

But to all who do appropriate the heavenly gift, and who faithfully walk in the fullness of the Spirit, the promise will be fulfilled -

"Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. And all of us who have the unveiled face, and who see the glory of the Lord as it were reflected in a mirror, will be changed into that same image from glory to glory. All this comes from the Lord, the Spirit" (2 Co 3:17-18).

CHAPTER TEN

SEIZING THE PROMISE

How should people appropriate the promise of the Father? What might hinder them? How can you help others to receive the promise?

(I) PRECURSORS TO HOLY SPIRIT BAPTISM

(A) REPENTANCE AND BAPTISM

In his second great sermon in Jerusalem, shortly after the day of Pentecost, Peter told the people how to meet God's requirements. He used terms similar to those he had spoken in his earlier exhortation (see Ac 2:38; 3:19) -

<i>"Repent. . ."</i>	<i>"Repent. . ."</i>
<i>"Be baptised. . ."</i>	<i>"Turn again. . ."</i>
<i>"Forgiveness of sins. . ."</i>	<i>"Sins blotted out. . ."</i>
<i>"Gift of the Holy Spirit. . ."</i>	<i>"Times of refreshing. . ."</i>
(Ac 2:38).	(Ac 3:19).

There is an obvious parallel in those passages, and the phrase, "*times of refreshing*" seems to be synonymous with "*the gift of the Holy Spirit*". (this is confirmed by the next clause in 3:19, "*may come from the presence of the Lord*", which appears to echo 2:33.) If this is so, then Peter has here given us a delightfully apt description of the blessing of the Spirit - it is indeed a "refreshing".

But the second passage is interesting especially for its early support for the claim that the basic prerequisites for Holy Spirit baptism are *repentance*, *faith in Christ*, and *baptism in water*. In fact, the implication is strong that repentance and water-baptism should issue at once in Spirit-baptism.

However, while the two passages are similar, they are also different. Which raises the question: why did Peter not repeat in this second sermon the same instructions he had given in the first? Answer: because Peter (and his reporter, Luke) spoke to the different needs and attitudes of two groups of people. He did not believe that the way salvation came to people should be stereotyped. This principle, as we have seen earlier, is confirmed by the remainder of *Acts*, which describes people receiving the gift of the Spirit in several diverse ways.

Nonetheless, we may still say that the usual precursors of Holy Spirit baptism are repentance (linked with faith in Christ) and water-baptism. The fulfilling of those two conditions should normally leave no further reason for delay in receiving the gift of the Spirit.

(B) MORAL RECTITUDE

You may encounter two extremes here. First, there are those (usually Pentecostals) who demand a high degree of personal holiness as a pre-requisite for receiving the gift of the Spirit. They require the baptised to be “emptied of self”, or “rid of all known sin”, etc. Second, there are those (usually non-Pentecostals) who oppose any suggestion of pre-conditions for Holy Spirit baptism, excepting the one demand for faith in Christ (sometimes linked with water-baptism). The following comments take up those two ideas -

(1) Paul’s question, “*Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?*” suggests that faith is the only necessary condition for receiving the Spirit. In other words, faith in Christ as Saviour should lead at once to faith in Christ as Baptiser in the Spirit. This emphasis on “faith” apart from any personal achievement is repeated often by Paul (Ga 3:4-51; 13-14; 4:5-6; cp. also *Romans 11:35-36*. If anything other than faith is required as the means by which the gift of the Spirit is received, two anomalies arise:

(a) the anomaly of trying to earn that which comes to us as a free gift from God, and which we are commanded simply to receive (not “obtain” - cp. Ac 18:20); and

(b) the anomaly of trying to reach in our own strength that very holiness for which we hunger, and which drives us to seek the fullness of the Spirit.

If I can bring myself to a position of purity, holiness, and close fellowship with God, why would I need the baptism in the Spirit? I can’t; therefore scripture insists that the Holy Spirit must be received simply by hearing the promise and believing it. Hence *Acts* describes a multitude of newly converted people easily gaining the promise of the Father, either spontaneously or in response to brief instruction, prayer, and the laying-on of hands. Among those who desired the gift, all without exception apparently received it (cp. Ac 8:14-17; etc.)

(2) So scripture demands faith as the only ground upon which the gift of the spirit can be received. But having said this, one must also say that faith cannot work in a moral vacuum. Sin undermines faith - “If I had cherished iniquity in my heart, the Lord would not have listened to me” (Ps 66:18). So Peter sternly rebuked the mercenary Simon (who had been baptised in water but apparently not in the Spirit) - “You have neither part nor share in this gift, for your heart is not right before God” (see Ac 8:18-24). Therefore, people may be baptised Christians, but if they desire the blessing for the wrong motive, or think the gift of God can be bought, or are still “in the gall of bitterness and in the bond of iniquity”, and their “hearts are not right with God”, they may not be able to exercise faith for the promise.

Scripture says that salvation comes through faith in Christ alone, independent of any personal goodness of ours. That of course is true; yet it is impossible to “believe and be saved” unless “believing” includes a genuine sorrow for sin. That means also a desire to be both pardoned and loosed from sin, and a deep commitment to Christ al Lord. In other words, “saving faith” can exist only within a certain moral framework; and the same is true of faith for the gift of the Spirit

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(cp. Ac 5:32; 15:8-9. Notice that the giving of the spirit was preceded by God “knowing their hearts: and “cleansing their hearts”).

(3) Some writers have argued that faith must be faith in Christ, and that it is improper to distinguish between faith for salvation and faith for the Holy spirit. The proper direction for faith is in Christ as Saviour and Christ as Baptiser in the Spirit; and since both are faith in Christ, the one should issue out of the other. That is, the person who exercises faith in Christ as Saviour will at the same time, and without any additional exercise of faith, receive the gift of the spirit.

Let me say that everything we receive from god comes to us through Christ and as a result of our commitment to Christ. Nonetheless, each promise of God demands a specific exercise of faith for its fulfilment. The Bible contains many promises that are provisionally ours in Christ, but become ours in practice only as we hear them and bring ourselves to the place where we can believe and receive them. in relation to “the promise of the Spirit” Jesus himself particularly taught that we should “ask, see, and knock” for it (Lu 11:9-13).

If the case of Cornelius (Ac 10:44-48) is cited as an example of a lack of any pre conditions, we answer

(a) there are dispensational overtones in this incident, which are sufficient to explain god’s sovereign act in giving a spontaneous effusion of the Spirit; and

(b) remember that even this outpouring was preceded by intense prayer, fasting, and the supernatural intervention of angels (10:1-33).

(C) PRAYER

Many object to the Pentecostal use of the expression “tarry for the Spirit” on the grounds that this command was applicable only to the disciples before the Day of Pentecost. Even then it meant only that they were to stay in Jerusalem until the “promise of the Father” was fulfilled (Lu 24:49; Ac 1:4-5). In the historical sense, of course, the objection is true. We are given no direct command today to “tarry” or to “wait for the spirit” - that is, if “tarry” is taken to mean that God may arbitrarily withhold the gift of the Spirit, and that the seeder must patiently persevere until the Lord chooses to act. Any teaching like that would deny scripture. We are told, not to wait until god chooses to give the Spirit, but rather to receive the gift which has already been given (on the day of Pentecost).

Yet certain qualifications must be made -

(1) One could hardly assert that the disciples before the Day of Pentecost did nothing except stay in Jerusalem, wandering around, aimlessly waiting for God to act. On the contrary, they “*were continually in the temple, praising God. . .(and they all) with one accord devoted themselves to prayer*” (Lu 24:53; Ac 1:14). Why? Because they remembered the instruction Jesus himself had given them (Lu 11:13; Jn 7:37-39). Had they spent their time in Jerusalem, scattered around, sightseeing, occupying themselves with mundane affairs, they probably would have missed the Pentecostal event altogether (cp. 1 Co 15:6). In fact, only about 120 of them actually obeyed the command to “tarry” (Ac 1:15), and so they were the ones who received the gift of God. A similar principle must surely apply today.

(2) Christ himself prayed in conjunction with his baptism, and as a consequence received the promised gift of the Spirit (Lu 3:21-22; and cp. Is 11:1-3; 42:1; 61:1-2). His knowledge of the promise of God, and his confidence in the certain fulfilment of the promise, far from deterring him from prayer, caused him to prepare himself by baptism, and then prayerfully to claim his Father’s gift.

(3) The statement “claim the promise by faith” must be understood in different ways when applied to salvation and to Holy Spirit baptism. When applied to salvation, “faith” means simple belief in the witness of scripture about the atoning work and lordship of Christ. No specific evidence is to be sought, nor any other sign, save the word God has spoken and the believer’s own testimony in water-baptism. But when applied to Holy Spirit baptism, an experience that is tangible, and demonstrated by outward signs, “faith” must mean to seek God in believing prayer until the experience actually happens. There is no alternative, except of course to deny that Holy Spirit baptism is a knowable experience, and to insist that the only sign of the Spirit (as of salvation) is faith itself. But I have already shown the error of that view.

(4) Such statements as “*those who hunger and thirst for righteousness will be satisfied*” (Mt 5:6) may be rightly applied to Holy Spirit baptism (cp. Jn 7:37-39). They strongly imply an earnest and fervent seeking for the fullness of the Spirit (also, Is 55:1-2; 40:28-31; Ja 5:16-18; Ac 4:31).

So, if “tarry” is taken to mean only that the seeker should pray until he or she is “*clothed with power from on high*” - that is, until he or she receives an evidential baptism in the Spirit - I can see no objection to its use.

(D) PERSEVERANCE

From the point of view of God’s promise, there is no reason why there should be any delay between asking for the fullness of the Spirit and receiving it. But in practice, delay is often experienced. The reason may lie in some restraint, hindrance, or unbelief in the seeker; or it may be caused by the Lord’s desire to try the seeker’s commitment.

This principle of delay is expressed in several places (He 10:35-37; Lu 18:1; Ps 40:1; Ac 1:4) and it is applicable to any promise God has made to his people (excluding the new birth, which is a promise to those outside of the family of God). In the face of such delays, our part is not to become discouraged, nor, having put our hand to the plough, to turn back, but to press forward in faith. True believers should be willing to submit themselves to the preparative work of the Spirit. My observation is that long delays are generally associated with wavering faith. But when God sees determination to persevere, linked with sure faith and a surrendered will, the Spirit moves swiftly (cp. Ja 1:5-8; Lu 18:8; He 10:37; 1 Ti 6:12; and notice the emphasis in Lu 11:9-11, which reads literally, “*ask, and keep on asking. . . seek, and keep on seeking. . . knock, and keep on knocking*”).

(E) LAYING ON OF HANDS

Acts makes it clear that laying on of hands, in conjunction with prayer, was an integral part of the giving and receiving of the Holy Spirit in Bible days (Ac 8:15-17; etc). It is beyond the scope of this study to examine exhaustively the significance of the laying on of hands. But some aspects of the subject are important for our present theme -

(1) It shows the discrete nature of the baptism in the Spirit

(2) It shows that the baptism in the Spirit is imparted to people by the church. This is probably that “*greater work*” Jesus spoke about, which was to be the ineffable privilege of the church (Jn 14:12 - the statement, “*because I go to my Father*” is unquestionably related to the Pentecostal effusion - Ac 2:33).

(3) It is related to the two principles of prayer enunciated by Christ:

- the principle of his presence (where two or three are gathered in his name, Mt 18:20); and

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- the principle of united faith (vs. 19).

(4) It is related to the principle of fraternal unity and of a compassionate concern for one another (Ps 133:1,3b; Ga 6:2; Ja 5:16-18).

(5) It was not restricted to apostles (as some claim):

- Ananias prayed for Paul (Ac 9:10,17);
- Philip was instrumental in bringing salvation, water-baptism, and (presumably) the gift of the Spirit to the Ethiopian (Ac 8:38-40);
- Epaphros ministered the Spirit (with glossolalia) to the Colossians (Cl 1:7-8; 3:16);
- Timothy practiced the laying on of hands (1 Ti 5:22); and
- Christ insisted that all believers could do so in connection with the charismata (Mk 16:17).³¹

(6) Presumably laying on of hands did not occur in a teaching vacuum (cp. 1 Ti 5:22), but was preceded by instruction concerning the promises of God and the proper attitude of those who want to receive those promises (cp. Ac 10:44; Ro 15:18-19; He 2:3-4; 6:2 - "*with instruction about. . .the laying on of hands.*")

Those who desire to receive the Spirit can do so only by faith; but that faith comes by the preached Word (Ro 10:14-15). To say, for example, that the Galatians "*received the Spirit. . .by hearing with faith*" means that when Paul came to Galatia he not only spoke to them about Christ as Saviour, he also preached "*the promise of the Father*". He exhorted them to receive that promise with "*miracles*" ("dunamis" = "glossolalia"; Ga. 3:5; and cp. Ac 15:12, which refers to Paul's ministry in Galatia.)

So today, Holy Spirit baptism will usually be "*supplied. . .with miracles*" only where the promise is preached and people are encouraged by prayer and the laying on of hands to respond to that promise in faith.

(7) Laying on of hands implies more than a ritual placing of a hand on a person's head and uttering (or muttering) some appropriate words. I cannot believe that the early church saw laying on of hands as a kind of magical ceremony, a merely formal act. Spirit-filled Christians who laid hands on a seeker, did so

- to express loving concern and fellowship in Christ;
- believing that the gift of the Spirit could be, and would be, conveyed by this act;
- as a climax to teaching the seeker about the promise of the Father, and as a signal for the seeker to release faith at that point and to receive the gift of the Spirit.

It was then, at the moment of laying on of hands, that the seeker was expected to be filled with the Spirit and to respond in faith to that infilling by beginning to speak in other tongues.

(31) Note: even if the latter reference is not accepted as a genuine part of Mark's gospel (many scholars reject it), it still shows that in the earliest days of the church it was not felt that there was anything improper about ordinary believers laying hands on one another in conjunction with the charismata.

(F) ABANDONMENT

To receive the fullness of the Holy Spirit the human spirit must be yielded and abandoned to the Lord. We are told to “*present our bodies as a living sacrifice to God.*” Jesus said that those who want divine fullness must come and “*drink*” (Jn 7:37). How can you drink deeply and satisfyingly? Only by throwing back your head, opening your mouth wide, relaxing your throat, and gladly swallowing! So it is spiritually. One’s entire being should be opened and yielded to the inflowing Spirit. “*Open your mouth wide,*” says the Lord, “*and I will fill it!*” (Ps 81:10).

However, this abandonment, this self-surrender, does not mean loss of self-control. God does not cause or require his children to lose control of themselves (1 Co 14:32,40). In fact, one of the marks of the Holy Spirit in the believer’s life is “*self-control*”. He will hardly then signal his presence by robbing us of that self-control (Ga 5:23).

(II) HINDRANCES TO HOLY SPIRIT BAPTISM

The existence of factors like the following may be sufficient to hinder or prevent people from receiving the baptism in the Spirit -

(A) OBJECTIVE FACTORS

(1) A church unresponsive to the Word of God, or strangled by a spirit of worldliness or unbelief, may so hinder the flow of the Spirit, or so grieve the Spirit, that its members will be prevented from enjoying a personal Pentecost (cp. Mk 6:5-6; Ep 4:30).

(2) Ignorance of the Scriptures on Holy Spirit baptism will prevent a person from receiving and enjoying that experience (cp. Ro 10:14-15; Ac 19:2).

(3) The inability of a seeker (**a**) to find someone who is willing to pray for him and to lay hands on him, or (**b**) to find someone who is willing to remain patiently with him in prayer, may have the practical effect of keeping him from receiving the baptism in the Spirit.

(B) SUBJECTIVE FACTORS

(1) An uncertain or wavering faith will prevent some from being filled with the Spirit (cp. Ja 1:6-8).

(2) A lack of determination to seek God until the fullness comes will deny the gift to some (cp. He 10:38).

(3) Some are prevented from receiving the gift of the Spirit by a feeling of being unworthy. Concerning this, notice -

(**a**) Peter said that “*God gives the Holy Spirit to those who obey him*” - but what is this “*obedience*”? Basically, it means obedience to the command to “*tarry for the spirit*”. It may also hold the deeper sense of general obedience to God’s will. But it cannot mean achieving a state of perfect holiness, for that would be an impossible demand. So it means simply not holding to any wilful or known obedience. Nor does it mean having complete victory over every temptation or sin, but rather being willing to be rid of such things and, after receiving the fullness of the Spirit, to overcome them by the strength of the Spirit.

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However, people who deliberately hold on to some secret sin, which they refuse either to repent of or to relinquish, may indeed find that they have lost the ability to receive any good thing from God. Yet even here God is sovereign, and may do as he pleases (cp. 1 Sa 19:18-24). Still, those who despise the grace of God, and reject the opportunity he gives them with his gift, may, like Saul and his servants, or like Balaam, or Samson, perish (cp. He 10:29-31).

(b) The command is to *receive the gift* of the Holy Spirit. A gift cannot be earned - it can only be gratefully accepted, or ungratefully rejected. The Holy Spirit has already been given; let the seeker then humbly, thankfully, trustfully, receive the gift of God.

(c) Christ likens the gift of the Holy Spirit to the food a father faithfully gives his children (Lu 11:10-13). No good father will deny his children the nourishment they need for life and health. They need only to reach out a hand and take what is set before them. Neither will God deny his children. If chastisement is necessary (He 12:6-11) it will not be inflicted by denying the seeker the gift he most needs in order to fulfil the Father's will!

(d) Assuming, then, that the seeker is not wilfully violating some clear command of God, he may banish from his heart all feeling of unworthiness (or of worthiness). Trusting simply in the merits of Christ, and by the grace of God, he should appropriate the promise of the Spirit. Never exclude yourself from the plain undertaking of Christ: "*Everyone who asks receives, and those who seek find, and to those who knock it will be opened*" (Lu 11:10).

(4) Some are hindered from receiving a glossolalic infilling of the Spirit by the fear of losing their self-control, or of receiving a false, or embarrassing, or "emotional", or even demonic experience. The Lord himself was apparently aware of this fear. To countermand it he gave a specific promise - see *Luke 11:9-13*. Those who seek a personal Pentecost should be assured that the Holy Spirit will not do anything that is contrary to his own sublime character (Ga 5:22). One of the marks of a true Christian is ordinary "*courtesy*" (1 Pe 3:8, A.V.). So it is unthinkable that the divine Spirit would cause improper embarrassment, or loss of self-control, or that he would violate the person he is seeking to bless.

(5) Some are unwilling to receive the Holy Spirit in the way appointed by God. It is futile to bargain with the Lord, or to insist that the gift of the Spirit must come in some other way than that shown in scripture. No doubt God *could* grant the seeker an infilling of the Spirit without the occurrence of glossolalia, and there may even be cases where he does so. But anyone who desires to be true to scripture and to receive the gift of God in whatever way he chooses to give it, must at least be *willing* to experience a glossolalic infilling.

(6) Many people expect more than God has promised, and they fail to receive the gift of the Spirit, or to acknowledge the gift when they *have* received it, because they did not get a particular feeling, or sensation, or emotion, or some manifestation other than glossolalia. However, the only immediate evidence mentioned in scripture of Holy Spirit baptism is glossolalia. When Peter heard the Romans speaking in tongues he said that God had given them the Holy Spirit "*just as he did to us*" (Ac 15:8). Now, unlike the Jews in Jerusalem, the Romans did not experience the "*sound, wind, or fire*"; they only spoke in tongues. But that was enough for Peter. Glossolalia by itself was complete proof that they had received the fullness of the Spirit; no other evidence was required. Nor does the scripture specify how long, or how loudly, or how emotionally, or how fluently they spoke in tongues. They simply "*spoke*", that is all. If a person has truly spoken in tongues, even if only briefly, then he or she has received the Holy Spirit. Glossolalia is the one sign common to every charismatic infilling of the Spirit, and it is the only sign the seeker should expect. Other phenomena *may* occur - such as laughing, weeping, physical sensations, song, etc. - but they are all highly personalised. They are an indirect human response to Holy Spirit baptism rather than a direct work of the Spirit himself. None of them are necessary; they spring from the human spirit and, if it is felt necessary to do so, they may be easily curbed (cp. 1 Co 14:32). If people are taught to expect any immediate evidence apart from simple glossolalia they will lapse into a chaos of subjectiveness.

(7) Failure to accept that their utterance in tongues is inspired by God hinders many people from discovering the full blessing of Pentecost. They feel that when they speak in tongues (especially if no manifestation or emotion is present) the utterance comes from their own imagination. The promise of Christ to the sincere is again the safeguard (Lu 11:11-13). Let the speaker accept that his or her utterance, no matter how unemotional or small, comes from the prompting of the Spirit. Then seize hold of it by faith, rejoice in it, and continue to drink deeply of the Lord's blessing. The small trickle will soon become a river. Jesus likened the infilling of the Spirit to the flow of a river (Jn 7:38-39). A river usually begins as a small stream, enlarging only as it flows on. Notice also that the phrase "*as the scripture hath said*" (Jn 7:38) probably includes a reference to one of Ezekiel's visions. The prophet saw the outpouring of the Spirit beginning like a trickle of water; but then, as he watched and prayed, it became a surging flood, which brought life and blessing to the whole land (Ez 47:1-12).

(8) People may be hindered from "receiving" the gift because they insist that God should forcibly thrust his gift upon them. So they sit passively, determined that nothing will happen until God himself makes it happen. But the Lord usually does not compel any of us to do what we are not willing to do. He normally requires seekers to accept the gift of the Spirit by faith, in response to prayer and the laying on of hands. They should then confidently and gladly open their mouths and begin speaking in a new language. No "working up" into an emotional fever is required, no sensation of a "surge of power", nor any feeling of ecstasy, but just the ordinary act of opening the mouth, and beginning to speak.

Remember that speaking in tongues is not a miracle of *speech* but of *utterance*. The miracle in glossolalia is not the act of *speaking*, but the *words* that are spoken. From a mechanical aspect, speaking in tongues is no more difficult than speaking a known language. The difference lies solely in the fact that, in the latter case, the words uttered come from the mind in response to education; whereas in the former, they come from the spirit in response to divine inspiration. It is like the time when Peter had to heed the Lord's invitation and jump out of his boat *before* any miracle was wrought to harden the water (Mt 14:29). So with holy Spirit baptism: one must seize the promise of God, accept the gift of God, and at once move one's speech into a new tongue, while believing that the Holy Spirit will both create and guide the utterance. The disciples, we are told, "*began to speak*", and as they did so, the Holy Spirit "*gave them utterance*". Or, conversely, as the Spirit gave utterance, the disciples began to speak. The "speaking" arose from the disciples; the "utterance" arose from the Holy Spirit. There is a blending and cooperation between human and divine elements in the occurrence of glossolalia.

(III) MORE ON PRE-CONDITIONS

Despite what is written above, remember that the Book of *Acts* does not show a fixed set of pre-conditions for receiving the gift of the Spirit. As we have seen in earlier pages, Luke reveals a great variety in the sequence and style of the three basic parts of Christian initiation. Special apostolic ministry or spontaneous effusion of the Spirit may make detailed personal preparation unnecessary. People differ in their degree of faith, consecration, understanding; and all of these things may affect their reception of the Spirit. The events leading to their conversion, or water-baptism, differ greatly, and also the manner in which they are drawn to seek the infilling of the Spirit. All these factors, and others as well, may affect their reception of the Spirit.

The infilling of the Spirit is personal and real for each seeker. In this it differs greatly from the new birth, which is an essentially legal transaction, one that is concerned with the simple imparting of "life", hence it is basically identical for each person. But hardly any two people will take hold of, or experience, Holy Spirit baptism in the same way. The above paragraphs on "conditions" are intended to convey only a general picture of things that exist in both scripture and in contemporary Pentecostal practice.

CONCLUSION

My argument so far has focussed upon the Christian's personal need of the baptism in the Spirit, and on the benefits we can gain in daily life from this dynamic experience. But is that all there is to say? Does the baptism in the Holy Spirit relate only to the Spirit filled believer's personal life? Is the baptism in the Holy Spirit is a sufficient end in itself?

Hardly! On the larger scene, Holy Spirit baptism is fulfilled only when a group of Spirit-filled people gather together to create a worshipping community in which the Word is preached and the charismata are manifested (1 Co 12:7-11). In just such a setting Paul describes the local church as "*the body of Christ*" (vs 12,27; Ro 12:4-6). That is, through the agency of the gifts of the Spirit, and through its preaching ministry, the local church can be (and should be) to its community all that Christ would be if he were physically present.

What does that mean?

The gospels show that the people of old Palestine found two things in Christ when they flocked to see him: the Word preached; and power demonstrated. What they found in those days through the physical body of Jesus today should be able to find through his mystical "body", the local church.

How can that be done?

There is no other way except through preaching the Word of God, in conjunction with the confirmatory power of the charismata (Mk 16:20; He 2:4). The prophetic word and the charismata should be an integral part of the worship and witness of the local church. Then people will be able to enter its doors and find the same grace and glory they would have found had they been among the crowds who thronged Jesus in Galilee.

However, the prophetic Word, and the charismata, can fully occur only when the local church consists of a group of Spirit-filled people gathered under the leadership of an oversight and ministry raised up by god. Then, and only then, has the baptism in the Spirit fulfilled its greater purpose. This is confirmed by Christ's promise, "*Truly, truly, I say to you, those who believe in me will do the works that I do; and they will do even greater works than these, because I go to the Father*" (Jn 14:12). That promise was made within the context of the more important promise of the Spirit (cp. vs. 15-17,25-26;15:26-27;16:7; and cp. the words "*Because I go to the Father*" with Ac 2:33). The promise was a collective one, spoken to the disciples as a group. It was fulfilled when, as a group, they were baptised in the Spirit and went out to preach the Word in the power of the charismata (Ac 2:43;4:29-31;5:12-16; etc). So again we see that the full purpose of Holy Spirit baptism is realised only when a group of Spirit-filled believer come together so that the "greater works" promised by the Master may be wrought through them.

Nothing less should satisfy us.

ADDENDUM

TONGUES OF ANGELS

A STUDY ON THE VALIDITY OF GLOSSOLALIA

a paper presented to

the Australian Pentecostal Minister's Fellowship

The larger theme of this session is "*The Holy Spirit - The Spirit of Life*", and the focus of my particular segment is "*The Validity of Glossolalia*", which I take to require a discussion of the nature of *glossolalia* and how it is imparted to the believer by the Holy Spirit.

Paul's first mention of glossolalia is not in 1 Co 12, as commonly thought, but in chapter two, where he uses the words "*perfect*", and "*fully mature*", to describe the Spirit-filled tongue-speaking believer - ³²

"Among those who are now perfect³³ we speak wisdom - but now the wisdom of this world, nor of its rulers, who are all doomed to perish. Rather, we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery³⁴ . . . For we have not received the spirit of this world, but the Spirit sent by God, so that we might understand the charismata³⁵ God has bestowed upon us. That is why we speak, not in words taught by human wisdom, but rather in words that the Spirit taught us, using the language of the Spirit to interpret spiritual truth."³⁶

(32) See 1 Corinthians 2:6-7, 12-15.

(33) The word is "tellies", which among other things, was used in Greek to describe someone who had been fully initiated into a religious cult, and now had a right to belong to its innermost circle. Paul applies it to Christians who had received the gift of the Holy Spirit accompanied by glossolalia.

(34) "Musterion", the same word he uses in 1 Corinthians 14:2.

(35) See 1 Corinthians 12:7-11.

(36) Compare *Ephesians 5:18b-19; Colossians 3:16*.

Paul there begins to open up themes that he will develop more fully later in his letter; but in this passage he draws special attention to two things:

- **first:** the manner in which the charismata, and especially glossolalia, are a powerful catalyst to open up our minds to a revelation of all that is available to us in Christ (vs. 9,10) -

“Things that no eyes has seen, nor any ear heard, nor any human heart ever conceived, all that God has prepared for those who love him, God has now revealed to us through his Spirit.”

- **second:** how absurd all this seems to the natural man (vs. 14-15) -

“Someone who is unspiritual is not able to receive the things that come from the Spirit of God, because to him they seem absurd. He cannot understand them, because they must be spiritual discerned. But the spiritual³⁷ man is able to discern all things.”

That second idea is the one I want to focus on in this study.

(I) A SPIRITUAL LANGUAGE

On the face of it, it does seem preposterous to claim that such a bizarre phenomenon as glossolalia should be taken as a mark of “*maturity*”, or of full initiation into the church. But is it really so ridiculous?

There are three possible sources of glossolalia in an individual’s life:

- demonic impulse (examples of which you have probably observed)
- psychic catalepsy (the result of an emotional frenzy, or an hypnotic state)
- spiritual arousal (effected by God through Holy Spirit baptism).

We are concerned here only with Holy Spirit-induced glossolalia. But notice that I have used the words “*arousal*” and “*induced*”, rather than (say) “*imparted*”. Why? Because we must learn at the beginning that glossolalia is a natural expression of the *human spirit*. We discover this from the way in which scripture contrasts the language of the *human spirit* with that of the *human mind* -

“(The glossolalist) declares secret things in the spirit” (1 Co 14:2)

“If I pray in an unknown tongue, my spirit is praying, but my mind is unable to add anything useful to it” (vs. 14)

“What shall I do then? I will pray with my spirit, and I will pray with my mind also; I will sing with my spirit, and I will sing with my mind also” (vs. 15)

“Speak to each other in psalms and hymns and songs of the spirit. . .Instruct and exhort each other with psalms and hymns and songs of the spirit” (Ep 5:19; Cl 3:16).

(37) The word is “pneumatikos”, which he also uses in 12:1.

It seems correct in each of the above translations to avoid the use of an initial capital for the word “*spirit*”, for Paul is surely talking, not about the *Holy Spirit*, but about the *human spirit*. He is comparing the activity of the human *spirit*, under the anointing and inspiration of the Holy Spirit, with the activity of the human *mind*.

(A) FORETOLD BY CHRIST

Jesus predicted the coming of this experience when he said -

“Out of his inmost being there will flow rivers of living water” (Jn 7:38).

That is a graphic way of describing praise that pours, not out of a dispassionate mind, but from an enraptured spirit. Thus, when the *Holy Spirit* inspires the *human spirit* to speak in tongues, the mind is by-passed. The language spoken is not known, either by the speaker (vs. 1 Co 14:14), or by the hearers (vs. 2); but it is understood by God!

If this is true - that glossolalia arises from the human spirit, under the impulse and inspiration of the Holy Spirit - then two conclusions can be drawn -

(1) IT HAS A SPIRITUAL ORIGIN

True glossolalia³⁸ is not a product of human imagination; it has a spiritual, not a mental, origin. It cannot be first thought out in the mind, and then spoken. It must arise spontaneously from the human spirit under the impulsion of the Holy Spirit during the experience we call *Holy Spirit baptism*. This experience can be described as an *infilling* of the human spirit by the Spirit of God, and its occurrence is marked by the sign of speaking in tongues. That is, the human spirit, anointed and inspired by the Holy Spirit, expresses itself through the physical body, and the worshipper addresses God in speech that the mind has never learned.

Only in this sense is glossolalia a supernatural utterance. After it has been released in the human spirit by Holy Spirit baptism, we must then say of glossolalia that

(2) IT IS A NATURAL FUNCTION

Note how Paul describes “*praying and singing in the spirit*” as an act of personal volition, as though it were a merely natural function, fully under human control. Indeed, he asserts as much command over glossolalic speech as he does over his use of the vernacular (14:14-15). Whether speaking in Greek or glossolalia, he remained fully in charge of his tongue. From this we may infer that just as the human *mind* possesses an inherent ability to express itself through a *known* language, so the human *spirit* possesses an inherent ability to express itself through an *unknown* language. The vocal abilities of the mind are released through social influence and education; but the vocal abilities of the spirit require a different catalyst. In the case of a Christian, that catalyst is (or should be) Holy Spirit baptism.

So an ability to express itself through glossolalia may be said to be natural to the human spirit; but this ability lies dormant until, in a Christian, it is released by the Holy Spirit. Hence I repeat:

(38) There is a false glossolalia that can be induced by hypnotic trance or intense emotional arousal, or even demonic stimulus, which has often been observed in pagan circles. Its main distinction from Christian glossolalia is the state of catalepsy which it usually produces in its practitioners.

glossolalia is supernatural *only in that it has a supernatural origin* (Holy Spirit baptism); but thereafter it becomes a natural function of the spirit of the person concerned.

(B) UNDER HUMAN CONTROL

Because glossolalia, once it has been released in a person's life, becomes a natural part of his life, he can now speak in tongues at will - with love or without it; to the glory of God, or against God's glory; wisely, or unwisely. He can talk in tongues, pray in tongues, sing in tongues - in fact, he can exercise glossolalia in any manner he pleases. Of course, Paul always sought to use the gift in conscious unction with the Holy Spirit; he wished to benefit the church by it, and to praise God, which should also be our aim.

For this reason then, because glossolalic utterance arises *directly* from the human spirit (and only *indirectly* from the Holy Spirit), scripture rightly demands that those who use the gift must take full responsibility for it. Hence we read: "*the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets*" (14:32; and cp. 13:1); that is, the prophets are expected to exercise firm discipline over whatever inspired utterance is aroused within them.

Note that while the mind is not the source of the gift, nor is it the channel through which the gift functions, *the mind does have power to determine the proper time, place, and manner for the exercise of the gift.*

This does not mean that the *Holy Spirit* can be controlled by human will, for that would be nonsense. I am saying only that people who use the vocal gifts must control the actions of their own spirits; they must ensure that they are ruled by love (1 Co 13:1), and that they speak with the aim of edifying the church. They cannot thrust upon the Holy Spirit responsibility for ensuring that their oracles fulfil their divinely intended purpose.

(II) INTELLIGIBLE OR UNINTELLIGIBLE?

(A) NORMALLY UNINTELLIGIBLE

If it is true that glossolalia is an exercise of the human spirit, in sharp contrast to the language of the mind (1 Co 14:14), then it follows that glossolalia is normally *unintelligible*. It is of course *always* unintelligible to the person speaking; but it will also normally be just as incomprehensible to *any* listener anywhere. No matter where the glossolalist goes it is unlikely he will find anyone who could understand what he is saying. In other words, glossolalia is not usually made up of any known language.

I know there have been occasions when glossolalia has consisted of a known language.³⁹ But in ordinary usage it is not necessary to think of glossolalia as a language that would be understood somewhere in the world. Notice how Paul, in contrast with "*the tongues of men*", suggests that glossolalia consists of the language of "*angels*". It follows no earthly syntax, but flows like a tumultuous river from one's inmost being, bubbling, sparkling, incoherent, pursuing no straightly hewn path, but meandering in its own heavenly track, toward its own unseen end.

(39) For example, the *Day of Pentecost* (Ac 2:1-11); and there have been many modern occurrences of the same miracle. I have myself on at least four occasions during 40 years of Pentecostal ministry observed or shared in experiences where someone's glossolalia was recognised by a listener.

(B) BUT NOT GIBBERISH

Now this suggestion - that glossolalia is an essentially unintelligible utterance - is startling to some people. They feel it reduces speaking in tongues to mere gibberish. But the description "gibberish" can be used only if glossolalia is evaluated by criteria that are proper only for ordinary language. But glossolalia is the language of the spirit, not of the mind. It is not addressed to men, but to God. It does not appeal to the mind, but to the spirit. In fact, Paul says that in his mind, in the presence of glossolalia, was "*unfruitful*", and that "*no one can understand*" what he is saying (1 Co 14:2, 14-16).

But if glossolalia is the language of the spirit why then insist that it must have a logical or coherent structure? Intelligibility, syntax, can be demanded only of that which must address its appeal to the mind. But that is the very thing glossolalia does not do! Rather, it speaks from and to the mystic spirit.

Indeed, if glossolalia were subject to the laws that bind ordinary language, or if, when I speak in tongues, I must be speaking one of the native languages of men, what would I have gained? In what way would I have improved my prayer life?

Speaking personally, I already have a good command of the world's most richly expressive language,⁴⁰ so that whatever the human mind can say I am able to say in my ordinary speech. Yet there are many things my mind *cannot* express, many deep and wondrous impulses for which ordinary language is simply not adequate. There are many sentiments I could not put into words even if I were familiar with every language in the world - yet my heart yearns to sing them to God.

Is this not the anguish or worship, of poetry and song, and of all great art - that people sense a beauty, mystery, and wonder they long to express, yet perfection of statement constantly eludes them? Always there is a haunting sense that while the prayer, the poem, or picture, may have stated more than has ever before been said, there is still so much that has evaded human grasp, so much that human artistry cannot capture.

So I do not believe that when I speak in tongues I am only speaking Swahili, or Urdu, or Chinese! If this were so, my prayer would remain bound by the limitations that inherently restrict the expressive power of all human language. Glossolalia is free of such restraint. It is not bound by the formal rules of logic and grammar. But neither is it gibberish. It is rather the soaring language of the spirit.

I rejoice that in my weakness of speech I can turn to the Holy Spirit, and I know that as I yield myself to him he will intercede for me, through me, with language and sighs too deep for ordinary speech! (Ro 8:26-27).

(C) LIKE THE FRAGRANCE OF A ROSE

It can now be seen why philologists and linguists have often criticised glossolalia because (they say) it lacks those structural features that usually characterise a valid language. Whether or not

(40) I mean, of course, English, which has by far the most extensive vocabulary of any language, with over a million words. I think that the next most prolific language is Dutch, with about half a million words. There are more ways to say more things in English than can be expressed in any other tongue.

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such observations are correct, I cannot tell; but it would not surprise me to find that glossolalia defies logical analysis, nor that it has few of the marks of a true language.

This lack of any discernible language structure, far from invalidating glossolalia, or reducing it to a collection of meaningless sounds, simply confirms its nature as an essentially spiritual utterance. As such it does not require a meaning or pattern intelligible to the mind.

May I suggest that God does not receive glossolalia as a succession of lucid words? Rather it reaches him like the fragrance of a rose, total in itself, expressing beauty and love. Or perhaps it is like an unbroken light, in one beam, searching out and exposing those things that are hidden. Or he perhaps hears it as a single infant cry, "*Abba! Father!*" (Ro 8:15-16). My prayer in tongues is a unified whole, not a collection of sentences and paragraphs. It is my spirit crying "Abba!" like a little child. The Father understands this cry without the formality of intelligible words, just as a mother instantly comprehends the cry of her baby, and hastens to attend to its needs.

So then, when I worship God with glossolalia, enlivened by the life-giving Spirit, I am joining with the whole creation in pouring out to heaven an instinctive paean of praise - a lyric that has in it the sound of the singing of every bird, the whisper of every breeze, the rustle of every leaf, the melody of every angel.

Glossolalia has the validity of a majestic symphony, the rationale of a glorious sunset, the lucidity of a lover's sigh, the truth of a revelation from God, the splendour of the tongues of angels!