

**Modern  
Pentecostal  
Controversies**  
**In Light of the Early Church**

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## **Introduction**

In the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, the debate was whether or not speaking in tongues was of the devil. That debate has been decisively won by the Pentecostals. Only a few theological diehards still teach that tongues and the other gifts of the Spirit ceased with the Apostles or with the adoption of the canon of Scripture.

Today, the battle among Pentecostals is in two areas. Is speaking in tongues the initial evidence of the Baptism of the Holy Spirit? The second area is even more fundamental. Is the Baptism of the Holy Spirit subsequent to salvation?

If the Baptism of the Holy Spirit is not subsequent to salvation, there is no point to argue that speaking tongues is the initial evidence. Otherwise we would end up defending the notion that speaking in tongues is the sign of salvation. The doctrine of “initial evidence” rests upon a presumption that non-Pentecostals challenge. Since they deny that the Baptism of the Holy Spirit is separate from salvation, they would only accept the signs of salvation as initial evidence of the Baptism of the Holy Spirit. In their view, since tongues is not a sign of salvation, it cannot be a sign or initial evidence of the Baptism of the Holy Spirit.

Prior to defending the doctrine of tongues as evidence, it is necessary to establish that the Baptism of the Holy Spirit is subsequent to salvation and not part of it. This idea, the doctrine of subsequence, is essential to the Pentecostal position. Without it, it is impossible to defend tongues as evidence.

In this book, I am arguing that the Baptism of the Holy Spirit is subsequent to salvation. I am basing my argument on two concepts. First, we find this analogy in the life of Jesus, among the disciples, and in the New Testament church. These analogies, taken as a group, strongly suggest that it will be subsequent for us as well. Then I argue that the post-biblical church viewed the Baptism of the Spirit as subsequent to salvation.

In my first argument, I am following some who have drawn upon the analogy of Jesus, and many who use the analogy of the disciples. Where the field gets thinner is making this argument from the early church apologists and fathers. If this book makes any contribution at all, it is looking to the early church for their views on this subject.

There is a reason why Protestant Pentecostals have neglected to look to the early church for support of our views. Catholic Pentecostals have contributed far more in this area for obvious reasons rooted in their tradition. Since the Reformation, the views of the early church have been largely disregarded among Protestants, including Pentecostals. I give some of the reasons in the chapter, “Requiem for the Reformation.” Hopefully the Church will not mind meeting their grandparents.

There is a third line of reasoning which I have not developed here, but which I think could yield useful insights. I hope to follow it in some future Pentecost sermon series. In that series I want to look at the Old Testament, especially the Biblical Feasts, and see the concepts of subsequence that are built into that system. Particularly, I want to study the connections between Passover and Pentecost. Only in the “Hebrew Roots” branch of Christianity is any effort being made to explore this aspect and even there the effort is tiny.

Those who reject the classical Pentecostal position fall into two categories. First, there are those who deny “subsequence,” and therefore so not feel the need to defend any further position. The second category accepts tongues as a gift for today, but not as “initial physical evidence.”

I am personally convinced that the preponderance of evidence is in favor of the Pentecostal doctrine of subsequence. I believe that tongues is the critical evidence of that subsequent experience. That belief is based on the preponderance of evidence in the book of Acts. While the writings of the early church certainly refer to speaking in tongues, there is insufficient detail to draw strong conclusions in either direction. The lonely assertion of Arnobius that Jesus spoke in tongues is tantalizing. Even though we do not doubt him on the other things he has said, the sheer solitude of his report has kept his view from prevailing. (I do think it is a bit arrogant of the ANF editors to suggest that only on this point he must be mistaken.)

Even though the final brick is the wall of proof may be lacking for speaking in tongues as the initial evidence, I think it is essential that the Assemblies of God hold to this position. Others have observed before me, that when the insistence upon it is lost, it is not long until tongues itself is lost. My pastoral position leads me to prefer insisting upon tongues as evidence and seeing the experience in the lives of people over waiting until everyone conclusively agrees. I can sleep easily at night knowing that if it happened in the New Testament Church, I’m not too far off in urging it to continue today. Indeed, the only time I don’t sleep easily is when preachers yell in church.

Joe Fuiten  
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## The Baptism of Jesus

The baptism of Jesus is the prototype of the Baptism in the Holy Spirit preceded by Salvation. What we know about the baptism and the subsequent anointing of the Spirit we have from the Gospel writers. Matthew says:

*As soon as Jesus was baptized, he went up out of the water. At that moment heaven was opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and lighting on him. And a voice from heaven said, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased."<sup>1</sup>*

Luke describes the same scene but highlights different details.

*When all the people were being baptized, Jesus was baptized too. And as he was praying, heaven was opened and the Holy Spirit descended on him in bodily form like a dove. And a voice came from heaven:*

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<sup>1</sup> Matthew 3:16-17.

*"You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased."<sup>2</sup>*

Following the two Evangelists, we have two thesis statements regarding the baptism of Jesus. First, the baptism of Jesus is really a two-stage event. Jesus is first baptized in water, then he is anointed with the Holy Spirit. Second, this two-step process is the usual way Christians encounter the Holy Spirit. First we encounter him in salvation, then in the baptism in the Holy Spirit. We say that the anointing of Jesus is the first New Testament description of our experience, hence it takes on normative elements—it shows us how it should happen for those who follow.

### **Analogy as Precedent**

Some reject the anointing of Jesus by the Holy Spirit as being normative for the Christian life. They choose to reject the event as normative for two reasons.

First, they incorrectly characterize our analogy: “Jesus is born, conceived of the Holy Spirit, through the Virgin Mary. This correlates with our supernatural rebirth or regeneration.”<sup>3</sup> Gordon Fee says it is difficult to “see the appropriateness of the relationship of that event to his birth as analogy for subsequent Christian experience.”<sup>4</sup> In their

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<sup>2</sup> Luke 3:21-22.

<sup>3</sup> H. I. Lederle, Treasures Old and New, Interpretations of “Spirit baptism” in the Charismatic Renewal Movement (Peabody, Massachusetts: Hendrickson Publishers, 1988), p. 57

<sup>4</sup> Gordon Fee, Gospel and Spirit, Issues in New Testament Hermeneutics (Peabody, Massachusetts: Hendrickson Publishers, 1991), p.109.

conclusions, Fee and Lederle closely follow the analysis of James Dunn.<sup>5</sup>

Pentecostals, in using the analogy, do not necessarily liken the birth of Jesus to being born again. The two births are not analogous, and do not need to be, in order for the Pentecostal position to stand. The Pentecostal position is that the Spirit was alive in Jesus before he was anointed with the Spirit. They come to the correct summary of our position when they characterize the Spirit's descent on Jesus:

“This is seen as Jesus’ Spirit baptism, which brought an enduement with power and initiated his period of public ministry which included signs and wonders. It is then concluded that if the Son of God needed this extra experience how much more do we, his disciples.”<sup>6</sup>

Secondly, some deny the normative nature of the baptism of Jesus because they deny the use of analogies out of hand.

Gordon Fee says, “The use of historical precedent as an analogy by which to establish a norm is never valid in itself. Such a process (drawing universal norms from particular events) produces a *non sequitur* and is therefore irrelevant.”<sup>7</sup> For Fee, the analogy of the baptism of Jesus is

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<sup>5</sup> James D. G. Dunn, Baptism in the Holy Spirit (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: The Westminster Press, 1970).

<sup>6</sup> Lederle, p. 57.

<sup>7</sup> Fee, p. 94.

“of such a different kind from succeeding Christian experience that (it) can scarcely have normative value.”<sup>8</sup>

Fee closely mirrors James Dunn. For Dunn, the anointing of Jesus relates to his unique role in salvation-history. This event is so pivotal that salvation-history takes a decidedly different turn at the moment of anointing. Dunn says,

“Where the Pentecostalist thesis breaks down is in its failure to grasp the fact that we are dealing here with events whose significance, at least for those who record them, lies almost totally in the part they play in salvation-history.”

H. I. Lederle says of our point “the argument fails to take sufficient cognizance of the uniqueness of Jesus and his unrepeatable role in salvation history.”<sup>9</sup> Fee makes the same argument for Pentecost. They are certainly correct that Jesus is entirely unique and no one else could have provided for our salvation. The four living creatures and twenty-four elders of Revelation 5 affirm this. After searching heaven and earth for someone worthy and finding none they proclaim of the Lamb, “*You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals, because you were slain, and with your blood you purchased men for God...*”<sup>10</sup>

Christ’s unique role in salvation history is not disputed, but neither do these writers prove that it is relevant to the normative nature of his anointing by the Spirit. It is not sufficient just to say Jesus is too unique to count as a

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<sup>8</sup> Fee, p. 94.

<sup>9</sup> Lederle, p. 57.

<sup>10</sup> Revelation 5:9

model. What exactly is the causal link between the unique mission of Jesus and the inability to use his experiences as a model for our own? This is always left unstated as if it were self-evident, an unchallengable premise. Am I the only one who is missing something here? Since both the Bible itself and the early church used Jesus as a model, upon what basis is he now ruled out of bounds? I wonder if this is nothing more than the prejudice of hyper-Protestantism. If Jesus becomes our model, then we might try to copy his behavior. If we copy his behavior, we might be inclined to think that by works we could earn our way into heaven. If it is by works, that sounds like medieval Catholicism. The Reformation's thrust was to overthrow medieval Catholicism. Therefore, the unique role of Jesus in salvation history makes his experience off limits for establishing Christian norms.

Since both Fee and Lederle follow Dunn on this topic, I would like to relate to Dunn as generally representing the views of all three.

Dunn begins with the concept of the intent of the author. He argues that it was the “nearly exclusive intent” of the Gospel writers, in recording the anointing of Jesus, to show the eschatological mission of Jesus. Closely related to “intent” is the new era that is revealed. This is the announcement of his Messiahship, the beginning of a new era. “Only with the descent of the Spirit does the new covenant and new epoch enter...”<sup>11</sup> This is his critical concept. The anointing begins something new. It is like Adam being created, or the first day out of the ark.

If the anointing of Jesus is the start, then someone failed to tell Luke before he wrote his first two chapters.

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<sup>11</sup> Dunn, p. 32.

The angel tells Mary, "*The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God.*"<sup>12</sup> A determined polemicist might argue that the angel's words describe a future reality. Dunn says that "only then," at the Spirit anointing, does Jesus become the "Christ" or "Anointed One." Only then, with the descent of the Spirit, can the messianic age begin.<sup>13</sup> But Luke has a whole host of angels say, "*Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord.*"<sup>14</sup> For Dunn, the anointing "initiates Jesus into the messianic age,"<sup>15</sup> but Luke calls Jesus the Savior from day one and even from conception. Luke reports Jesus being about "his Father's business" long before the anointing. One has to wonder if Dunn's "nearly exclusive intent" is as exclusive as he suggests.

The "start of the messianic era" concept is important to Dunn's analysis, so he subpoenas some unlikely witnesses to testify. Although the dove might speak of Jesus as the sin sacrifice,<sup>16</sup> for Dunn it "quite probably" is intended to recall Genesis 1:2. David sees the wings of the dove as an escape to the very desert where Jesus is anointed,<sup>17</sup> but Dunn says it "should probably" be given eschatological significance.<sup>18</sup> God gives the dove as a divine symbol,<sup>19</sup> but Dunn chooses it to remind us of the time of Noah's flood. Dunn sounds more like Origen when he says the dove is "a

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<sup>12</sup> Luke 1:35.

<sup>13</sup> Dunn, p 27.

<sup>14</sup> Luke 2:11

<sup>15</sup> Dunn, p 25.

<sup>16</sup> Lev. 12:6.

<sup>17</sup> Ps. 55:6.

<sup>18</sup> Dunn, p. 27.

<sup>19</sup> Ps. 68:13.

symbol of Israel,” and infers from this that Mark’s Gospel is suggesting Jesus is the new Adam.<sup>20</sup> This forced cross-examination is necessary because for Dunn, it must be an initiation, the start of something. If it only represents the continuation of the Spirit’s work begun in conception, continued as Jesus grew in wisdom, and flourished as he confounded the scholars, then the evidence falls into the Pentecostals’ viewpoint. But if Dunn can brush off the Spirit’s work in these areas, then his concept of a new era at the anointing at least has a stronger pulse on arrival.

Dunn himself seems to struggle with his “new era” concepts. He says that Luke believed the new era brings Jesus a new role yet he cannot finally decide if Jesus was Christ the Lord at birth, or only after the anointing at the Jordan. He admits Luke calls him both Savior and Christ before the anointing, and he knows that Luke does not contradict himself. If Dunn is right, Simeon could not have seen the Lord’s Christ as promised, but only the one who would later be the Christ. But Luke tells us Simeon saw the Lord’s Christ. Dunn says that only after the anointing does the voice from heaven call him “Son.” But we either need to make the angel’s words strictly prophetic or stuff a sock in the mouth of the other voice from heaven that said to Mary “*the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God.*”<sup>21</sup> Was Jesus the Christ or not? Was he the Son or not? The crown jewels of his argument are thus left dangling between the horns of his dilemma and he is left with two large dents in his “there is also a sense” argument. Luke makes Dunn admit

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<sup>20</sup> Dunn, p 30.

<sup>21</sup> Luke 1:35.

He (Luke) does not intend to deny what he has already written in Chs. 1 and 2, nor does he naively contradict himself; there is a sense in which Jesus is Messiah and Son of God from birth but there is also a sense in which he only becomes Messiah and Son at Jordan, since he does not in fact become the Anointed One til then and only then does the heavenly voice hail him as Son.<sup>22</sup>

His dilemma is not resolved by resorting to an argument from silence. Yet Dunn employs it with regard to the heavenly voice. Do we really know that Jesus had no commending voice from heaven calling him “son” before the anointing?” There is nothing in the text which says “Today, and not before today, you are my son.” First Dunn goes against Luke by denying that Jesus is the Christ until the moment at the Jordan. Then Dunn tries to implicate the Father in his conclusion because the Father never previously denied or affirmed, on the record, that Jesus was his Son. His conclusion is forced.

In one respect Dunn is correct in pointing to a beginning. It is the beginning of Jesus’ preaching of the kingdom confirmed by signs and wonders. But this is precisely how the Pentecostal sees the baptism in the Holy Spirit. It is for preaching the Gospel of salvation which God confirms with signs following.

Dunn also presents the “nearly exclusive intent” argument. He says that it was the “nearly exclusive intent” of the Gospel writers, in recording the anointing of Jesus, to show the eschatological mission of Jesus. Of course, if

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<sup>22</sup> Dunn, p 28.

the Gospel writers were presenting Jesus' mission as their exclusively intended purpose, then it would not be proper to use their account to establish normative Christian activity from the actions of Jesus. This is a popular theme with those who wish to limit the influence of Acts as normative for Church life today. But was it really the intent of the authors to achieve such an exclusive goal? Can Dunn and Fee be so certain about the unwritten intent of the authors as to exclude other uses of the Scripture beyond what they narrowly say?

We have John's own words as to his intent, "*But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.*"<sup>23</sup> We also have Luke's. Luke wanted to write an orderly account and one that would allow his readers to know how sure their teaching had been.

*Many have undertaken to draw up an account of the things that have been fulfilled among us, just as they were handed down to us by those who from the first were eyewitnesses and servants of the word. Therefore, since I myself have carefully investigated everything from the beginning, it seemed good also to me to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus, so that you may know the certainty of the things you have been taught.*<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> John 20:31.

<sup>24</sup> Luke 1:1-4.

With an amazing Pentecostal flair, demonstrating the gift of interpretation, Dunn is able to transform the stated objectives of the Gospel writers themselves into unstated and different objectives. Dunn supports a hermeneutical principle that says that only the intent of the author can determine the primary meaning of a text. Then, looking through the inverting lens of hermeneutical principles that he himself invented, Dunn sees that Pentecostals have turned the account upside-down and wrongly use it for establishing norms. Why is it wrong? Because it goes against the “nearly exclusive intent” of the author. As we will show throughout this book, Dunn’s arbitrary principles would have come as a surprise to the first several centuries of Christians. Such hermeneutical principles would never have been accepted in the early church, and therefore their conclusions from Scripture were entirely different from Dunn, Lederle, and Fee.

We want to show that the anointing of Jesus for ministry is parallel to our experience of being baptized in the Holy Spirit.

Dunn and Fee notwithstanding, we will show that the baptism of Jesus was not the first, but rather the continuation of Old Testament events. It became the first of several, similar, New Testament events. When all these are added together they fit into the caveat which Fee himself allows: “for a biblical precedent to justify a present action, the principle of the action must be taught elsewhere, where it is the primary intent so to teach.”<sup>25</sup> We maintain that in the Old Testament anointing of priests this is directly taught. Further, that references in Ephesians point to this event as normative.

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<sup>25</sup> Fee, p. 95.

Consider the parallels:

Jesus was alive in the Spirit and by the Spirit from the beginning of his human journey. He was conceived of the Holy Spirit. His early growth in wisdom, demonstrated at age twelve in the Temple, evidences the workings of the Holy Spirit. Luke notes this when he says, “*And the child grew and became strong, he was filled with wisdom, and the grace of God was upon him.*”<sup>26</sup> No one can reasonably argue that Jesus needed more of the Holy Spirit. The grace of God was on Him. The Holy Spirit was alive in him.

The Holy Spirit in the life of Jesus does compare to the Holy Spirit in the life of Christians. It is here that we claim an analogy. Jesus was alive in the Spirit before being anointed with the Holy Spirit. The very definition of salvation is to receive the Holy Spirit. “*If anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Christ.*”<sup>27</sup> In this reference, it is clear that Paul was referring to the Holy Spirit because he goes on to say, “*And if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies.*”<sup>28</sup> It is ironic that Pauline scholars such as Fee and Dunn stumble on the analogy of Jesus’ anointing since it most closely resembles Paul’s approach.

The analogy that we claim is that just as Jesus was alive in the Spirit before his anointing, so we are alive in the Spirit from the moment of Salvation. And, just as Jesus received a further encounter with the Holy Spirit beyond what he had during his early years, so we further encounter the Holy Spirit at some point after our initial contact.

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<sup>26</sup> Luke 2:40 NIV.

<sup>27</sup> Romans 8:9.

<sup>28</sup> Romans 8:10.

That a parallel in the life of Jesus exists, is the conclusion of scholars such as Tak-Ming Cheung, who has written

The Pentecostal understanding of Spirit-Baptism has gained some support in recent scholarship. R. Stronstad points out that the parallelism between Jesus' anointing at Jordan and the disciples' receiving of the Spirit on the day of Pentecost implies the functional equivalence of the Spirit in the two events—that is, for charismatic empowerment in mission.<sup>29</sup>

This is also the view the Robert Menzies.

The striking parallels between Jesus' pneumatic anointing at the Jordan and that of the disciples at Pentecost suggest that Luke interpreted the latter event in light of the former: Pentecost was for the disciples what the Jordan was for Jesus.<sup>30</sup>

But it is not only recent scholars who find parallels between the baptism of Jesus and the subsequent work of the Spirit and the Spirit's work in our lives. Ancient writers do as well.

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<sup>29</sup> Tak-Ming Cheung, "Understandings of Spirit Baptism," *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 8, April 1996, p. 116-117.

<sup>30</sup> Menzies, Part II, Chpt.10, "Empowered for Witness", (Sheffield, England: Sheffield Academic Press, 1994), P.174.

And if He was perfect, why was He, the perfect one, baptized? It was necessary, they say, to fulfill the profession that pertained to humanity. Most excellent. Well, I assert, simultaneously with His baptism by John, He becomes perfect? Manifestly. He did not then learn anything more from him? Certainly not. But He is perfected by the washing—of baptism—alone, and is sanctified by the descent of the Spirit? Such is the case. **The same also takes place in our case, whose exemplar Christ became** (emphasis mine).<sup>31</sup>

Another example is found in a comment by A. Cleveland Cox in the Ante-Nicene Fathers, edited by Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson, who writes:

The seven gifts of the Spirit seem to be prefigured in this symbol, corresponding to the seven (spirits) lamps before the throne in the vision of St. John. The prediction of Isaiah intimates the anointing of Jesus at his baptism, and the outpouring of these gifts upon the Christian Church.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> Clement of Alexandria, “The Instructor, Book I,” Ante-Nicene Fathers; Alexander Roberts & James Donaldson, eds., Vol. 2 (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson Publishers, 1994) 215-6.

<sup>32</sup> A. Cleveland Coxe, Elucidations, IV, relating to The Instructor, Ante-Nicene Fathers; Vol. 2, Alexander Roberts & James Donaldson, eds., (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson Publishers, 1994) p. 477.

More than casual references, the analogy made its way into the earliest liturgies of the church. Being part of the liturgy, to be prayed in every service, made it at the very core of what the church practiced and believed. The editors cite Neale<sup>33</sup> as to the dates of the various early liturgies. We will quote from “The Divine Liturgy of James, the Holy Apostle and Brother of the Lord.” Neale says “the Liturgy of St. James is of earlier date, as to its main fabric, than AD 200.” Three times in the liturgy there is a prayer for the gifts of the Spirit. In the third prayer, which comes as part of the lengthy communion, the liturgist prays for the Holy Spirit to come. Just as Tertullian urged that they pray for the gifts to be poured out at the communion altar, so this liturgist prays for the Spirit, who is described as the one,

that descended in the form of a dove on our Lord Jesus Christ at the river Jordan, and abode on Him; that descended on Thy apostles in the form of tongues of fire in the upper room of the holy and glorious Zion on the day of Pentecost; this Thine all-holy Spirit, send down, O Lord, upon us, and upon these offered holy gifts.

Enshrined in the Divine Liturgy, the analogy takes on enormous theological force. It is not incidental or secondary. The analogy is firmly within the mainstream of early church belief. What the early Christians hoped to receive was compared to what Jesus and the disciples had

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<sup>33</sup> General Introduction to the History of the Holy Eastern Church, p. 319, cited on p. 553, Vol. 7 Ante-Nicene Fathers.

received. In short, what was hoped for was analogous to what their predecessors had received.

Although he writes in the mid-fourth century, Cyril of Jerusalem is very precise in using the anointing of Jesus as an analogy for the beginning of ministry after the Spirit's anointing. In doing so, he takes a decidedly Assemblies of God viewpoint with regard to when ministry should begin. He says:

Jesus Christ was the Son of God, yet He preached not the Gospel before His Baptism. If the Master Himself followed the right time in due order, ought we, His servants, to venture out of order? *From that time Jesus began to preach, when the Holy Spirit had descended upon Him in a bodily shape, like a dove;...* If thou too hast unfeigned piety, the Holy Ghost cometh down on thee also, and a Father's voice sounds over thee from on high....<sup>34</sup>

The editors of the second series of "The Nicene Fathers" indicate very clearly the analogous nature of the anointing of Jesus for the anointing that believers were to receive. They said:

The custom of anointing the baptized with consecrated ointment is regarded by Cyril as a sacramental act representing the anointing of

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<sup>34</sup>Philip Schaff and Henry Wace, eds., "Catechetical Lectures, Lecture III," Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers; vol. 7 (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson Publishers, 1995) 17.

Jesus by the Spirit at His Baptism. “As the Holy Ghost in substance lighted on Him, like resting upon like, so, after you had come up from the pool of the sacred waters, there was given to you an unction the counterpart (το αντιτυπον) of that wherewith He was anointed, and this is the Holy Ghost (*Mystag.* iii. § x.).”<sup>35</sup>

We cite these authors and the early liturgy to counter Lederle and Fee who wish to remove the baptism of Jesus as an illustration of what happens to us. For Gordon Fee, the baptism of Jesus is not an appropriate analogy for our experience. But the early church fathers were not so hesitant. Further, since Fee is careful to define exegesis as “what it meant then,”<sup>36</sup> and since the church fathers are among those who comprise the “then”, their interpretation of what was meant by the recording of the event becomes important to the exegesis of the text. It would be inappropriate for us, some twenty centuries later, to deny the understanding of the Gospel writers by those who were so closely connected both in time and culture. Even when their writing is some years removed, they are communicating traditions much older than they are. Especially since their claim to legitimacy was primarily their direct connection to the apostles and those who succeeded them, we must give careful weight to the exegesis of the early church fathers.

If Jesus had the Holy Spirit in him, then what was the nature of what happened to him on the banks of the Jordan

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<sup>35</sup> Philip Schaff and Henry Wace, eds., “Ceremonies of Baptism and Chrism,” *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*; vol. 7 (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson Publishers, 1995) xxiv-xxv.

<sup>36</sup> Fee, p. 4.

River? Before we address that question, I want to suggest that the significant experience with the Holy Spirit did not occur in the Jordan River and certainly was not his baptism by John. On this point, James Dunn becomes an ally as he engages in his interpretive conflict with the sacramentalists.

### **Jesus received the anointing of the Spirit on the shore, not in the water**

This point is not absolutely necessary to my main argument. However, I think the weight of evidence from the Scripture and from the church fathers makes this view at least as reasonable as the view that all the activity of the Spirit takes place in the water. When I read Matthew there is nothing to suggest that the Spirit event takes place in the water. *“As soon as Jesus was baptized, he went up out of the water. At that moment heaven was opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and lighting on him.”*<sup>37</sup>

We have two ideas here. First, that Jesus was baptized, and second that he went up out of the water. If we try to argue that the reference to *“out of the water”* somehow speaks of the baptism itself, then we would make the sentence redundant (Jesus was put in the water, came up out of the water, then he went up out of the water). Certainly baptism means to go into the water and to come back up, otherwise it is a drowning not a baptism. When Matthew adds the expression, *“Went up out of the water”*, are we presumptuous in assuming that it was onto the shore that he went?

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<sup>37</sup> Matthew 3:17.

The choice of words in Matthew's account matches that of Luke's account in Acts:<sup>38</sup>

*As they traveled along the road, they came to some water and the eunuch said, "Look, here is water. Why shouldn't I be baptized?" And he gave orders to stop the chariot. Then both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water and Philip baptized him. When they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord suddenly took Philip away, and the eunuch did not see him again, but went on his way rejoicing.*

Of particular significance is the expression "they came up out of the water". Clearly, Philip himself was not baptized again. He was the one doing the baptizing. Yet both of them "came up out of the water". It can only mean that they left the water and arrived on the shore. That is the only sense in which both of them came out of the water.

In Acts, we do not suppose that "out of the water" refers to baptism. Yet in Acts, these are the same words used by Matthew to describe Jesus coming up out of the water. This is the point that Dunn also makes. Dunn notes that Matthew's reference

"could be translated simply, 'he left the water,' and is shown most clearly by Acts 8.39, where *both* Philip and the eunuch came up out of the water, and certainly Philip had not been immersing himself."<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> Acts 8:36-39

<sup>39</sup> Dunn, p.34.

In the same way Dunn concludes that Mark

does not describe the emergence above the surface of the water which follows the complete immersion; it describes rather the climbing out of the river onto the bank after the rite has been completed.<sup>40</sup>

While the Greek text may not absolutely resolve the question of where Jesus was when the Spirit came upon him, when we see how the early church interpreted this, then our conclusion is more reasonable. Luke's description and our conclusion is that Jesus was not in the water when the Spirit came upon him. Rather, he was on the shore praying.

Seldom do the early Church Fathers speak categorically to this precise point. In the other cases, we are left to assemble the meaning from the clues they leave. For example, Justin Martyr, writing in his dialogue with Typhro, seems to contrast the descent of Jesus into the river with his emergence from the river. Our main clue is that he uses similar terminology we have seen in Matthew and in Acts.

“And then, when Jesus had gone to the river Jordan, where John was baptizing, and when He had stepped into the water, a fire was kindled in the Jordan; and when He came out of the water, the Holy Ghost lighted on

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<sup>40</sup> Dunn, p. 34.

Him like a dove, [as] the apostles of this very Christ of ours wrote.”<sup>41</sup>

Justin is helpful, but we do have more direct statements. Origen indicates that the Spirit came upon Jesus after his baptism, rather than as part of it.

The Father therefore, the principal, sends the Son, but the Holy Spirit also sends Him and directs Him to go before, promising to descend, when the time comes, to the Son of God, and to work with Him for the salvation of men. This He did, when, in a bodily shape like a dove, He flew to Him after the baptism.<sup>42</sup>

Jacob of Serugh (ca. 451-521) is one who makes a categorical statement. He says that the Holy Spirit did not appear at the Jordan to sanctify the water or Jesus, but to bear witness. For Jacob, the proof of his argument is that the Spirit appeared only after Jesus ascended out of the water.<sup>43</sup> In Jacob's case we are not left to wonder. He leaves no uncertainty at all. His whole logical argument is built upon the assumption that Jesus was out of the water. It is worth noting that no one responds to Jacob by saying Jesus was in the water when the Spirit descended upon him. His conclusion is left unchallenged. If there had been a

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<sup>41</sup> Justin Martyr, "Dialogue of Justin, Philosopher and Martyr, with Trypho, a Jew." Chapter LXXXVIII. *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, Vol. 1, p. 242.

<sup>42</sup> Allan Menzies, DD, "Origen's Commentary on the Gospel of John," Book II, Chapter VI, *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, Vol. 9.

<sup>43</sup> *Homiliae Selectae Mar--Jacobi Sarugensis*, ed. Pl Bedjan, 5 Vols. (Leipzig: Harrassowitz, 1905-1910) 1.159, cited in *Theological Studies* 56 (1995) p. 212.

general belief in the early church that the Spirit event had occurred in the water, Jacob could not have advanced his argument. Reasoning backward from this conclusion, we suggest that it is following his emergence from the River that Jesus is anointed with the Spirit. Therefore we speculate that it was upon Matthew's text, "*at that moment,*" that they fixed the Spirit event on the shore, and subsequent to the baptism of John.

When Peter preached at Cornelius' house he seems to indicate that the water baptism and the Spirit event, a term which we are using for the Spirit baptism of Jesus, were two separate events. Peter preached,

*"You know what has happened throughout Judea, beginning in Galilee after the baptism that John preached - how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and power, and how he went around doing good and healing all who were under the power of the devil, because God was with him."<sup>44</sup>*

Typological evidence also suggests separation. The "washing" with water followed by the anointing with the Spirit is consistent with the Old Testament pattern for consecrating priests for ministry. There the priest was first washed, then he was anointed with oil.<sup>45</sup> It is commonly said that Jesus' baptism fulfilled "righteousness" by way of being an example for baptizing of new converts. According to this belief, the righteousness fulfilled anticipated the Scripture, "*whoever believes and is baptized will be*

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<sup>44</sup> Acts 1:37-38

<sup>45</sup> Exodus 29:4 and 7

*saved.*”<sup>46</sup> We do not have this belief by Scripture, but by logical deduction from Scripture. It may be that Jesus fulfilled the righteous requirements of the priesthood by being washed and anointed rather than in the baptism of repentance which Jesus did not need. In that case, this event could not be an “initiation” comparable to salvation, but would remain the final ceremony before entering ministry as a priest. Indeed, this is what we maintain when we say that the baptism of Jesus was a prototype of our Spirit baptism that prepares us for ministry.

Later, when we deal with the two-stage work of grace, we show that Cyril of Jerusalem viewed the water baptism followed by the anointing with the Holy Spirit as analogous to the Old Testament anointing of the High Priest.<sup>47</sup> Cyril’s understanding and commentary on the subject, drawing upon the type, is meaningless if the anointing was not subsequent to the water baptism.

Roger Stronstad has shown Luke’s continuity of expression with the Old Testament regarding the experience of the Spirit. Even Pentecost is not the first experience with the Spirit, but a continuation of charismatic encounters that reaches back into the Old Testament.<sup>48</sup>

Peter’s use of Joel, on the one hand, and Luke’s parallel between the anointing of Jesus and the Spirit baptism of the disciples,

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<sup>46</sup> Mark 16:16

<sup>47</sup> Cyril of Jerusalem. Catechetical Lecture XXI.6, Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Vol. 7, (Peabody Massachusetts: Hendrickson Publishers, 1995. Reprint of Christian Literature Publishing company, 1894.) p. 150. Also, Lecture III.5, page 15.

<sup>48</sup> Roger Stronstad. The Charismatic Theology of St. Luke, (Peabody, Mass: Hendrickson Publishers, 1984) p.53.

on the other hand, make it clear that Pentecost stands in continuity with the charismatic activity of the Spirit in Old Testament times and in the ministry of Jesus.<sup>49</sup>

In the section that compares water and Spirit baptism we will show those who believed that water baptism was a preparation for the Spirit, but not the entry of the Spirit himself. Here, let us say that Gregory Nazianzen is one who spoke of “the bridegroom’s friend, which prepared for the Lord a peculiar people and cleansed them by the water in preparation for the Spirit.”<sup>50</sup> If the water is the preparation for the Spirit, then it cannot be the Spirit himself. The preparation cannot be the thing itself, otherwise it is not the preparation, but the thing itself.

Gregory makes it clear that he does not regard water baptism as the same thing as Spirit baptism. Rather, this anointing of the Holy Spirit is something which is separate and for which a person must seek:

“...That perfecteth so as even to anticipate Baptism, yet after Baptism to be sought as a separate gift; that doeth all things that God doeth; divided into fiery tongues; dividing gifts; making Apostles, Prophets, Evangelists, Pastors, and Teachers; understanding manifold, clear, piercing, undefiled, unhindered, which is the same

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<sup>49</sup> Stronstad, p. 57.

<sup>50</sup> Gregory Nazianzen, “The Second Oration on Easter,” XXVI, Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers; Vol. 7, Philip Schaff and Henry Wace, eds., (Peabody, Mass: Hendrickson Publishers, 1995) p. 432.

thing as Most wise and varied in His actions; and making all things clear and plain; and of independent power, unchangeable, Almighty, all-seeing, penetrating all spirits that are intelligent, pure, most subtle (the Angel Hosts I think); and also all prophetic spirits and apostolic in the same manner and not in the same places; for they lived in different places; thus showing that He is uncircumscribed.”<sup>51</sup>

In another of his sermons, Gregory indicates that Jesus was not in the water when he received the Spirit. Rather, he describes Jesus, who,

goeth up out of the water...for with himself he carries up the world ...and sees the heaven opened which Adam had shut against himself and all his posterity, as the gates of Paradise by the flaming sword. And the Spirit bears witness to His Godhead, for he descends upon One that is like Him, as does the Voice from Heaven (for He to whom the witness is borne came from thence), and like a Dove, for He honors the Body (for this also was God, through its union with God) by being seen in a bodily form.<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>51</sup>Gregory Nazianzen, “On the Holy Spirit,” XXIX, Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers; vol. 7 p. 327.

<sup>52</sup>Gregory Nazianzen, “Oration on the Holy Lights,” XVI, Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers; Vol. 7, p. 358.

For Gregory, all the activity that we associate with the event at the Jordan takes place after Jesus “goes up” from the water. Then he sees heaven open. There is a clear sequence. Jesus goes up, then the heavens open. Using this terminology, there is no question as to the meaning of the words “comes up out of the water” because he does not use them. He substitutes “goes up” in its place. Here I agree with the conclusion of James Dunn.

It must be stated emphatically, that the baptism of Jesus and the descent of the Spirit are two distinct events—closely related, but distinct.<sup>53</sup>

The conclusions of these writers seems to be warranted based on the selection of details used by Luke. While Menzies notes Luke’s emphasis upon the Spirit’s anointing upon Jesus, we would prefer to see these events as occurring, first in the Jordan, and second, beside the Jordan.

Luke has Jesus receive the Spirit after his baptism, while praying. Luke is not concerned to draw connections between Jesus’ water baptism and his reception of the Spirit. Indeed, what was of central importance to Luke was not Jesus’ baptism, rather, his reception of the Spirit, occasioned by prayer. For this reason Luke has transformed an account of Jesus’ baptism

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<sup>53</sup> Dunn, p. 35.

into an account of Jesus' reception of the Spirit.<sup>54</sup>

## **The Baptism of Jesus as a theological model for believers**

The baptism of Jesus was the model for the early church, at least in several branches of the church. In the Syriac tradition, one of the oldest, this took on some interesting aspects. "From the beginning the paradigm at Antioch was the baptism of Jesus when he was anointed with the Spirit and proclaimed Son of God."<sup>55</sup>

Keilian McDonnell suggests that "Only at this rather late date (4<sup>th</sup> century) did people note that the Spirit comes down on Jesus only *after* he emerges from the water."<sup>56</sup> The fact is this was the understanding well before the 4th century. The rituals associated with water baptism, and the anointings that followed it, give clear evidence that the early church understood that the Spirit came upon Jesus after his emergence from the water. It was the understanding from the beginning. Particularly when you study Tertullian do you see this. McDonnell himself admits that what Tertullian wrote reflected traditions much older than himself. Tertullian writes at the end of the

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<sup>54</sup> Menzies, Part II, Chpt.8, Section 1.2, Empowered for Witness, (Sheffield, England: Sheffield Academic Press, 1994), P.134. In a footnote he adds "In view of the change in the tenses of the participles (aorist participle to present participle, my translation reads: 'After all the people and Jesus had been baptized, while he was praying...'

<sup>55</sup> Kelian McDonnell and George T. Montague. Christian Initiation and Baptism in the Holy Spirit. Evidences from the First Eight Centuries (Collegeville, Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 1991) p. 231.

<sup>56</sup> McDonnell, p. 231.

second century about traditions that were already of some antiquity.

Indeed, the early Christians of the Syriac and Armenian traditions, place the greatest emphasis on the baptism of Jesus precisely as our model for the descent of the Spirit:

If one is tracing the beginnings of Spirit-Christology it will be found in the baptism of Jesus.

What is significant in this creed is that the prototype of Christians baptism is the baptism of Jesus at the Jordan. The greatest theological weight was attached to this mystery. As Jesus received the Spirit at his baptism in the Jordan, we receive the Spirit at ours. At the Jordan the epiphany of the Spirit had as its function to identify and proclaim that Jesus is the one sent from the Father. This very ancient creed not only safeguards the pneumatological content of Christian baptism, but retains a Trinitarian dynamic.<sup>57</sup>

We want to remember that McDonnell writes from the theological viewpoint of a Catholic. They believe that water baptism is the moment of salvation and the moment at which the baptism of the Holy Spirit actually occurs. It is particularly significant, then that he acknowledges the separation, even though he tries to keep them together. In his conclusion he first admits the separation, then argues to put them back together. He writes:

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<sup>57</sup> McDonnell, p. 232-233.

The Spirit descends on Jesus upon or after his coming out of the water, not during his submersion in it. The sequence is noted by all the Synoptics. On the one hand this indicates that the Spirit comes on Jesus as a sovereign intervention of God (the heavens are opened) and not just because Jesus received the baptism of John. On the other hand, the descent of the Spirit is immediate (even Luke considers it part of the baptism story). Consequently, when Jesus' Jordan baptism becomes the icon for Christian initiation (Christian baptism being modeled on Jesus' baptism rather than John's baptism), the gift of the Spirit must be integral to the initiation rite. The post-biblical theology, especially in the East, would distinguish two moments but it considered them inseparable--immersion into the water (seen as a union with Christ) and gift of the Spirit.<sup>58</sup>

In the end, McDonnell comes to the same conclusion that I do. He says, "As Jesus begins his public ministry with an imparting of the charisms, so must also ours."<sup>59</sup> For McDonnell, the baptism of Jesus is a prototype for us.

It is quite clear that the ancients such as Cyril regarded the baptism of Jesus as a prototype of our experiences and

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<sup>58</sup> McDonnell, p. 316.

<sup>59</sup> McDonnell, p. 152.

that they saw the Spirit baptism of Jesus as the moment when his ministry began.

Jesus Christ was the Son of God, yet He preached not the Gospel before His Baptism. If the Master Himself followed the right time in due order, ought we, His servants, to venture out of order? *From that time Jesus began to preach, when the Holy Spirit had descended upon Him in a bodily shape, like a dove; ...If thou too hast unfeigned piety, the Holy Ghost cometh down on thee also, and a Father's voice sounds over thee from on high-not, "This is My Son," but, "This has now been made My son.*<sup>60</sup>

“If thou too...” is evidence that Cyril viewed the baptism of Jesus as a suitable analogy for his use. Cyril, in another place, indicates that the baptism of Jesus had an effect upon those who were to be baptized. Jesus received grace in his baptism. In the same way and because of what Jesus did, the newly baptized can expect to receive the grace that we call the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

. . .He shed forth blood and water; that men, living in times of peace, might be baptized in water, and, in times of persecution, in their own blood. . . . He was baptized, that He

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<sup>60</sup>Cyril of Jerusalem, “Catechetical Lectures, Lecture III.14,” Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers; vol. 7, p. 17.

might give to them that are baptized a divine and excellent grace.<sup>61</sup>

Hilary, a contemporary of Cyril, takes the same view that the baptism of Jesus is an analogy for our experience. We have noted elsewhere that Hilary viewed the baptism of Jesus as the time of his charismatic empowering. We will add here that he tied the imparting of charisms to being baptized in the Holy Spirit. Further, he sees a distinction between water baptism and Spirit baptism when he writes of “the sacraments of baptism and of the Spirit.”<sup>62</sup> Hilary again draws the analogy between the baptism of Jesus and of Christian believers.<sup>63</sup> Like Jesus, we receive the gifts of the Spirit when we are baptized in the Holy Spirit. Even Dunn agrees that it was “this anointing with the Spirit which equipped Jesus with power and authority for his mission to follow.”<sup>64</sup>

We have more than a casual interest in when the baptism of the Holy Spirit occurs. If the baptism of the Holy Spirit occurs in salvation, and the gifts of the Spirit flow from salvation, then for every saved person, they possess the gifts at that moment and maybe the gifts they then possess are all the gifts they will ever possess. For most people that hardly seems adequate. On the other hand, if the baptism of the Holy Spirit occurs at some time after salvation, and the spiritual gifts follow, then we can anticipate a greater exercise in spiritual gifts later on.

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<sup>61</sup>Cyril, “Catechetical Lectures, Lecture III.11,” Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers; vol. 7 Philip Schaff and Henry Wace, eds., (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson Publishers, 1995) 16.

<sup>62</sup> Hilary, “On Matthew,” 4:27, cited in McDonnell, p. 143.

<sup>63</sup> Hilary, “On Matthew,” 2:6, cited in McDonnell, p. 142.

<sup>64</sup> Dunn, p24.

We do believe that spiritual gifts follow the baptism of the Holy Spirit. On this point, the baptism of Jesus is critical. Only after his anointing with the Spirit does he go out into ministry with signs, wonders, and miracles. Origen notes that Jesus received the charism of wisdom at his baptism.<sup>65</sup> Lactantius says that after being anointed by the Spirit, “from that time on” Jesus does the miracles associated with his ministry.<sup>66</sup> In the same way that the early church saw Jesus receiving the gifts of the Spirit at his Spirit baptism, we see that it will be the same for us. We will go out from Spirit baptism proclaiming the Gospel and seeing salvation confirmed with signs, wonders, miracles, and gifts of the Spirit.

*This salvation, which was first announced by the Lord, was confirmed to us by those who heard him. God also testified to it by signs, wonders and various miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit distributed according to his will.<sup>67</sup>*

The Church Fathers understood the charismatic empowering associated with the baptism of Jesus. This McDonnell readily acknowledges:

This charismatic empowering is implicit already in the New Testament in the modeling of Christian initiation upon Jesus’ baptism, which was an anointing for the

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<sup>65</sup> Origen, “Against Celsus,” 1:44, cited in McDonnell, p. 128.

<sup>66</sup> Lactantius, “The Divine Institutes”, Book IV, chapter XV. Ante-Nicene Fathers, Vol. 7, p. 117.

<sup>67</sup> Hebrews 2:3-4.

ministry of the kingdom. It becomes explicit in Acts, in Paul, and increasingly so in Tertullian, Hilary, and Cyril. Paul's exhortation to seek the spiritual gifts (1 Cor. 14:1) is picked up by Tertullian and Cyril in their baptismal exhortations to seek and expect the charisms, and in Hilary's urging the faithful to use them.<sup>68</sup>

For John of Apamea one must 'perfectly possess in oneself the power of holy baptism,' then one will be 'adorned with all the divine gifts.' Further, he places this empowerment through the actualized baptism in contrast to Jesus' life before the Jordan experience. Just as Jesus manifested himself in 'signs and wonders' only after his baptism, so the charisms manifest themselves only after one has perfectly possessed the power of baptism.<sup>69</sup>

Our principal point of disagreement is to note that these things are not truly related to water baptism, but to the baptism of the Holy Spirit. John of Apamea's ideas form the core of what McDonnell recommends for Catholic Christians. McDonnell wants Catholics to pray for the actualization of the gifts that they received in infant baptism. As adults, when they begin to speak in tongues, they are "actualizing" the baptism of the Holy Spirit

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<sup>68</sup> McDonnell, p. 323.

<sup>69</sup> McDonnell, p. 323.

received in salvation. The practical result is the same, but the theology is not.

Some today question the significance of Jesus' anointing. Particularly, Lederle departs from the views of the early church and objects to the connection of the Spirit event of Jesus with the subsequent signs and wonders that he performed. But Peter was not so reluctant. Peter tied the two together as though one flowed from the other.<sup>70</sup> Similarly, in Acts 4, when the disciples wanted to be able to speak the Word boldly, and when they wanted God to stretch out his hand to heal and perform miraculous signs and wonders, they prayed to God who responded by filling them with the Holy Spirit once again.<sup>71</sup> Luke wants us to see that when God wants his Word spoken boldly and when signs and wonders are to occur, it happens after people are filled with the Holy Spirit.

Luke's Gospel relates the water baptism of Jesus to the water baptism of the rest of the people. "*When all the people were being baptized, Jesus was baptized too.*" Luke then indicates that Jesus was praying when the Spirit event occurred. Luke does not relate the Spirit event to the water baptism but rather, attaches it to the praying of Jesus.

We are arguing for subsequence, that Spirit baptism is subsequent to salvation. We should note that Luke's

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<sup>70</sup> Acts 10:37-38 "You know what has happened throughout Judea, beginning in Galilee after the baptism that John preached--how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and power, and how he went around doing good and healing all who were under the power of the devil, because God was with him.

<sup>71</sup> Acts 4:29-31. "Now, Lord, consider their threats and enable your servants to speak your word with great boldness. Stretch out your hand to heal and perform miraculous signs and wonders through the name of your holy servant Jesus." After they prayed, the place where they were meeting was shaken. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God boldly.

account does nothing to dissuade us from our belief. Instead, the way Luke separates the water baptism from the Spirit event encourages us to see an indication of a subsequent event to water baptism. Tertullian follows Luke's emphasis in suggesting to those newly baptized to pray for their inheritance, the distributed charisms.

Even if we should fail to prove that the anointing of the Holy Spirit was subsequent to his baptism in water, the anointing was clearly subsequent to the entrance of the Holy Spirit into the physical life of Jesus. In reality, our point of subsequence is proved both ways. Given the separation that Matthew and Luke do show, others definitely cannot use it to argue that salvation and/or water baptism are the same as Spirit baptism since Jesus was not being initiated into anything except his public ministry.

We have said the "unique role of Jesus in salvation history" is unrelated to the question of the usefulness of the analogy of his Spirit event to that of the believers "baptism in the Holy Spirit." To argue otherwise would require that Jesus not be used as a model or example for our lives. If Scripture uses Jesus as an analogy, and if the church fathers use him that way as well, are we taking something away from the uniqueness of Jesus by noting the parallel of his Spirit event with ours? But can we use Jesus' example to predict our own experiences?

The writer of Hebrews is not hesitant to use the parallels of the believers' trials with those of Jesus. "*Consider him who endured such opposition from sinful men, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.*"<sup>72</sup>

The Apostle Paul notes that we are "*Built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets with Christ Jesus*

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<sup>72</sup> Hebrews 12:3.

*himself as the chief cornerstone.*”<sup>73</sup> Paul indicates that the Church is built not just upon the apostles and prophets, but in the same way, upon Christ himself. Is the church only built on his sacrifice and not his example?

Jesus himself urges each of his followers to “*take his cross and follow me...*”<sup>74</sup> Jesus relates the cross he will bear with the cross that his followers must carry. We don’t hear Dunn and Fee objecting that Jesus should not use the analogy of his unique role in salvation history as the one who bears the cross. Jesus uses the analogy of the cross, even though it is a unique moment in salvation history. But when Pentecostals try to use the analogy of Jesus’ anointing, we suddenly do not appreciate Jesus’ unique role in salvation history. If we Pentecostals are hermeneutically ignorant for breaking the rule regarding analogies, at least we are in the excellent company of the most important figures of the ancient church.

Cyril of Jerusalem, blissfully ignorant of Dunn and Fee, is quite willing to compare the baptism of Jesus in the Jordan with that of the believers:

He washed in the river Jordan, and having imparted of the fragrance of His Godhead to the waters, He came up from them; and the Holy Ghost in the fullness of His being lighted on Him, like resting upon like. And to you in like manner, after you had come up from the pool of the sacred streams, there was given an Unction, the anti-type of what wherewith Christ was anointed; and this is

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<sup>73</sup> Ephesians 2:20.

<sup>74</sup> Matt 10:38.

the Holy Ghost; of whom also the blessed Esaias, in his prophecy respecting Him, said in the person of the Lord, *The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me. Because He hath anointed Me: He hath sent Me to preach glad tidings to the poor.*<sup>75</sup>

It seems to me that the burden of proof is upon Dunn, Fee, and Lederle, and those of their persuasion, to show that we cannot build upon the life and experience of Jesus to anticipate our own experiences. It is not sufficient for them to simply assert, in light of the acceptance of it in the early church, that the analogy cannot be used. They must show why the early church was wrong to include it and why they are right to exclude it. Lederle seems to recognize the burden and suggests that the reason we cannot use the analogy of his Spirit event is because we do not carry over every aspect of the Life of Jesus and make it normative:

Neo-Pentecostals take some elements in Jesus' life as normative for his followers while others are passed by, e.g. the fact that he remained unmarried, was circumcised, or that he waited until his thirtieth year before starting his ministry.<sup>76</sup>

But Lederle is not convincing in this argument. He knows full well that circumcision was a sign of the Jewish covenant and that it was not binding upon Gentiles. Further, the age of thirty was usual for beginning the

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<sup>75</sup> Cyril, Lecture XXI.1, (On the Mysteries III. On Chrism) p. 149.

<sup>76</sup> Lederle, p.58.

priesthood, but was not slavishly adhered to, with even the age of twenty accepted at times in Jewish history.<sup>77</sup> Clearly, the age of thirty was the age Jesus chose for maximum acceptance but was not intended to be normative or Jesus would have corrected the age adaptation in Biblical history. His choice of remaining single was also an option, but equally clearly not the norm of creation or Biblical history, as indicated by Paul not using Lederle's line of thinking in 1 Corinthians 7 when he addresses the topic of marriage.

We will be well served to recall the Gospel of John's perspective on the Spirit event by the Jordan. The Apostle John completely leaves out the baptism by John. There is no mention of it at all. Rather, he emphasizes the Spirit coming down:

*I saw the Spirit come down from Heaven as a dove and remain on him. I would not have known him, except that the one who sent me to baptize with water told me, 'the man on whom you see the Spirit come down and remain is he who will baptize with the Holy Spirit.'*<sup>78</sup>

If we were to consider the Apostle John's emphasis, which leaves out the water baptism, we would have to conclude that the Spirit event was the central event. Further, God had spoken to the Baptist that he would see the Spirit come down and remain on Jesus. John's emphasis is also Luke's. Luke interprets the central event of the Jordan experience as the encounter with the Spirit: "*Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan,*

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<sup>77</sup> I Chronicles 23:24-27.

<sup>78</sup> John 1:32-33.

*and was led by the Spirit into the desert...*<sup>79</sup> Again, later in the chapter, Luke indicates that Jesus “*returned to Galilee in the power of the Spirit...*”<sup>80</sup> Luke also lets us hear Jesus giving his own understanding of what had happened when Jesus read in the synagogue “*The Spirit of the Lord is on me...*”<sup>81</sup> The Apostle John joins Luke in emphasizing the anointing of the Spirit as the definitive act from the Jordan, rather than his baptism in water.

Pentecostals have no difficulty accepting the Apostle John’s account, since Jesus’ experience is akin to our own. We have already noted that Jesus had a significant relationship with the Holy Spirit prior to the moment of the Spirit event. No one would try to refute that. Yet here we have the Spirit coming down on him in a definitive act.

Was this just window dressing, or a divine show to convince John that Jesus was the Messiah? Were they seeing theatrics for popular consumption, or was this a real event? Did the Spirit really come upon Jesus in some new way?

When we consider Isaiah 42 with its vision of a coming Messiah, we are struck by the similarities with the scene from Jordan’s bank. “*Here is my servant, whom I uphold my chosen one in whom I delight: I will put my Spirit on him and he will bring justice to the nations.*”<sup>82</sup> The voice from heaven and the voice of the Old Testament prophet sound remarkably alike. The prophet indicates that God would put his Spirit on him, and that is what happened as Jesus prayed following being baptized by John.

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<sup>79</sup> Luke 4:1

<sup>80</sup> Luke 4:14

<sup>81</sup> Luke 4:18

<sup>82</sup> Isaiah 42:1.

In the same way, God has promised his Holy Spirit to us, not just in salvation, but as equipping for ministry. It happened to Jesus, and we accept it as an illustration of what God wants to do in the life of each individual believer. Across the centuries, and across the empire, the early church frequently expresses the belief that the baptism of Jesus is a model for Christian experience. It is an analogy of our Pentecostal experience.



## **The Analogy of the Disciples’ Baptism in the Holy Spirit**

In this chapter, I want to show that the analogy of the disciples’ experience is also parallel to our Pentecostal experience. The experience of the disciples shaped their doctrine and it should shape ours. Indeed, what happened with regard to the baptism of the Holy Spirit among the disciples was used in the early church as the model for what others should expect to experience. In showing this, I will assert that those who have abandoned analogies used by the early church have come to wrong conclusions about the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

Gordon Fee, among others, denies the applicability of the Easter night/Pentecost Sunday experiences of the disciples with our encounter with God in salvation, followed by the baptism of the Holy Spirit. In his view “the uniqueness of the event of Pentecost in salvation history, not to mention the exegetical difficulties of demonstrating that John 20:22 refers to a regenerative experience makes the analogy equally tenuous...”

J. I. Packer, Fee’s fellow Professor at Regent College, calls John 20:22 a “problem text.” For him, Jesus made the believers clean during his ministry (before the cross!) “Believers were regenerated, then, during Jesus’ three

years of ministry, including eleven out of Jesus' chosen twelve."<sup>83</sup> Therefore, this could not have been their moment of New Testament conversion. But the implications of this with regard to the meaning of the cross are enormous. He further thinks the Spirit could not be given until Jesus was glorified. So for him, the in-breathing is a kind of commissioning. McDonnell would disagree with Packer when he points out that "the word *receive* is a traditional expression for the initial gift of the Spirit."<sup>84</sup> McDonnell follows Origen who said, "...in the Gospel of John the Savior having given the Holy Spirit unto the disciples by breathing upon them said, "Receive you the Holy Spirit,"..."<sup>85</sup>

Packer says "The only reason why the first disciples had to be taken through a two-stage, two-level pattern of experience was that they became believers before Pentecost."<sup>86</sup> Fee must have a problem with Packer's view. Fee sees the gifts occurring as part of salvation that is the "empowerment for life, with openness to gifts and the miraculous."<sup>87</sup> But if the disciples were really all that Luke describes, "*Then they worshipped him and returned to Jerusalem with great joy. And they stayed continually at*

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<sup>83</sup> J. I. Packer. Keep in Step with the Spirit. (Tarrytown, New York: Chosen Books, 1984) p. 87.

<sup>84</sup> Kelian McDonnell and George T. Montague. Christian Initiation and Baptism in the Holy Spirit, Evidence from the First Eight Centuries. (Collegeville, Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 1991), p. 58. The footnote on this section says to see the extensive references given in Burge, *Anointed Community*, 126.

<sup>85</sup> John Patrick, D.D., "Origen's Commentary on the Gospel of Matthew," Book XII, Chapter XI, Ante-Nicene Fathers, Vol. 9.

<sup>86</sup> Packer, p 91.

<sup>87</sup> Fee, p. 117.

*the temple, praising God,*”<sup>88</sup> then what did they need further with Pentecost?

Dunn sees the comparison of the in-breathed spirit on Resurrection night with the creation of life within man. Even though he will reject the experience as normative, or as supporting the idea of subsequence for anyone other than the disciples, he does acknowledge the merit of thinking of this as the moment of salvation.

It is the word used in Genesis 2.7, Ezekiel 37.9, and Wisdom 15.11 to describe the creation of man—the divine breath that brings life to what was otherwise a corpse. In other words, John presents the act of Jesus as a new creation: Jesus is the author of the new creations as he was of the old. If Pentecostals look for the moment when the apostles became regenerate they can find it only here and not before—only then was the spiritual life (breath) of the new creation communicated to them.<sup>89</sup>

With Fee and Packer, however, their views are different from those of the early church. Several of the most important early church fathers refute Fee and Packer’s interpretation. We will come to them shortly.

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<sup>88</sup> Luke 24:52-53.

<sup>89</sup> Dunn, p. 180.

## The Grace of the Spirit

When modern Pentecostals read the Church Fathers for their views on the gifts and work of the Spirit, the first reading would suggest that it was not a topic in which they showed much interest. This supposed lack of interest has two explanations.

First, when the church in the early centuries debated issues relating to the Holy Spirit they were not over gifts of the Spirit, but over the nature of the Holy Spirit. Mostly, they spent their energy defending the Holy Spirit as a member of the Trinity. Their works defined the nature of the Spirit and the relationship of the Spirit to the Father and to the Son.

Secondly, their terminology for the gifts of the Spirit is different from what is commonly used in contemporary Protestant and Pentecostal literature. We talk of “gifts”, they talked of “grace”. For them, the gifts of the Spirit are called “grace of the Spirit.”

*Then Peter and John placed their hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit. When Simon saw that the Spirit was given at the laying on of the apostles' hands, he offered them money and said, "Give me also this ability so that everyone on whom I lay my hands may receive the Holy Spirit.*

*Peter answered: "May your money perish with you, because you thought you could buy the gift of God with money!"<sup>90</sup>*

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<sup>90</sup> Acts 8:17-20

When Cyril of Jerusalem summarized this same event he said it like this:

Thy money perish with thee, because thou has thought to purchase the gift<sup>91</sup> of God with money ; for thou art a second Judas, for expecting to buy the grace of the Spirit with money.<sup>92</sup>

In another of his lectures he uses similar terminology to describe the incident:

Peter came, and the Spirit was poured out upon them that believed, and they spake with other tongues, and prophesied: and after the grace of the Spirit the Scripture saith that Peter *commanded them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ*: in order that, the soul having been born again by faith, the body also might by the water partake of the grace.<sup>93</sup>

This adjusted expression has continued down through the Church. In Roman Catholic reference, for example, the gifts of the Spirit are called the grace of the Spirit, following the lead of Cyril. Once you understand that “grace of the Spirit” speaks of the work of the Holy Spirit

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<sup>91</sup> *dorea*

<sup>92</sup> Cyril of Jerusalem. Catechetical Lecture XVI.10, Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Vol. 7, (Peabody Massachusetts: Hendrickson Publishers, 1995. Reprint of Christian Literature Publishing company, 1894.) p. 117.

<sup>93</sup> Cyril “Catechetical Lectures, Lecture III.4,” Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers; vol. 7, p. 15.

through believers, what we call “gifts”, then references abound.

### **Hippolytus believed the disciples received the Holy Spirit on Easter night.**

The views of Hippolytus on this subject are very important because of the early date that he lived. He lived between 170 and 236 AD. Not only is he early, but he is the disciple of Irenaeus. We are only three generations from the Apostle John, one of those who actually received the Spirit on that Easter night. Hippolytus is describing the unique Christ:

This (is He who) breathes upon the disciples, and gives them the Spirit, and comes in among them when the doors are shut, and is taken up by a cloud into the heavens while the disciples gaze at Him, and is set down on the right hand of the Father, and comes again as Judge of the living and the dead.<sup>94</sup>

From the context, there is no mistaking the time period. This is the resurrected Christ. Furthermore, Jesus gives them the Spirit. This is not a promise of the Spirit. Nor does Hippolytus know anything of a commissioning for future service, as Packer would have us believe. Hippolytus is quite plain that Jesus here gives them the Spirit. Packer says they did not receive the Spirit and Fee says it does not

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<sup>94</sup> Hippolytus, “Against the Heresy of One Noetus” Ante-Nicene Fathers, Vol. 5, p. 231.

matter since it is a unique event, but this important church father is plain enough on the subject.

When Hippolytus speaks in this way, he may be following the lead of the liturgy of St. Mark. Certainly he is in step with the view contained in that liturgy of which portions date before AD 200.<sup>95</sup> In the liturgy, a prayer at the very beginning asks the Holy Spirit to come upon those who will be leading the service in the same way that the Holy Spirit came upon the disciples on Easter night.

O Sovereign Lord our God, who ...has  
breathed upon their faces and said unto  
them, Receive the Holy Spirit the  
Comforter...breathe also thy Holy Spirit  
upon us thy servants, who, standing around,  
are about to enter on thy holy service...<sup>96</sup>

The prayer also notes that the disciples healed the sick and forgave sins. Since the liturgist was going to be engaged in the same sort of work, they needed the same spiritual aid. This liturgy is another evidence that some in the early church looked upon the Easter night experience as where the disciples received the enabling for their work. What is without question is that the liturgy viewed what happened to the disciples as analogous to what these later believers were to experience. It should be noted again that an adopted liturgy has considerably more theological force than even the writings of some important father. A liturgy represented the collected practice and belief within the church. If the Assemblies of God relies upon the analogy of

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<sup>95</sup> Per Neale cited earlier.

<sup>96</sup> "The Divine Liturgy of the Holy Apostle and Evangelist Mark, the Disciple of the Holy Peter" Ante-Nicene Fathers, Vol. 7, p. 552.

the disciples experience as we pray to receive the empowering of the Holy Spirit for our ministry, at least we would not have been alone in the early church. Indeed, it is not we who would be alone, but Fee.

Hippolytus and the liturgy of St. Mark are joined by an anonymous monk or Bishop in the fourth century:

Moreover, our Lord after His resurrection, when He had breathed upon His apostles, and had said to them, 'Receive ye the Holy Ghost,' thus and thus only bestowed upon them the Spirit.<sup>97</sup>

When Cyprian describes his conversion experience he says, "...by the agency of the Spirit, breathed from heaven, a second birth had restored me to a new man."<sup>98</sup> Unlike Fee, Cyprian uses the analogy of the disciples' experience to describe his own. He is born again by the in-breathed Spirit from heaven.

Cyprian argues that the disciples received the Holy Spirit on Easter night so they could forgive sins (in baptism). "...he alone can baptize and give remission of sins who has the Holy Spirit."<sup>99</sup> For Cyprian, if they had not received the Holy Spirit, they would not have been in a position to carry out the assignment Jesus gave them that night. This is also the position of St. Mark's liturgy. We might not precisely agree with their conclusion, but there can be no doubt that Cyprian and others believed that the

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<sup>97</sup> "A Treatise on Re-Baptism by an Anonymous Writer." Ante-Nicene Fathers, Vol. 5, p. 669.

<sup>98</sup> Cyprian, "The Epistles of Cyprian" Epistle LXIX.2, Ante-Nicene Fathers, Vol. 5, p. 276 Cyprian lived between 200 and 258 AD.

<sup>99</sup> Cyprian. p. 400.

disciples received the Holy Spirit that Easter night. Of course, it goes without saying that they were to receive some other dimension of the Spirit on Pentecost.

The view of Lactantius is similar. For him, the disciples not only received the Spirit, they actually received the charismatic empowering that Easter night. Certainly, if they received the gift of miracles, they received the Holy Spirit Himself.

...having arranged for the preaching of the Gospel throughout the whole world, He breathed into them the Holy Spirit, and gave them the power of working miracles, that they might act for the welfare of men as well by deeds as by words; and then at length, on the fortieth day, He returned to His Father, being carried up into a cloud.<sup>100</sup>

Gregory Nazianzen identifies three phases of encounter with the Holy Spirit. These are during the ministry of Jesus, at the in-breathing, and at Pentecost. His argument follows the same logic as Cyprian. If the disciples did miracles, they must have had the Holy Spirit since only the Spirit can give such power. There is no doubt that he believed the disciples received the in-breathing of the Spirit on Easter night.

...the disciples of Christ...(received the Holy Spirit) in three ways, as they were able to receive him, and on three occasions; before

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<sup>100</sup> Lactantius, "The Epitome of the Divine Institutes." Chapter XLVII. Ante-Nicene Fathers, Vol. 7. p. 241.

Christ was glorified by the passion, and after he was glorified by the Resurrection; and after His ascension...to heaven. Now the first of these manifest Him—the healing of the sick and casting out of evil spirits, which could not be apart from the Spirit; and so does that breathing upon them after the Resurrection, which we are now commemorating.<sup>101</sup>

Furthermore, Gregory viewed each of these experiences as progressive. The second was more than the first, and the third was more than the second. In another of his sermons he shows that it was progressive and each one was more substantial than the next.

. . . by gradual additions, and, as David says, Goings up, and advances and progress from glory to glory, the Light of the Trinity might shine upon the more illuminated. For this reason it was, I think, that He *gradually* came to dwell in the Disciples, measuring Himself out to them according to their capacity to receive Him, at the beginning of the Gospel, after the Passion, after the Ascension, making perfect their powers, being breathed upon them, and appearing in fiery tongues.<sup>102</sup>

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<sup>101</sup> “Gregory Nazianzen, On Pentecost,” Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers; vol. 7, p. 382-383.

<sup>102</sup> Philip Schaff and Henry Wace, eds., “Gregory Nazianzen, On the Holy Spirit,” Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers; vol. 7 (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson Publishers, 1995) 326.

No doubt it is upon Hippolytus, Cyprian, St. Mark's liturgy, and Lactantius, as well as the Scripture, that Cyril relies when he comes to his conclusions. Gregory and Cyril share common views but Cyril brings these previous streams of thinking together in a distinctive way.

### **Cyril of Jerusalem sees the In-breathed Spirit as less bountiful than the out-poured spirit.**

It is worth noting the literary style of the early writers. In the quotation that follows, Cyril puts words into the mouth of Jesus which do not come from any biblical text we now have. This is a common technique among the ancients. It is like an Amplified Version of the Bible. That is, he adds words that further clarify the meaning.

This is very valuable, because the additional words provide a commentary on the biblical text itself. The additional words give us Cyril's understanding of what Jesus was actually saying. Unlike Packer, for Cyril, there is no doubt that the Disciples received the Holy Spirit on Easter night. Nor is there any doubt in his mind that what they received there was less than what they, and others, would receive fifty days later:

...the Gospel relates, that after his resurrection He breathed on them. But though **He bestowed His grace** then, He was to lavish it yet more bountifully; and He says to them, 'I am ready to give it even now, but the vessel cannot yet hold it; for a while therefore receive ye **as much grace as ye can bear**; and look forward for **yet**

**more**; but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be **clothed** with power from on high. **Receive it in part now**; then, ye shall wear it in its fullness. For he who receives, often possesses the gift but **in part**; but he who is clothed, is, **completely** enfolded by his robe (emphasis mine).<sup>103</sup>

Later in the same section, Cyril leaves the words of Christ and summarizes what took place using his own words. Notice that he compares the fullness of what takes place at Pentecost with the partiality of what took place that first Sunday night. For him, both events were the work of the Holy Spirit. It was just a matter of degree.

But He came down to clothe the apostles with power, and to baptize them; for the Lord says, ‘Ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence. **This grace was not in part**, but His power was **in full perfection**; for as he who plunges into the waters and is baptized is encompassed on all sides by the waters, so were they also baptized completely by the Holy Ghost. The water however flows round the outside only, but the Spirit baptizes also the soul within, and that completely (emphasis mine).<sup>104</sup>

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<sup>103</sup> Cyril of Jerusalem. Catechetical Lecture XVII.12, p. 127.

<sup>104</sup> Cyril, XVII.14, p. 127.

I want to be careful to point out that Assembly of God doctrine does not follow Cyril on the “in part” versus “completely” division. Our doctrine is that the Holy Spirit is received fully at the moment of salvation. Indeed, it is the very definition of salvation: “*And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Christ.*”<sup>105</sup> However, the work of the Holy Spirit in salvation is not the same work as the Holy Spirit in the Baptism with the Holy Spirit. Cyril’s interpretation of the biblical text is clearly supportive of the Pentecostal interpretation even if he does not seem to distinguish between the nature of the two works. Rather, he sees the Spirit doing a partial work at first, which is finished in Spirit Baptism. Even if Cyril lacks the precision of Pentecostal doctrine today, he is in step with the Pentecostal way of thinking about the work of the Spirit. His views stand in sharp contrast to Packer and Dunn, and to those who believe that Baptism of the Spirit is the same as the work of the Spirit in salvation.

***Not only does Cyril notice the two-phased work in the Scripture, but also he expects that the work will be two-phased for those he is about to baptize.***

Here Cyril stands in contrast to Fee. Fee sees no analogy between what happened to the disciples and what happens to us. The disciples were unique, so the analogy must be dismissed. But Cyril finds the disciples a perfect example of what he hopes for with his students. He doesn’t describe this scene to his students who are about to undergo baptism and have hands laid upon them for no reason. He

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<sup>105</sup> Romans 8:9

fully expects that the historical-theological intent of Luke's record will be repeated again.

Cyril described the procedure for those preparing to be baptized in water. They were first anointed with oil. Then they were baptized. Then, later, they were to receive the anointing of the Holy Spirit.

Then, when you were stripped, you were anointed with exorcised oil, from the very hairs of your head to your feet, and were made partakers of the good olive-tree, Jesus Christ.<sup>106</sup>

Cyril then says:

After these things, you were led to the holy pool of Divine Baptism, as Christ was carried from the Cross to the Sepulcher which is before our eyes.<sup>107</sup>

His procedures of two-phases of anointing speak of an understanding of the two-phased work of the Spirit. The anointing with oil, we would understand as the Holy Spirit received in salvation. It is the Holy Spirit in salvation that drives out the devil from our lives. Then we are baptized in water. Following salvation we may receive the anointing of the Holy Spirit. This procedure was not something invented by Cyril. Rather, it is the echo of a long-standing doctrine and practice. The Spirit in Salvation is not of the same degree as the Spirit in Spirit baptism.

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<sup>106</sup> Cyril, Lecture XX (on the mysteries, II.) p. 147.

<sup>107</sup> Cyril, XX.4, p. 147.

Are we right in concluding that the anointing with oil after baptism should be considered to be the baptism of the Holy Spirit? We are arguing for subsequence here, so it becomes an important question. We know that Chrysostom viewed the oil as based upon the Spirit baptism of Jesus. "...the Spirit is the chief point in the unction, and that for which the oil is used."<sup>108</sup> The procedures of Cyril are in the middle of the fourth century, but he did not invent them. So we rely upon those earlier than Cyril to define the procedures. Origen is very clear how he views the oil of gladness. Because he relates the oil of gladness to Jesus, then he must be relating the filling of the Holy Spirit to Jesus. In doing so, he ties the believers' oil of anointing with that of Jesus.

... Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated wickedness: therefore God, thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows." As a reward for its love, then, it is anointed with the oil of gladness; i.e., the soul of Christ along with the Word of God is made Christ. Because to be anointed with the oil of gladness means nothing else than to be filled with the Holy Spirit.<sup>109</sup>

Origen sees miracles and other gifts of the Spirit going on around him. When he thinks about these gifts, he relates them to the dove that earlier descended upon Jesus and to

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<sup>108</sup> Chrysostom, Homily I, The Epistle to the Romans, NPNF, Vol. 11. P. 338.

<sup>109</sup> Origen, "Origen De Principiis, Book 2", *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, Alexander Roberts, and James Donaldson, eds., (Peabody, Massachusetts, Hendrickson Publishers, 1994), Vol.4, pg. 283

the miracles of the disciples. His comments indicate that he viewed the empowering of Jesus and the disciples as analogous and precedent setting, to those demonstrating gifts around him. Acts was normative.

And I shall refer not only to His miracles, but, as is proper, to those also of the apostles of Jesus. For they could not without the help of miracles and wonders have prevailed on those who heard their new doctrines and new teachings to abandon their national usages, and to accept their instructions at the danger to themselves even of death. And there are still preserved among Christians traces of that Holy Spirit which appeared in the form of a dove. They expel evil spirits, and perform many cures, and foresee certain events, according to the will of the Logos.

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In another place, while discussing why gifts were diminishing, Origen very explicitly connects the anointing of Jesus, and the Pentecost day outpouring which followed the ascension, with the present activity of the gifts of the Spirit in his era.

Moreover, the Holy Spirit gave signs of His presence at the beginning of Christ's ministry, and after His ascension He gave still more; but since that time these signs

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<sup>110</sup> Origen, "Origen Against Celsus, Book 1", *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, Alexander Roberts, and James Donaldson, eds., (Peabody, Massachusetts, Hendrickson Publishers, 1994), Vol.4, pg. 415

have diminished, although there are still traces of His presence in a few who have had their souls purified by the Gospel, and their actions regulated by its influence. “*For the Holy Spirit of discipline will flee deceit, and remove from thoughts that are without understanding.*”<sup>111</sup>

This is a theme to which Origen returns again and again. What he hopes to see repeated is Pentecost. He wants his disciples to experience the rushing mighty wind and the tongues of fire. He wants all that the early disciples had at Pentecost because for Origen the disciples were the analogy for later Christian experience. The historical precedent of Acts 2 still spoke to him those centuries later just like it still speaks to me. I could walk into the pulpit this Sunday and preach this. But if historical precedent cannot be used for doctrine, why should I? Without the doctrine, I have no assurance that God will do it again (unless I resort to that awful beast, experience!)

*“We are risen with Christ,” and “He hath exalted us, and made us to sit with Him in heavenly places in Christ,”* is always living in the season of Pentecost; and most of all, when going up to the upper chamber, like the apostles of Jesus, he gives himself to supplications and prayer, that he may become worthy of receiving *“the mighty wind rushing from heaven,”* which is

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<sup>111</sup> Origen, “Origen Against Celsus, Book 7”, *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, Alexander Roberts, and James Donaldson, eds., (Peabody, Massachusetts, Hendrickson Publishers, 1994), Vol.4, pg. 614.

powerful to destroy sin and its fruits among men, and worthy of having some share of the tongue of fire which God sends.<sup>112</sup>

Earlier, Cyprian had set the stage for the two-phased approach that Cyril and Origen followed:

It is also necessary that he should be anointed who is baptized; so that, having received the chrism, that is, the anointing, he may be anointed of God, and have in him the grace of Christ. Further, it is the Eucharist whence the baptized are anointed with the oil sanctified on the altar.<sup>113</sup>

What is of particular interest here is that Cyprian associates the receiving of the chrism, not with baptism itself, but with Holy Communion. Here Cyprian is much like his spiritual father, Tertullian. Both want the gifts to be received at the altar, not in the baptistery. If the gifts of the Spirit are one element in the five-part conversion, as Fee would have it, then Tertullian and Cyprian know nothing of this idea. For them, the gifts come at the altar. Tertullian and Cyprian know our Pentecostal approach. Fee seems to have forgotten.

To this point we have drawn upon two critical analogies. We have observed that the early church used the anointing of Jesus and the anointing of the disciples as illustrations of what they might expect to receive. Although

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<sup>112</sup> Origen, "Origen Against Celsus, Book 8", *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, Alexander Roberts, and James Donaldson, eds., (Peabody, Massachusetts, Hendrickson Publishers, 1994), Vol.4, pg. 647 - 648.

<sup>113</sup> Cyprian, "The Epistles of Cyprian", *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, Vol. 5, p. 376.

he does not approach the matter from the views of the church fathers, Roger Stronstad nonetheless arrives at our position:

...just as the anointing of Jesus is a paradigm for the subsequent Spirit baptism of the disciples, so the gift of the Spirit to the disciples is a paradigm for God's people throughout the "last days" as a charismatic community of the Spirit—a prophethood of all believers.<sup>114</sup>

Stronstad draws upon Charles Talbert who outlines Luke's fourfold parallelism between the anointing of Jesus and Pentecost: 1) both Jesus and the disciples are praying, 2) the Spirit descends after their prayers, 3) there is a physical manifestation of the Spirit, and 4) the ministries of both Jesus and the disciples begin with a sermon which is thematic of what follows, appeals to the fulfillment of prophecy, and speaks of the rejection of Jesus.<sup>115</sup>

When Stronstad and Talbert come to their conclusions, they do so by comparing the terminology of Luke with Old Testament references. They find patterns from the Old Testament, which are repeated in Luke. From these patterns they see norms being established.

We are using the church fathers as our base of approach rather than one that starts with the Scripture. Clearly, the Scriptural approach takes precedent. However, when citing

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<sup>114</sup> Roger Stronstad. The Charismatic Theology of St. Luke (Peabody, Mass: Hendrickson Publishers, 1984) p. 9.

<sup>115</sup> Stronstad, p.51-52 referring to Charles Talbert. Literary Patterns, Theological Themes and the Genre of Luke-Acts, Society of Biblical Literature Monograph Series, 20 (Missoula: Scholars Press, 1974), p. 16

the early church apologists and fathers who relied upon the Scripture, we are showing that the interpretations of modern Pentecostal theologians are in step with the early church.

## **Pentecost at Ephesus**

The Book of Ephesians has several references that indicate that Paul may have had Pentecost at least partially in mind when he wrote it.

At one point Paul even expresses a desire to be in Ephesus for Pentecost when he wrote, “*But I will stay on a Ephesus until Pentecost.*”<sup>116</sup> I doubt if his reference to Pentecost is comparable to our referring to an event as being around Thanksgiving. It was more than a reference in time. Pentecost was a Jewish feast. If it were only a time reference, would the Gentile Corinthians have understood the Jewish reference?

We have to remember that when 1 Corinthians was written the church in Corinth was four or five years old at the most, and that the majority of its members had come out of paganism and would have known nothing of the Jewish calendar before their conversion. Would the date

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<sup>116</sup> 1 Corinthians 16:8.

have meant anything to them unless it had some association with the Christian life?<sup>117</sup>

Paul's attitude may have been related to the content of the Feast of Pentecost itself. By Paul's time it had already changed from its ancient agricultural roots to a celebration of the giving of the law on Mount Sinai.

In the Tanach the Feast of Weeks is also called the Feast of the Harvest, the Feast of the First Fruits, and the Feast of Ingathering (cf Exodus 23:16). It was thus an agricultural feast, marking the end of the wheat harvest. However, in late Tanach times this festival also came to be related to a historical event, the giving of the Torah and the covenant at Sinai. The book of 2 Chronicles tells us that in the fifteenth year of King Asa (i.e. approx. 896 BC) the people renewed the covenant with God in the third month--the month when the covenant was made at Sinai and the Feast of Weeks was celebrated (2 Chr 15:10). By the mid-second century BC observance of the Feast of Weeks included also celebration of the Sinai covenant and the giving of the Torah.<sup>118</sup>

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<sup>117</sup> J. Kirby. Ephesians: Baptism and Pentecost. An inquiry into the Structure and Purpose of the Epistle to the Ephesians. (Montreal: McGill University Press, 1968), p. 80.

<sup>118</sup>Ole Kvarme. The Acts of the Apostles. (Caspari Center for Biblical and Jewish Studies, PO Box 71099, Jerusalem, 91710, Israel, 1994). p. 9.

This early connection with the giving of the Law is also the opinion of Kirby, Professor of New Testament at McGill University. As a summary of his lengthy defense of this idea, he says,

...while there is little direct evidence in rabbinic Judaism in the first century to connect Pentecost with the giving of the law, the evidence is clear in the 'apocryphal' tradition and in the Qumran literature.<sup>119</sup>

**There are numerous indications in Paul's Epistle that he is slanting his comments to fit into this understanding.** The passage that we associate with the so called "ministry gifts" is one example.

*But to each one of us grace has been given as Christ apportioned it. This is why it says: 'When he ascended on high, he led captives in his train and gave gifts'<sup>120</sup> to men.'<sup>121</sup> (What does "he ascended" mean except that he also descended to the lower, earthly regions? He who descended is the very one who ascended higher than all the heavens, in order to fill the whole universe.) It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God's*

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<sup>119</sup> J. Kirby. p.69.

<sup>120</sup>Greek: *doma* (dom'-ah); from the base of 1325; a present. (Strong's)

<sup>121</sup>Ps 68:18 "When you ascended on high, you led captives in your train; you received gifts from men, even from the rebellious-- that you, O LORD God, might dwell there."

*people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.<sup>122</sup>*

**In considering this passage, we first must ask, why does Paul link the ascension of Jesus with giving of the gifts of Grace?**

Paul's first thought is about the gifts of the Spirit that he refers to as "grace" which has been given to each one. Once his mind turns to the gifts of the Spirit, he turns immediately to the ascension. The question is why does he do that? There are three reasons why Paul links the two.

First, **Peter did this** from the first day of New Testament Pentecost when the Spirit was poured out. That first sermon of the Gospel era linked the two together:

*God has raised this Jesus to life, and we are all witnesses of the fact. Exalted to the right hand of God, he has received from the Father the promised Holy Spirit and has poured out what you now see and hear.<sup>123</sup>*

In Peter's mind, there was a direct connection between the resurrection, ascension, and the giving of the Holy Spirit. His sermon simply reflects his understanding of the flow of events. On that Pentecost Sunday, **the words of**

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<sup>122</sup>Ephesians 4:7-13

<sup>123</sup>Acts 2:32-33

**Jesus** are still fresh in Peter's mind. Those words form the second reason:

*But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth. After he said this, he was taken up before their very eyes, and a cloud hid him from their sight.<sup>124</sup>*

For the disciples, the outpouring of the Holy Spirit was associated with the promise of Jesus, a promise he gave them just before he ascended into heaven. Thereafter, to think about the ascension was to think about his promise. In the same way, whenever they received gifts of the Spirit, the new recipients were no doubt told that this was what Jesus had promised just before he ascended to the right hand of the Father.

The third reason has to do with the **Scripture readings** for the Feast of Pentecost. There are three Scriptures that formed the synagogue readings for Pentecost. They were Exodus 19-20, which is the giving of the Law on Mt. Sinai,<sup>125</sup> Psalms 68, and Numbers 18.

One of the more interesting subjects is how Psalm 68:18 migrated into Ephesians 4:8.<sup>126</sup> Of course, we

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<sup>124</sup> Acts 1:8-9

<sup>125</sup> Kvarme. The Acts of the Apostles. p. 9

<sup>126</sup> See Richard Taylor, Professor of Old Testament Studies, Dallas Theological Seminary in Bibliotheca Sacra, July-September 1991 in an article titled, "The Use of Psalm 68:18 in Ephesians 4:8 in Light of Ancient Versions" for a complete study on this topic. He says: "In a similar vein Cambier maintains that the Ephesians pericope adopts a midrashic technique which in this instance exploits the variant textual tradition found in the Targum in order to make an

believe in the inspiration of Scripture, both Old and New. Under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, the Rabbi's had given their commentary on this passage, as meaning the one who ascended was Moses and the gifts that God had given to man was the law. One Rabbi had translated the passage, not "received gifts from men" but "gave gifts to men." Paul, if not his Jewish readers, may have had this in mind as he wrote and it shaped his understanding of the passage.

We might ask, **why does this teaching emerge at Ephesus?** Was there anything unique about Ephesus that made it a likely candidate?

Ephesus had been treated to some of the best Bible teaching available. **Paul** himself was there a long time.

*They arrived at Ephesus, where Paul left Priscilla and Aquila. He himself went into the synagogue and reasoned with the Jews.<sup>127</sup>*

The ministry of Paul, Priscilla and Aquila was followed by Apollos:

*Meanwhile a Jew named Apollos, a native of Alexandria, came to Ephesus. He was a*

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analogous application to Christ of ideas which in the Targum are applied to Moses." (p. 329). Then he adds: "That Ephesians 4:8 is following a variant text-form of Psalm 68:18 is the view to be preferred. The general technique behind this preference for the variant reading has much in common with a restrained use of Midrash pesher as sometimes practiced in early rabbinic circles."

<sup>127</sup> Acts 18:19

*learned man, with a thorough knowledge of the Scriptures.*<sup>128</sup>

**Timothy** pastored there:

*As I urged you when I went into Macedonia, stay there in Ephesus so that you may command certain men not to teach false doctrines any longer.*<sup>129</sup>

Even the **Apostle John** pastored the church, and many think wrote the Gospel of John while there. However, it is not likely that he had pastored here before Paul wrote the Epistle of Ephesians.

**Given such leadership, the connection between Old and New Testament Pentecost seems unlikely to have been missed by these outstanding preachers and teachers.**

Connecting the two events was done by the early preachers. This makes perfect sense when you consider **God's promise to Jeremiah.**

*"This is the covenant I will make with the house of Israel after that time," declares the LORD. "I will put my law in their minds and write it on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people."*<sup>130</sup>

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<sup>128</sup> Acts 18:24

<sup>129</sup> 1 Tim 1:3

<sup>130</sup> Jeremiah 31:33

Kvarme makes note of the connection between the Old and New Testament Pentecost.

In the prophetic literature of the Tanach the memory of the Sinai covenant is also connected with the hope of a new covenant. Both Jeremiah and Ezekiel speak about an end-of-days act of God when he will give his people a new heart and a new spirit. Then he will forgive the people their sins and by his Spirit write the Torah in their hearts so that they will live according to his will.<sup>131</sup>

These early preachers made the connection because the evidence was so obvious as to be inescapable. **Acts 2 looked and sounded like Exodus 19-20.** The comparisons are so striking that only God could have planned it.

The **cloven tongues of fire** reminded them of Sinai where the words of God divided into 70 tongues of fire, representing the tongues of the 70 nations. In Jewish thought, the world is divided into Jews and 70 Gentile nations. According to the tradition there were literally tongues of fire at Sinai that sat upon the people of Israel like a diadem or crown. It may be that Cyril was aware of this tradition because of the words he uses to describe the tongues of fire. He said, “He sat upon them in the form of fiery tongues, that they might crown themselves with new and spiritual diadems by fiery tongues upon their heads.”<sup>132</sup>

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<sup>131</sup>Kvarme, p. 10.

<sup>132</sup> Cyril of Jerusalem, Catechetical Lecture XVII.8, p. 126-128. See also the following footnotes.

On the day of Pentecost, when the tongues of fire sat upon the 120,<sup>133</sup> this came as no particular surprise to those present. Israel had seen it before. By seeing it again, they clearly made the connection that what God had done at Sinai, he was doing again. God had made a covenant with Israel at Sinai. Now he was communicating the new covenant with Israel and those who would believe the Covenant that Ezekiel and Jeremiah had foreseen.

**Acts 2 and the sound of the rushing mighty wind** reminded them of the growing sound of the trumpet on Sinai.

*On the morning of the third day there was thunder and lightning, with a thick cloud over the mountain, and a very loud trumpet blast. Everyone in the camp trembled. Then Moses led the people out of the camp to meet with God, and they stood at the foot of the mountain. Mount Sinai was covered with smoke, because the LORD descended on it in fire. The smoke billowed up from it like smoke from a furnace, the whole mountain trembled violently, and the sound of the trumpet grew louder and louder. Then Moses spoke and the voice of God answered him.<sup>134</sup>*

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<sup>133</sup> Chrysostom in Homily IV on The Acts of the Apostles, (Vol 11, p 25) says that it was not upon the 12 but the 120 that the Spirit came, otherwise the prophecy regarding all flesh, including sons, daughters, and young and old men could not have been fulfilled as Peter preached.

<sup>134</sup> Exodus 19:16-19

The great sound that accompanied God's speaking at Sinai was echoed at Zion. Again, it was not just that a sound was present, but it was a sound that reminded them of God's presence on Sinai and communicated that this was an event of equal significance.

Kirby gives us a possible second connection with the wind.<sup>135</sup> One of the other frequent readings for this day was out of Genesis 11, the story of the Tower of Babel. In the Book of Jubilees (10:18-27), there is a version of the story which includes a mighty wind which God sends to destroy the tower. Unlike Babel, the Pentecostal wind is not for destruction, but for construction. It is part of God reclaiming his fallen world. When we see that Cyril uses the speaking in tongues of Pentecost as a reclaiming of the confusion of tongues at Babel, we may be seeing reflection of a document that Cyril possesses which is a reflection on this event. Indeed, it may be the Book of Jubilees. If it is, there can be no doubt that the early church made the connection between Pentecost and Sinai.

The **speaking in tongues** reminded them that at Sinai, God's words came first as flames of fire that then became words and voice. When God spoke, they could both see and hear his words. They could see them in stone, but also hear God speak in their language. At Zion, this was how God manifested himself. First came the sound, then the fire, then his Spirit speaking through the believers in words that could be heard. The glory of God has spoken by the Spirit in the tongues of those who were present to listen. The spoken languages were a physical evidence that God had spoken. God spoke to Israel on Sinai with physical evidences. Now he speaks to the world, also accompanied

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<sup>135</sup> Kirby, p 116-117.

by evidence that it is God and not another who is speaking.<sup>136 137 138</sup>

Jewish Sages have interpreted Exodus 20:22 as reading, ‘...you have seen in the heavens what I spoke to you.’ They say that while God spoke the Law to Moses audibly in 70 languages, He also wrote the commandments in the sky with fire for the Children of Israel to read.<sup>139</sup>

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<sup>136</sup> Kvarme, page 10 writes: “Aramaic Targums of the Tanach and the Jewish Hellenistic writer Philo explain that God’s words at Sinai came first as flames which then became words and voices [Texts 2 & 3]. The rabbinic tradition also mentions that the words from God were divided into seventy tongues of flames--i.e. the tongues of the 70 nations. The same rabbinic tradition also explains that the glory of God descended upon the heads of the Israelites as divine diadems when they received the Torah at Sinai [Text 4].” Note: A Targum is an Aramaic translation or paraphrase of an OT book. The Tanach is the Hebrew word for the Old Testament taken as a whole. It has three divisions: Pentateuch or Torah, Prophets or Nebiim, and the Hagiographa or Ketubim.

<sup>137</sup> Philo, The Decalogue, 45-46: “They had cleansed themselves with ablutions and lustrations for three days past, and moreover had washed their clothes. So in the whitest of raiment they stood on tiptoe with ears pricked up in obedience to the warning of Moses to prepare themselves for a congregation which he knew would be held from the oracular advice he received when he was summoned up by himself. Then from the midst of the fire that streamed from heaven there sounded forth to their utter amazement a voice, for the flame became articulate speech in the language familiar to the audience, and so clearly and distinctly were the words formed by it that they seemed to see rather than hear them.”

<sup>138</sup> Fragment-Targum (from the Cairo Geniza) to Exodus 20:2 said, “*I am the Lord*: The first commandment, when it left the mouth of the Holy One Blessed be He,...as meteors and lightening and as torches of fire; a fiery torch to its right and a fiery torch to its left, which burst forth and flew in the air of the heavenly expanse; it proceeded to circle around the camp of Israel; and then was engraved upon the tablets of the covenant.”

<sup>139</sup> Clarence H. Wagner, Jr. International Director, Bridges for Peace, May 1996 Newsletter.

Given these obvious connections between Pentecost and Sinai, it is understandable that Paul uses Psalm 68 in relation to the gifts of the Spirit. For him, if it applied to Sinai, then it must have something to do with Pentecost as well.

The third Scripture reading does not relate as directly to Sinai, but does relate to the order that was established there. At Sinai, God said:

*I myself have selected your fellow Levites from among the Israelites as a gift to you, dedicated to the LORD to do the work at the Tent of Meeting. But only you and your sons may serve as priests in connection with everything at the altar and inside the curtain. I am giving you the service of the priesthood as a gift. Anyone else who comes near the sanctuary must be put to death.<sup>140</sup>*

In the minds of Israel, then, the service of those who served God in the tabernacle was seen as a gift. Peter also described the coming of the Holy Spirit as the “gift of the Holy Spirit”

Kirby reflects on this possibility of how this understanding came about:

That this Psalm (68) was connected with Pentecost in Acts is shown by W. L. Knox:  
‘The Targum on that Psalm interpreted the verse, ‘the

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<sup>140</sup> Numbers 18:6-7

Lord gave the word; great was the company of preachers' by rendering it 'Thou by thy word gavest thy word unto thy servants the prophets'. So Jesus, having been exalted to the right hand of God, received from the Father the promised Spirit and has poured it out on the Apostles.'

He thinks that it is only in the light of this rabbinic view that any sense can be made of Acts 2:33, for no reason is given in Acts why the ascension should have been followed by the gift of the Spirit. In a similar way, the author of Ephesians brings in Psalm 68:18 to show that the ascended Jesus gave gifts to men.<sup>141</sup>

We might comment on how this understanding played itself out in the understanding of how ministry is to be performed. If the gifts of the Spirit are analogous to the Old Testament Priesthood, then we should say that all ministry in the Lord's Church is to be done by the gifts of the Holy Spirit. Indeed, this is how Irenaeus and others described the Church as functioning.

By listing what we call "ministry gifts" in this passage in Ephesians, it is clear that Paul is relating these gifts of ministry in the New Testament to the role of the Levites in the Tabernacle. Without any doubt, Paul views the operation of spiritual gifts as the equivalent of the priesthood. In this, the vision of Zechariah is realized. The

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<sup>141</sup> Kirby, p. 146. Numbers 18:6-7

golden lampstand is the means of ministry within the Church:

*'Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit,' says the LORD Almighty.*<sup>142</sup>

A Pentecostal view of ministry is that all the gifts of the Spirit are meant for ministry to the Church. However, in recent years some have started breaking up the various lists of gifts in the New Testament as if there were different types of gifts. The gifts of Romans 12 change into “motivational gifts,” while those of 1 Corinthians 12 become “manifestation gifts.” The Ephesians 4 list is arbitrarily named “ministry gifts.” The labelers think they are adding clarity by making these distinctions. However, their unwarranted distinctions undermine the Pentecostal view of gifts. We really should think of gifts simply as the manifestation of the Spirit, and leave it at that.

Unlike today, the so-called “ministry gifts” of Ephesians 4 were not understood in the early church as narrowly limited to the five mentioned, but were inclusive of all ministries in the Church. If this is true, then any distinction that tries to separate the five gifts as being different from the others is a departure from what the early church would have accepted. The Pastor of Hermas, a very early church father, knows no such division:

Hear now with regard to the stones which are in the building. Those square white stones which fitted exactly into each other, are apostles, bishops, teachers, and deacons,

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<sup>142</sup> Zechariah 4:6

who have lived in godly purity, and have acted as bishops and teachers and deacons chastely and reverently to the elect of God. Some of them have fallen asleep, and some still remain alive.<sup>143</sup>

Hilary writes often of the charisms. In one place he writes about wisdom, knowledge, teaching, miracles, healing, tongues, and interpretations as “ministries and workings (ministeria et operationes) of the church in which (church) is the body of Christ.”<sup>144</sup> Hilary knows nothing of the distinctions that moderns try to place on the gifts. In fact, he specifically argues against it in Book 8, section 33. My personal view is that Pentecostals have uncritically adopted evangelical designations that make it possible for Evangelicals to have the gifts of Romans and Ephesians without taking on the obligation of the more “uncomfortable” 1 Corinthians 12 gifts.

**When Paul applies the concept of the Grace of God, he does so in all the Hebraic ways familiar to the celebration of Pentecost.** He relates it to the Mt. Sinai ascension, to law as a gift, and ministry as gifts to the Sanctuary.

There are tremendous pastoral as well as theological implications to this application of spiritual gifts to the law from Mt. Sinai. For Paul, the gifts of the Spirit to the Church carry the same force as the law had to the covenant community at Sinai and beyond. There is now a new dynamic in the Covenant community.

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<sup>143</sup> “The Pastor of Hermas,” V, *Ante-Nicene Fathers*; vol. 2, Alexander Roberts & James Donaldson, eds. (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson Publishers, 1994) 14.

<sup>144</sup> Hilary, “On the Trinity,” 8:33, *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, second series, p. 147.

We have maintained that the anointing of Jesus is a prototype of the normative Christian experience. Some have suggested that the anointing of Jesus at the Jordan also carries with it connections to Sinai.<sup>145</sup> If this is so, we have another Pentecostal connection with Paul's teaching.

*Then his people recalled the days of old, the days of Moses and his people-- where is he who brought them through the sea, with the shepherd of his flock? Where is he who set his Holy Spirit among them...<sup>146</sup>*

God has put the law in our hearts and he expresses it through the people as they exercise their spiritual gifts.

**Given this high place of spiritual gifts in the new covenant community, we can understand why Paul urges us to “covet earnestly” the best spiritual gifts.** The pastoral implications of this are profound. If we are to take on the role of Pastor, we must also be about the process of urging the search for spiritual gifts. We must also provide the means within congregation life for the gifts to be acquired, developed, and used. To fail in this is to fail in a fundamental function of pastoral ministry.

*Follow the way of love and **eagerly desire spiritual gifts**, especially the gift of prophecy. For anyone who speaks in a tongue does not speak to men but to God.*

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<sup>145</sup> James Dunn says (30) “if the echoes of Isa. 63:11f., suggested by S. I. Buse could be established, it would suggest that Mark saw the events at Jordan as parallel in significance to the passing through the Red Sea. The gift of the Spirit would then parallel the giving of the law at Sinai,...”

<sup>146</sup> Isaiah 63:11

*Indeed, no one understands him; he utters mysteries with his spirit. But everyone who prophesies speaks to men for their strengthening, encouragement and comfort. He who speaks in a tongue edifies himself, but he who prophesies edifies the church. I would like every one of you to speak in tongues, but I would rather have you prophesy. He who prophesies is greater than one who speaks in tongues, unless he interprets, so that the church may be edified.<sup>147</sup>*

In setting forth the priority of spiritual gifts, Paul also establishes a hierarchy of value for the spiritual gifts.<sup>148</sup> He indicates that prophecy is to be prized because it strengthens, encourages, and comforts. On the other hand, speaking in tongues benefits the person who speaks. Prophecy is superior to speaking in tongues because in prophecy the church is edified whereas speaking in tongues benefits only the speaker. The indicator of the relative value of a spiritual gift is based upon the number of people who benefit by its exercise.

In conclusion, we have found several connections between the giving of the Law on Mt. Sinai, and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on Mt. Zion. These two

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<sup>147</sup> 1 Corinthians 14:1-5

<sup>148</sup> Origen, "Origen Against Celsus, Book 3", *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, (Peabody, Massachusetts, Hendrickson Publishers, 1994), Vol.4, pg. 483, writes, "Paul also, in the catalogue of "charismata" bestowed by God, placed first "the word of wisdom," and second, as being inferior to it, "the word of knowledge," but third, and lower down, "faith." And because he regarded "the word" as higher than miraculous powers, he for that reason places "workings of miracles" and "gifts of healings" in a lower place than the gifts of the word."

mountains, along with Calvary in between, form the anchors of their respective Testaments. Paul, in writing Ephesians, is mindful of these connections and draws upon them for his analysis. In doing so, he reminds us that Pentecostal expressions are not an appendix to the church but part of its very core. This connection is one more brick in the wall of “normative.” As Pastors, we must find ways to encourage the growth of the use of spiritual gifts within our congregations.

Let’s return to the question of the Book of Acts as the basis for theology. Paul’s use of Acts to form his theology of the church is very clear. He uses Luke’s description to form the foundation for his teaching. Acts 2 is to the church what Sinai was to Israel. Just as a Jew studies what was written on Mt. Sinai, so the Christian looks to the Acts 2 experience to be repeated in his heart. It is as though the tablets were imprinted on the heart. The baptism of the Spirit becomes a personal Sinai.

Obviously, Sinai was not a repeated event. Yet it shapes our understanding of Pentecost. Pentecost and Sinai are analogous events. Pentecost is personal, not just corporate. An event that occurred before I was born cannot impart spiritual substance to me unless I come to be a participant in it. To the extent that each individual needed to obey the law, then each individual needs to experience a personal Pentecost. The counting of the Omer moved the Israeli from Passover to Pentecost. In the same way, a Christian should move from Salvation to the Baptism of the Holy Spirit. When Paul urges the Ephesians in the direction of the gifts of the Spirit, using the comparison of Sinai, then I think he makes Acts 2 normative. Sinai and Zion, as Hebrews 12 also shows us, peer down on our theology. All

other sights must have these two mountains also in the picture.



## **The Early Church Fathers and the Book of Acts**

According to Fee, and others of his persuasion, we cannot use the book of Acts for doctrinal statements unless it was the clear intent of the writers to establish doctrine. Of course, without the book of Acts, it becomes very difficult to demonstrate that the doctrines of the Assemblies of God relating to the baptism of the Holy Spirit are true. Then, if we cannot prove that our beliefs are true, relating to subsequence and speaking in tongues as the evidence of the baptism of the Holy Spirit, then they must not be true. If we can't prove it, it must not be true. It is a difficult place for us to be. We must prove it from the Bible, but we can't use those portions of the Bible which speak about it. The theological police have ruled the evidence inadmissible.

The reasons Acts cannot be used as the Assemblies of God uses it, is because of a hermeneutical principle which some theologians have invented. There is certainly nothing in the Scripture itself that would prevent this. Indeed, we might argue that the Bible says the opposite. Paul said, "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in

*righteousness.*”<sup>149</sup> Even though Scripture says we can, some scholars say we can’t.

Steven Land has defended the Pentecostal approach by suggesting that the Holy Spirit is back of the Scriptures. His term for the Scripture is “Spirit-Word.” In his view, “the Spirit who inspired and preserved the Scriptures illuminates, teaches, guides, convicts and transforms through the Word today.”<sup>150</sup> Fee wants Acts limited to the actual intent of the author. But who is the author? If the Holy Spirit inspired Luke to write Acts, could there be more to the text than even Luke knew? When Psalm 22 was written, did the author know fully what was being written? Clearly, when the Old Testament was applied in the New Testament, some pretty amazing interpretations were applied. Hilary believed that each Psalm was originally given in the Spirit of prophecy.<sup>151</sup> We accept these interpretations because we recognize the Spirit’s work in the interpretation. But what has happened to the Spirit today? Fee argues for what amounts to a more mechanistic approach to the Scripture. But we are not even arguing for an interpretation beyond what the Scripture actually says. We simply want to use “all Scripture.” We think we can know God in the Scripture, not just read about him. There is a tension between “authorial intent” and inspired Scripture.

What is the Bible? Is it limited to the sum of its individual writers? One gets this impression with all the emphasis upon the individual approach of each individual writer that characterizes all of the modern approach. If the

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<sup>149</sup> 2 Timothy 3:16.

<sup>150</sup> Steven J. Land, Pentecostal Spirituality: A Passion for the Kingdom (Sheffield, England: Sheffield Academic Press, 1993) p. 100.

<sup>151</sup> Hilary, “Against Constantius,” 11. Cited in McDonnell p. 135.

Holy Spirit caused each part to be written, did he also have something to do with its final collection? If he had something to do with the final collection, doesn't the Bible have more weight than its individual parts? Then, if we observe a trend in how God works in Acts and the Epistles, are we not justified to suspect that we have this trend for a reason that God knows? What if each individual author is inspired to write a piece of the puzzle, not knowing that it was a piece and not the whole. And what if the Holy Spirit superintends the whole? Can we not, then, see the Holy Spirit as the author even as we consider each individual contribution? Are there no limits to redaction criticism? If this is reasonable, then our approach of assembling evidence from Jesus, the disciples, Acts, and the Epistles is reasonable in knowing the intent of the Holy Spirit.

We may not have to resort to a "collective intent" to be able to use Acts. Stronstad has suggested that it was Luke's intent in Acts to illustrate the "universality of the vocational gift of the Spirit."<sup>152</sup> No matter where the Gospel went, among Jews or Gentiles, God poured out the gifts of the Spirit. If we use Acts to suggest some things are normative as evidence of the Baptism of the Holy Spirit, are we not doing exactly what Luke did in Acts? We join Peter in reasoning that we know the Spirit is present because "*God, who knows the heart, showed that he accepted them by giving the Holy Spirit to them, just as he did to us.*"<sup>153</sup> Conversely, Peter would know that a person had not yet been baptized in the Spirit if it had not happened to these others as it had to Peter. The Assemblies of God gets into that line of reasoning. Like Peter, we say,

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<sup>152</sup> Stronstad, p. 68.

<sup>153</sup> Acts 15:8.

if it happened to the 120, and it happened to those at Cornelius' house, and it happened to us in the same way, then it must be the same thing.

Menzies has worried about taking the concept of primary intent too far.

An exclusive focus on an author's 'primary intent' or 'intention to teach' too often leads to a form of tunnel vision which ignores the implications of an individual text for the theological perspective of the author. This myopia is illustrated in Fee's treatment of the Samaritan episode in Acts 8.4-17. He argues that this passage is ultimately irrelevant to discussions concerning the doctrine of subsequence for Luke's 'primary intent' lies elsewhere. Now, the primary intent of the narrative, as Fee suggests, may be to stress that the expansion of the gospel beyond the bounds of Judaism had 'divine and apostolic approval'. And, I would agree, it is unlikely that Luke consciously sought to teach here that the gift of the Spirit is normally separate from saving faith. Yet this does not allow us to ignore the clear implications of the narrative for Luke's pneumatology. Indeed, the fact that Luke does separate the gift of the Spirit from saving faith clearly reveals his distinctive pneumatological perspective. Paul would not-indeed, could not-have interpreted and narrated the event in this way. Furthermore, this separation refutes the commonly

accepted interpretation of the Lukan gift as 'the climax of conversion-initiation'. In other words, the value of a passage for assessing the theological perspective of a given author cannot be reduced to its 'primary intent'. A passage must be understood in terms of its original setting and intention, but the theological freight it carries may transcend its 'primary intent'. Each piece of evidence must be taken seriously as we seek to reconstruct the theological perspective of the biblical author.<sup>154</sup>

There are several approaches we can take to resolve the tension of the appropriate use of Acts. In this paper, I have chosen to emphasize what the church fathers thought on this subject. I think I can show pretty clearly that the early church was not at all hesitant to use Acts for their theology or to establish church norms. I'd like to offer a few examples.

*When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to*

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<sup>154</sup> Menzies, Part III, Chpt.13, Section 2, Empowered for Witness, (Sheffield Academic Press), P.247.

*...speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them.*<sup>155</sup>

## **Cyril and the Acts 2 Pentecost**

There are several different ideas that Cyril develops about the Acts 2 event:

First, Cyril views tongues as the restoration of the confusion of Babel, and the fire as restoring the flaming sword of the Garden of Eden. Second, he seems to suggest that the outpouring was the completion of an earlier baptism because they are now “entirely baptized”. Third, this baptism seems to complete the Salvation experience for Cyril, because the fire of it burns away sin (sanctifies). While it is a rather lengthy quotation, it is interesting to listen to him “preach” on a core text.

And lest men should be ignorant of the greatness of the mighty gift coming down to them, there sounded as it were a heavenly trumpet<sup>156</sup>, For *suddenly there came from heaven a sound as of the rushing of a mighty wind*, signifying the presence of Him who was to grant power unto men to seize with violence the kingdom of God; that both their eyes might see the fiery tongues, and their ears hear the sound. *And it filled all the house where they were sitting*; for the house became the vessel of the spiritual water; as

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<sup>155</sup> Acts 2:1-4

<sup>156</sup> St. Jerome lived in Bethlehem shortly after Cyril and may have picked up this idea from Cyril since Jerome likens the sound at Pentecost to that of the trumpet on Sinai.

the disciples sat within, the whole house was filled. Thus they were entirely baptized according to the promise, and invested soul and body with a divine garment of salvation. *And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost.* They partook of fire, not of burning but of saving fire; of fire which consumes the thorns of sins, but gives lustre to the soul. **This is now coming upon you also**, and that to strip away and consume your sins which are like thorns, and to brighten yet more that precious possession of your souls, and to give you grace; for He gave it then to the Apostles. And He sat upon them in the form of fiery tongues, that they might crown themselves with new and spiritual diadems by fiery tongues upon their heads. A fiery sword barred of old the gates of Paradise; a fiery tongue which brought salvation restored the gift.

*And they began to speak with other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance.* The Galilean Peter or Andrew spoke Persian or Median. John and the rest of the Apostles spake every tongue to those of Gentile extraction; for not in our time have multitudes of strangers first begun to assemble here from all quarters, but they have done so since that time. What teacher can be found so great as to teach men all at once things which they have not learned?

So many years are they in learning by grammar and other arts to speak only Greek well; nor yet do all speak this equally well; the Rhetorician perhaps succeeds in speaking well, and the Grammarian sometimes not well, and the skillful Grammarian is ignorant of the subjects of philosophy. But the Holy Spirit taught them many languages at once, languages which in all their life they never knew. This is in truth vast wisdom, this is power divine. What a contrast of their long ignorance in time past to their sudden, complete and varied and unaccustomed exercise of these languages!

The multitude of the hearers was confounded;--it was a second confusion, in the room of that first evil one at Babylon. For in that confusion of tongues there was division of purpose, because their thought was at enmity with God; but here minds were restored and united, because the object of interest was godly. The means of falling were the means of recovery. Wherefore they marveled, saying, *How hear we them speaking?* No marvel if ye be ignorant; for even Nicodemus was ignorant of the coming of the Spirit, and to him it was said, *The Spirit breatheth where it listeth, and thou hearest the voice thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth;* but if, even though I hear His voice, I know not whence he cometh, how can I explain, what

He is Himself in substance? (emphasis mine)<sup>157</sup>

It is obvious that Cyril used the experience of the disciples as a model for what would happen to those he was about to baptize. If he can use this to model one part of their experience, are we so far off when we use the same event to describe another part of our experience? Isn't it true that Cyril was using Acts for doctrine? This being part of his important catechism lectures, he is offering a systematic discussion of the Christian faith.

The **miracle of tongues was in the speaking, not in the hearing**. Altogether, fifteen different people groups are mentioned as having heard them speaking in their own language,

They spoke with strange tongues, and not those of their native land; and the wonder was great, a language spoken by those who had not learnt it. And the sign is to them that believe not, and not to them that believe, that it may be an accusation of the unbelievers, as it is written, With other tongues and other lips will I speak unto this people, and not even so will they listen to Me saith the Lord. But they heard. Here stop a little and raise a question, how you are to divide the words. For the expression has an ambiguity, which is to be determined by the punctuation. Did they each hear in

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<sup>157</sup>Cyril, "Catechetical Lectures, Lecture VII.16-17," Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers; Vol. 7 Philip Schaff and Henry Wace, eds., (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson Publishers, 1995) 128.

their own dialect so that if I may so say, one sound was uttered, but many were heard; the air being thus beaten and, so to speak, sounds being produced more clear than the original sound; or are we to put the stop after “they Hear,” and then to add “them speaking in their own languages” to what follows, so that it would be speaking in languages their own to the hearers, which would be foreign to the speakers? I prefer to put it this latter way; for on the other plan the miracle would be rather of the hearers than of the speakers; whereas in this it would be on the speakers’ side; and it was they who were reproached for drunkenness, evidently because they by the Spirit wrought a miracle in the matter of the tongues.<sup>158</sup>

Although Cyril and Gregory say important things, they are not the earliest ones to use Acts for doctrine. One of the important debates that shaped the third century was whether people who had been baptized by heretics must submit again to water baptism. A council was held at which Cyprian apparently presided over “many priests assembled at once.” The results of this council were directed to Stephen, the Roman bishop, in the form of a decree. Notice that they relied upon the book of Acts to form their decree or doctrine.

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<sup>158</sup>Gregory Nazianzen, “The Last Farewell, XV,” Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers; vol. 7 Philip Schaff and Henry Wace, eds., (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson Publishers, 1995) 384.

Those who have been dipped abroad outside the Church, and have been stained among heretics and schismatics with the taint of profane water, when they come to us and to the Church which is one, ought to be baptized, for the reason that it is a small matter to 'lay hands on them that they may receive the Holy Ghost,' unless they receive also the baptism of the Church. For then finally can they be fully sanctified, and be the sons of God, they be born of each sacrament; since it is written, 'Except a man be born again of water, and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.' For we find also, in the Acts of the Apostles, that this is maintained by the Apostles, and kept in the truth of the saving faith, so that when, in the house of Cornelius the centurion, the Holy Ghost had descended upon the Gentiles who were there, fervent in the warmth of their faith, and believing in the Lord with the whole heart; and when, filled with the Spirit, they blessed God in divers tongues, still none the less the blessed Apostle Peter, mindful of the divine precept and the Gospel, commanded that those same men should be baptized who had already been filled with the Holy Spirit, that nothing might seem to be neglected to the observance by the apostolic instruction in all things of the law of the divine precept and Gospel.

Not only did they reference Acts 10, but they also took up the issue of Acts 8. Those who felt the baptism of heretics was sufficient, argued that because the Samaritans were not rebaptized after Peter and John came to them, then it was not necessary to rebaptize those who had been baptized by heretics. The council rejected the argument, not because it was from a historical narrative, or because it was outside the intent of the author, as Fee would do, but because the facts of the case were not an appropriate ground for the conclusion they sought. The council said,

They who had believed in Samaria had believed with a true faith; and within, in the Church which is one, and to which alone it is granted to bestow the grace of baptism and to remit sins, had been baptized by Philip the deacon, whom the same apostles had sent. And therefore, because they had obtained a legitimate and ecclesiastical baptism, there was no need that they should be baptized any more, but only that which was needed was performed by Peter and John; viz., that prayer being made for them, and hands being imposed, the Holy Spirit should be invoked and poured out upon them, which now too is done among us, so that they who are baptized in the Church are brought to the prelates of the Church, and by our prayers and by the imposition of hands obtain the Holy Spirit, and are perfected with the Lord's seal.<sup>159</sup>

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<sup>159</sup> Cyprian. "The Epistles of Cyprian." Ante-Nicene Fathers, Vol. 5, p. 381.

Elsewhere, when we discuss the Samaritans, we address the question of whether or not they were saved without receiving the Holy Spirit in baptism. Cyprian and the council of priests agree that they were saved, even though they had not received the Holy Spirit through the laying on of hands. As such, this early council affirms the position of the Assemblies of God and does not agree with Packer,<sup>160</sup> Dunn, or Fee. Dunn, a vigorous opponent of the Assemblies of God position, will not let them be saved, but the council declares that they were saved. The difference in the conclusions of Dunn and this early church council could not be more pronounced. Although Fee agrees with the Council's conclusion, he is uncomfortable with their use of the passage. Fee does not want to use Acts 8 for theology. Fee objects that such a passage must not be used for "theological precision." For the early church, Acts 8 is pressed into service exactly for "theological precision." They based their theology on it. Although it is a historical narrative, and supposedly was outside the author's intent to establish a pattern, yet the Council was willing to make one incident into a doctrine. The history in Acts was deeply imbedded in the foundation of their doctrine. Fee says,

In the Samaritan case, for example, Luke actually says the Spirit does not come on them until the laying on of the apostles' hands. In order to square this with Paul's statement in Romans 8, James Dunn has argued that Luke does not consider them to be genuine believers before that. But that

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<sup>160</sup> Packer, *Ibid.*, p.89.

seems to run aground on the rest of linguistic evidence used to describe them prior to the laying on of hands, all of which is Lukan language for Christian conversion. Indeed the resolution to this tension is most likely to be found at the linguistic level. One simply must not press Luke's phenomenological use of Spirit language into service for theological precision. Although Luke says otherwise, we may assume the Samaritans and Paul to have become believers in the Pauline sense—that without the Spirit they are none of his. For Luke, however, the phenomenological expressions of the Spirit's presence are what he describes as the 'coming of' or 'filling with' the Spirit.<sup>161</sup>

Not only was Acts 8 used, but so was Acts 19.<sup>162</sup> The results of such councils became doctrine. They took on absolute force. To ignore such councils was to be branded a heretic. For Cyprian and this council, because it was in the book of Acts, there was a firm foundation for applying the text to their lives. In short, Acts shaped doctrine.

What Acts was for Cyprian and the council, it also was for the anonymous writer, also of the same time period.

And there will be no doubt that men may be baptized with the Holy Ghost without water, --as thou observest that these were baptized

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<sup>161</sup> Fee, p. 110.

<sup>162</sup> Cyprian, p.392.

before they were baptized with water; that the announcements of both John and of our Lord Himself were satisfied, --forasmuch as they received the grace of the promise both without the imposition of the apostles' hands and without the laver, which they attained afterwards. And their hearts being purified, God bestowed upon them at the same time, in virtue of their faith, remission of sins; so that the subsequent baptism conferred upon them this benefit alone, that they received also the invocation of the name of Jesus Christ, that nothing might appear to be wanting to the integrity of their service and faith.<sup>163</sup>

For this anonymous writer, there is no doubt that the book of Acts may be used to establish his point of doctrine. There is nothing of this discussion about the "author's intent" limiting the application to which a Scripture could be put. It described a previous reality that established the norms for his times. Without any doubt, these issues of doctrine in the early church were resolved by relying upon Acts, not upon Paul or the Epistles alone.

If it has been within the tradition of the church to establish doctrine based upon the historical narratives of Acts, why must Pentecostals go into exile and be the only ones who may not use the Acts. By what authority does a teacher stand up today and say that a new limitation has been imposed upon the church? You can't use Acts for

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<sup>163</sup> "A Treatise on Re-baptism by an Anonymous Writer." Ante-Nicene Fathers, Vol. 5. P.670.

doctrine any longer. We contend that the church has, historically, used Acts for doctrine, and it is still available.

Some have suggested that the book of Acts forms what they describe as “narrative theology.” Rather than a series of propositions, stories are told which communicate the theology. Jack Deere, formerly of Dallas Seminary writes,

In the ancient world, especially in the ancient Near Eastern world of which the Bible is a part, the most common way to communicate theology was to tell a story. Stories were written to communicate theological doctrine. Sometimes modern writers treat the Gospels and Acts as if they were nothing more than ‘newspaper’ accounts of what happened. They are definitely more than this; they are themselves theologies. When Luke wrote his Gospel and the book of Acts, he selected all of his material very carefully to teach definite theological truths to his audience.<sup>164</sup>

Deere suggests that if we were to follow the advice of this new approach, we would be eliminating some 59% of the New Testament. Then Deere goes on to say,

Nobody really believes this. They only mean you cannot use the Gospels and Acts to determine the relevance of miracles for the church’s present ministry, and this is a

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<sup>164</sup> Jack Deere. Surprised by the Power of the Spirit (Grand Rapid Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 1993), p. 112-113.

completely arbitrary decision. It is not based on the teaching of the Bible but rather on a personal prejudice.

I don't know that it is right to call it personal prejudice, but I think Deere is correct in calling it completely arbitrary. Deere notes that "theologians have always used the Gospels and Acts for doctrine."<sup>165</sup> This is the point that I have been making here. He goes on to cite John Calvin and subsequent Reformed theologians who made use of the Acts and the Gospels. Missions and evangelism doctrines regularly make use of these books, as do dispensational doctrines.

Roger Stronstad notes that Paul was not hesitant to use the Old Testament narratives for doctrine. Paul reveals his hermeneutical principle when he writes, "*These things happened to them as examples and were written down as warnings for us, on whom the fulfillment of the ages has come.*"<sup>166</sup> Stronstad says,

If for Paul the historical narratives of the Old Testament had didactic lessons for New Testament Christians, then it would be most surprising if Luke, who modeled his historiography after the Old Testament historiography, did not invest his own history of the origin and spread of Christianity with a didactic significance.<sup>167</sup>

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<sup>165</sup> Deere, p. 111.

<sup>166</sup> 1 Corinthians 10:11.

<sup>167</sup> Roger Stronstad. The Charismatic Theology of St. Luke (Peabody, Mass: Hendrickson Publishers, 1984) p. 7.

Finally, we hold that if the church fathers used the Gospels and Acts for doctrine, and if theologians down through the ages have continued the same practice, then it is not unreasonable for Pentecostals to do the same. If Stronstad is correct, then we are using Acts for precisely the purpose that Luke had in mind.

## A Two-stage Work of Grace

Several of the quotations in the previous chapter indicate that the authors believed that the baptism of the Holy Spirit was not the same as salvation. An examination of John 20:22, Acts 1:4-8, and Acts 2:1-4 reveals two stages of the work of the Holy Spirit in the lives of the Disciples. First the Spirit is “in-breathed” by Jesus on Easter night. Then the Spirit is “out-poured” upon the same people on the Feast of Pentecost.

That there are two stages of grace is clear in Origen’s commentary on John. He introduces us to the subject when he writes:

The words "Of his fullness all we received," and "Grace for grace," show, as we have already made clear, that the prophets also received their gift from the fullness of Christ and received a second grace in place of that they had before; for they also, led by the Spirit, advanced from the introduction they had in types to the vision of truth.<sup>168</sup>

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<sup>168</sup> Allan Menzies, D.D., "Origen's Commentary on the Gospel of John," Book VI, Chapter II, Ante-Nicene Fathers, Vol. 9.

Cyril compares the baptism of Jesus in the Jordan with that of the believers:

He washed in the river Jordan, and having imparted of the fragrance of His Godhead to the waters, He came up from them; and the Holy Ghost in the fullness of His being lighted on Him, like resting upon like. And to you in like manner, after you had come up from the pool of the sacred streams, there was given an Unction, the anti-type of what wherewith Christ was anointed; and this is the Holy Ghost; of whom also the blessed Esaias, in his prophecy respecting Him, said in the person of the Lord, *The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me. Because He hath anointed Me: He hath sent Me to preach glad tidings to the poor.*<sup>169</sup>

We understand the relationship of water baptism to the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus.

*Or don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life. If we have been united with him like this in his death, we will*

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<sup>169</sup> Cyril, Lecture XXI.2, (On the Mysteries III. On Chrism) p. 149.

*certainly also be united with him in his resurrection.*<sup>170</sup>

It is upon this biblical understanding that Cyril draws when he says:

And as Christ was in reality crucified, and buried, and raised, and you are in baptism accounted worthy of being crucified, buried, and raised together with Him in a likeness, so is it with the unction also. As He was anointed with an ideal oil of gladness, that is, with the Holy Ghost, called oil of gladness because He is the author of spiritual gladness, so ye were anointed with ointment, having been made partakers and fellows of Christ.

In both these quotations from Cyril, he contrasts the spiritual realities of water baptism with what we call Spirit baptism. While he does not call the second work “Spirit baptism”, it is plain that he acknowledges some further action following water baptism. The anointing with oil was a symbol of the anointing of the Holy Spirit that Jesus received. The analogy of Jesus’ baptism determines their procedure and expectation. Throughout his writings, Cyril draws this two-step distinction. Again he says:

For as Christ after His Baptism, and the visitation of the Holy Ghost, went forth and vanquished the adversary, so likewise ye,

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<sup>170</sup> Romans 6:3-5

after Holy Baptism and the Mystical Chrism, having put on the whole armor of the Holy Ghost, are to stand against the power of the adversary, and vanquish it, saying, *I can do all thing through Christ which strengthens me.*<sup>171</sup>

We notice several features of Cyril's theology. First, he separates water and Spirit baptism. Second, he draws the analogy between the baptism of Jesus and believer's baptism. Third, he links the Spirit anointing of Jesus with power to overcome the devil. Fourth, he relies upon a narrative account to form his theology. In doing so, he goes beyond the intent of the author. In this Cyril would not get along well with either Lederle or Fee.

Cyril's comparison of this anointing after baptism, with the anointing of the Old Testament priests, further strengthens the two-step view. Cyril writes:

Moreover, you should know that in the old Scripture there lies the symbol of this Chrism. For what time Moses imparted to his brother the command of God, and made him High Priest, after bathing in water, he anointed him; and Aaron was called Christ or Anointed, evidently from the typical Chrism. So also the high priest, in advancing Solomon to the kingdom, anointed him after he had bathed in Gihon. To them however these things happened in a figure. But to you not in a figure but in truth;

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<sup>171</sup> Cyril, Lecture XXI.4, (On the Mysteries III. On Chrism) p. 150.

because ye were truly anointed by the Holy Ghost.<sup>172</sup>

The fact that he makes the comparison between the anointing of the high priest in the Old Testament and that of Christians adds further substance to the baptism of Jesus who was also washed then anointed. It also makes the baptism of Jesus something more than a historical analogy. It is the fulfillment of the law. When he makes the connection between the believers and the Old Testament, he thereby makes the baptism of Jesus the analogy for our experience.

It is also significant that Cyril does not limit this two-phased approach only to baptism. In his lecture on the crucifixion and burial of Jesus he says, “thou receivest now remission of thy sins, and the gifts of the King’s spiritual bounty.”<sup>173</sup>

In his lecture on the Holy Spirit he says:

If thou believe, thou shalt not only receive remission of sins, but also do things which pass man’s power. And mayest thou be worthy of the gift of prophecy also! For thou shalt receive grace according to the measure of thy capacity and not of my words; for I may possibly speak of but small things, yet thou mayest receive greater; since faith is a large affair...He will give thee gifts of grace of every kind, ... Be ye

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<sup>172</sup>Cyril, Lecture XXI.6, (On the Mysteries III. On Chrism) p. 150.

<sup>173</sup>Cyril, Lecture XIII.23, (On the Words, crucified and buried) p. 88.

ready to receive grace, and when ye have received it, cast it not away.<sup>174</sup>

## **The Samaritan believers who received the Holy Spirit**

If Cyril's view was widely held, and if he is following a view that is rooted in an understanding of Scripture, then we might have a reflection of how Luke describes the experience of the Samaritan believers. Consider the Biblical account:

*Philip went down to a city in Samaria and proclaimed the Christ there. When the crowds heard Philip and saw the miraculous signs he did, they all paid close attention to what he said. With shrieks, evil spirits came out of many, and many paralytics and cripples were healed. So there was great joy in that city.*

*Now for some time a man named Simon had practiced sorcery in the city and amazed all the people of Samaria. He boasted that he was someone great, and all the people, both high and low, gave him their attention and exclaimed, "This man is the divine power known as the Great Power." They followed him because he had amazed them for a long time with his magic.*

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<sup>174</sup> Cyril, Lecture XVII.37, (Continuation of the Discourse on the Holy Ghost) p. 133.

*But when they believed Philip as he preached the good news of the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women.*

*Simon himself believed and was baptized. And he followed Philip everywhere, astonished by the great signs and miracles he saw.*

*When the apostles in Jerusalem heard that Samaria had accepted the word of God, they sent Peter and John to them. When they arrived, they prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit, because the Holy Spirit had not yet come upon any of them; they had simply been baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus. Then Peter and John placed their hands on them, and they received<sup>175</sup> the Holy Spirit.<sup>176</sup>*

For some, the troubling part of Luke's account is that the believers received the Holy Spirit so long after salvation. If Cyril were to apply his model to these believers, he would say they had some partial experience with the Holy Spirit which was not completed until the Apostles came and laid hands on them. Only then had they received the Holy Spirit completely. On the other hand, if Cyril learns his view from this passage, and from those before him who were also schooled by it, then we have

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<sup>175</sup> Received: *lambano*; a prolonged form of a primary verb, which is used only as an alternate in certain tenses; to take. In very many applications, literally and figuratively; properly objective or active, to get hold of. (Strong's)

<sup>176</sup> Acts 8:5-17

evidence for a Pentecostal interpretation of this passage from the earliest days.

The Pentecostal explanation of the situation is that they received the Holy Spirit in salvation, but had not yet received the Baptism with the Holy Spirit. On the other hand, these early Christians believed that only the Baptism with the Holy Spirit completed the process and any partial experience was inadequate. They had not yet received the Holy Spirit, that is, completely and fully received the Holy Spirit.

Can we deny that these Samaritans were saved? They believed Philip as he preached the good news of God and Jesus Christ. They were baptized. Then Luke notes that they accepted the Word of God. They met the fundamental requirement for salvation: “*Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved.*”<sup>177</sup> Cyprian’s Council, referenced earlier, said yes, they were indeed saved.<sup>178</sup> The Constitutions of the Holy Apostles also follows this line saying “they embraced the faith of the God of the universe, and of the Lord Jesus, and were baptized into His name.”<sup>179</sup>

The Samaritan passage poses one small problem for Pentecostals and one large problem for those who deny our interpretation. Our small problem is the seemingly exclusive nature of Luke’s explanatory comment, “the Holy Spirit had not yet come upon any of them.” If salvation is defined by receiving the Holy Spirit, as Romans says, and if the Holy Spirit had not yet come upon these believers, then they cannot be saved. However, if we

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<sup>177</sup> Mark 16:16.

<sup>178</sup> See page 41.

<sup>179</sup> Constitutions of the Holy Apostles, Book VI, section VII. Ante-Nicene Fathers, Vol. 7, p. 452.

keep the first half of the sentence attached to the second half, the tension is relaxed. The full sentence reads,

When they arrived, they prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit, because the Holy Spirit had not yet come upon any of them; they had simply been baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus.

In the full sentence, not having received the Holy Spirit is compared to their water baptism. Thus the discussion is about the two baptisms. They had not received the Baptism in the Holy Spirit, only water baptism. Luke is not categorically denying the Holy Spirit had come upon them, he is saying the Spirit had not come upon them in Spirit baptism. Luke's distinction between the two baptisms follows John the Baptist's "*I baptize you with water, but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.*"<sup>180</sup> The comparative statement was an existing mental construct that Luke condenses further.

In light of Cyprian's Council, the Constitutions of the Holy Apostles, and Cyril of Jerusalem, this is a more reasonable reading than what Dunn offers. Dunn is forced into an odd position for a Reformed theologian, he must take away their salvation. Luke says they believed Philip as he preached the good news. Dunn would have another Acts 2 miracle. Even though Philip preached the Gospel, Dunn thinks they heard him speaking about "the Tahed."<sup>181</sup>

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<sup>180</sup> Mark 1:8 See also Matt 3:11 which says: "*I baptize you with water for repentance. But after me will come one who is more powerful than I, whose sandals I am not fit to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire.*"

<sup>181</sup> Dunn, p. 64.

The Scripture says they believed and were baptized. Dunn says it was not believing the Gospel that motivated them to be baptized but “the herd-instinct of a popular mass-movement.”<sup>182</sup> Then Luke notes that they accepted the Word of God. Dunn says “it was simply the assent of the mind to the acceptability of what Philip preached.”<sup>183</sup>

Dunn is inventive. He has explanations for why we must resort to his very specialized interpretations. Why must Dunn take away the salvation of the Samaritans? If they stay saved and receive the Holy Spirit later, then the Pentecostal doctrine of subsequence stands. Rather than allow that, he must take away their salvation prior to the Apostles laying hands upon them. Dunn needs to hear Cyprian:

...one is not born by the imposition of hands when he receives the Holy Ghost, but in baptism, that so, being already born, he may receive the Holy Spirit....<sup>184</sup>

Catholic theology recognized the problem of the Samaritans and developed the idea of “confirmation” based on the dynamics of this account. They could not deny that the Samaritans were saved. The whole history of the church affirmed their salvation. But if the Catholic theologians accepted the Samaritans as saved, then they must explain away the phrase: “*Then Peter and John placed their hands on them and they received the Holy Spirit.*”

In Catholic theology, the Baptism with the Holy Spirit is received as part of the salvation-water baptism event. So

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<sup>182</sup> Dunn p.65.

<sup>183</sup> Dunn p.65.

<sup>184</sup> Cyprian. “The Epistles of Cyprian,” Ante-Nicene Fathers, Vol. 5, p.388.

Catholic theology, along with Anglicans and others who follow them, is caught on the horns of a dilemma. Was the Holy Spirit received in Salvation or when the Apostles laid their hands on them? Rather than accept the views of Cyril or accept the Pentecostal views, the Catholics invented the notion of “confirmation.” In their view, the Holy Spirit was received earlier, when the Samaritans believed and were baptized. The Spirit was only “confirmed” in their lives when the proper authorities laid hands on them. They were comfortable in this view because their own practice often delayed baptism, and the imposition of hands, some time beyond when the catechumen entered the church’s influence.

It is not clear to me when the church developed the idea of “confirmation”. Possibly it was with Hippolytus of Rome in the third century. What is quite clear is that Cyril, in the middle of the fourth century, is more in tune with a two-step process than he was with Baptism with the Holy Spirit occurring at salvation and a mere “confirmation” occurring later.

What is equally clear is that a very important feature in Catholic/Anglican/Lutheran theology is built only on the Book of Acts. Why do they have no reluctance to build on the historical narratives for their theology but Pentecostals must stay far away from it? Who has forced us to play with one book tied behind our backs?

## **Water Baptism and Baptism with the Holy Spirit**

The principal question of this section asks about the relationship between the two baptisms. Many maintain that the two are virtually identical, or that they are simply two parts of the same event. We will maintain that they are two separate things entirely.

### **John the Baptist saw two baptisms.**

John said, *“I would not have known him, except that the one who sent me to baptize with water told me, ‘The man on whom you see the Spirit come down and remain is he who will baptize with the Holy Spirit.’”*<sup>185</sup> Luke’s account is the same: *“John answered them all, ‘I baptize you with water. But one more powerful than I will come, the thongs of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire.’”*<sup>186</sup>

Mark’s Gospel is simple in its declaration: *“I baptize you with water, but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.”*<sup>187</sup> In each Gospel, a distinction is made between water baptism and baptism with the Holy Spirit.

In Matthew’s Gospel we learn that John’s baptism was particularly connected to repentance:

*I baptize you with water for repentance. But after me will come one who is more powerful than I, whose sandals I am not fit*

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<sup>185</sup> John 1:33

<sup>186</sup> Luke 3:16

<sup>187</sup> Mark 1:8 See also Matt 3:11 which says: *“I baptize you with water for repentance. But after me will come one who is more powerful than I, whose sandals I am not fit to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire.”*

*to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire.*<sup>188</sup>

John himself notes that there is a difference between the two baptisms. It remains to be established that John's baptism is related to the baptism of new converts to Christianity. Some might say, since John baptized before the New Covenant era, that his baptism is entirely different from that of convert baptism after the crucifixion. But if Packer can have the disciples saved before the cross, can we baptize them? In any case, John was making reference to the baptism with the Holy Spirit that would not occur until the New Covenant was in place.

Tertullian treated the baptism of John as relating to repentance. For him, since repentance is part of the Christian initiation, John's baptism was the same as the baptism of any person who repents in the Christian era. Further, it is the baptism of repentance that prepares the way for the next work of the Spirit.

**For Tertullian, water baptism does not convey anything celestial, that is, of the Holy Spirit. John's baptism was for repentance.**

But we, with but as poor a measure of understanding as of faith, are able to determine that that baptism was divine indeed, (yet in respect of the command, not in respect of efficacy too, in that we read that John was sent by the Lord to perform this duty,) but human in its nature; for it

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<sup>188</sup> Matthew 3:11

conveyed nothing celestial, but it foreministered to things celestial: being, to wit, appointed over repentance, which is in man's power. In fact, the doctors of the law and the Pharisees, who were unwilling to "believe" did not repent either. But if repentance is a thing human, its baptism must necessarily be of the same nature; else, if it had been celestial, it would have given both the Holy Spirit and remission of sins.<sup>189</sup>

By making the distinction between human and celestial acts, and noting that water baptism is human, then it cannot impart the baptism with the Holy Spirit, which is celestial. For Tertullian, water baptism prepares us to receive the Holy Spirit, but is not the reception of the Spirit itself.

Not that *in* the waters we obtain the Holy Spirit; but in the water, under (the witness of) the angel, we are cleansed, and prepared *for* the Holy Spirit. In this case also a type has proceeded; for thus was John beforehand the Lord's forerunner, "preparing His ways." Thus, too, does the angel, the witness of baptism, "make the paths straight" for the Holy Spirit, who is about to come upon us, by the washing away of sins, which faith, sealed in (the Name of)

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<sup>189</sup> Tertullian, "On Baptism, X", Ante-Nicene Fathers, Vol. 3. (Peabody Massachusetts: Hendrickson Publishers, 1995. Reprint of Christian Literature Publishing company, 1894.) p. 674.

the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit,  
obtains.<sup>190</sup>

It is a very small step of logical deduction that if the baptism that relates to repentance precedes the Holy Spirit, it cannot be the same thing as the Baptism with the Holy Spirit. Tertullian understood Peter's Pentecost Day sermon to be urging the baptism of repentance as a preparation for the gift of the Holy Spirit, rather than as the gift itself:

*Peter replied, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off-- for all whom the Lord our God will call."<sup>191</sup>*

In light of the above two statements by Tertullian, and if the other Apostles were of the same view, one can understand how the Apostle Paul would have asked the believers in Ephesus if they had received the Holy Spirit when they believed. He wanted to know if they had received the baptism with the Holy Spirit:

*While Apollos was at Corinth, Paul took the road through the interior and arrived at Ephesus. There he found some disciples and asked them, "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?" They answered, "No,*

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<sup>190</sup> Tertullian, "On Baptism VI," p. 672.

<sup>191</sup> Acts 2:38-39.

*we have not even heard that there is a Holy Spirit."*

*So Paul asked, "Then what baptism did you receive?" "John's baptism," they replied.*

*Paul said, "John's baptism was a baptism of repentance. He told the people to believe in the one coming after him, that is, in Jesus." On hearing this, they were baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus.*

*When Paul placed his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came on them, and they spoke in tongues and prophesied.<sup>192</sup>*

Tertullian also adds a decidedly Reformation slant when he notes that "faith obtains" the work of the Spirit, even though baptism also plays a part in preparation for the Spirit. Baptism in water becomes the "sealing act" of the faith.

But now that faith has been enlarged, and is become a faith which believes in His nativity, passion, and resurrection, there has been an amplification added to the sacrament, viz., **the sealing act of baptism**; the clothing, in some sense, of the faith which before was bare and which cannot exist now without its proper law. For the law of baptizing has been imposed. and the formula prescribed: "Go," He saith, "teach the nations, baptizing them into the name of

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<sup>192</sup> Acts 19:1-6.

the Father, and the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.” The comparison with this law of that definition, unless a man have been reborn of water and Spirit, he shall not enter into the kingdom of the heavens,” has  tied faith to the necessity of baptism. Accordingly, all thereafter who became believers used to be baptized. Then it was, too, that Paul when he believed, was baptized: and this is the meaning of the precept which the Lord had given him when smitten with the plague of loss of sight, saying, “Arise, and enter Damascus; there shall be demonstrated to thee what thou oughtest to do,” to wit, -be baptized, which was the only thing lacking to him.<sup>193</sup>

In another place, Tertullian describes baptism as the act of sealing that he contrasts with the working of the Holy Spirit and the Communion. It is significant to note that after water baptism, in Tertullian’s time, the candidate immediately proceeded to the next two steps which included having hands laid upon him for the gifts of the Spirit, and then Holy Communion. No one would confuse Holy Communion with water baptism, even though they occurred in immediate sequence. In the same way, we should accept that for Tertullian, each of these three events had their own distinctive reality, even though connected sequentially for the candidate.

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<sup>193</sup> Tertullian, “On Baptism XII,” p. 676

One Lord God does she [the Church] acknowledge, the Creator of the universe, and Christ Jesus (born) of the Virgin Mary, the Son of God the Creator; and the Resurrection of the flesh; the law and the prophets she unites in one volume with the writings of evangelists and apostles, from which she drinks in her faith. This she seals with the water (of baptism), arrays with the Holy Ghost, feeds with the Eucharist, cheers with martyrdom, and against such a discipline thus (maintained) she admits no gainsayers.<sup>194</sup>

Cyprian, who was a pupil of Tertullian, follows his teacher into the same conclusions. Cyprian argues that the Spirit cannot enter until a receptacle has been formed. The receptacle is formed in salvation, then the Spirit enters. It is a subsequent action of the Spirit.

...one is not born by the imposition of hands when he receives the Holy Ghost, but in baptism, that so, being already born, he may receive the Holy Spirit, even as it happened in the first man Adam. For first God formed him, and then breathed into his nostrils the breath of life. For the Spirit cannot be received, unless he who receives first have an existence.<sup>195</sup>

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<sup>194</sup> Tertullian, "On Prescription against Heretics, XXXVI," p. 260-261.

<sup>195</sup> Cyprian. "The Epistles of Cyprian," ANE, Vol. 5, p.388.

Later, Origen notes that the gifts of the Spirit can be received in a variety of ways. Normally, non-Pentecostals say that the gifts are part of salvation. But when Origen says that gifts can come from baptism or in some other way, his comment exposes a belief that gifts are not necessarily attached to water baptism. This is an important admission, because if gifts are not always attached to baptism and salvation, then they cannot be inherently connected. If they are not inherently connected then they are different.

... we shall understand this to be said of the gift of the Holy Spirit: that when, whether by baptism, or by the grace of the Spirit, the word of wisdom, or the work of knowledge, or of any other gift, has been bestowed upon a man, and not rightly administered, i.e., either buried in the earth or tied up in a napkin, the gift of the Spirit will certainly be withdrawn from his soul, ...<sup>196</sup>

If gifts are not part of salvation for Origen, where do they come in? In Chrysostom's day, there was still the sense of separation. He writes of "...the cleansing of Baptism, the giving of the Spirit, the furnishing of the other blessings."<sup>197</sup> Chrysostom noted the delay of Pentecost as a necessary preparation of the hearts, a "longing desire for that event", by the disciples. Once we had a change of

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<sup>196</sup> Origen, "Origen De Principiis", ANF, Alexander Roberts, and James Donaldson, eds., (Peabody, Massachusetts, Hendrickson Publishers, 1994), Vol.4, pg. 296.

<sup>197</sup> Chrysostom, Homily XIV, The Epistle to the Romans, NPNE, Vol. 11, p. 441.

heart, and “our nature could be seen in heaven...then the Spirit should come”.<sup>198</sup> This was not just for the disciples. “It is the same with us also.”<sup>199</sup>

With the passage of the early centuries, we see more and more of Origen’s view that spiritual gifts are a very distant result of an exceptionally holy life. The gifts become more and more out of the reach of ordinary Christians. The question we are addressing here is what is the connection between water baptism and spirit baptism. Origen does not really believe that gifts come from water baptism, because he sets them so far forward into the future. In his system, gifts are the Ph.D. of Christian maturity.

Now these effects we are to suppose are brought about in the following manner: As holy and immaculate souls, after devoting themselves to God with all affection and purity, and after preserving themselves free from all contagion of evil spirits, and after being purified by lengthened abstinence, and imbued with holy and religious training, assume by this means a portion of divinity, and earn the grace of prophecy, and other divine gifts...<sup>200</sup>

Even with Origin this is not an entirely new idea. While we see lots of this idea still today, it actually had

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<sup>198</sup> Chrysostom, Homily I, The Acts of the Apostles, NPNF, Vol. 11, p. 6.

<sup>199</sup> Chrysostom, Homily I, The Acts of the Apostles, NPNF, Vol. 11, p.6.

<sup>200</sup> Origen, “Origen De Principiis, Book 3”, Ante-Nicene Fathers, Alexander Roberts, and James Donaldson, eds.,(Peabody, Massachusetts, Hendrickson Publishers, 1994), Vol.4, pg. 336

roots even before the time of Christ. Robert Menzies points to the Mishnah as originating this idea

R.Phineas b. Jair says: Heedfulness leads to cleanliness, and cleanliness leads to purity, and purity leads to abstinence, and abstinence leads to holiness, and holiness leads to humility, and humility leads to shunning of sin, and the shunning of sin leads to saintliness, and saintliness leads to (the gift of) the Holy Spirit, and the Holy Spirit leads to the resurrection of the dead. And the resurrection of the dead shall come through Elijah of blessed memory. Amen (*m. Sot* 9.15).

The initial part of the ‘chain’ (up to and including ‘saintliness leads to [the gift of] the Holy Spirit’) portrays the Spirit as a gift presently available to the pious individual.<sup>201</sup>

### **Cyril of Jerusalem also saw water baptism as the seal of the Holy Spirit**

For this cause the Lord, preventing us according to his loving-kindness, has granted repentance at Baptism, in order that

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<sup>201</sup> Menzies, Part I, Chpt.5, Section 2.2, Empowered for Witness, (Sheffield, England: Sheffield Academic Press, 1994), P.98-9. In a footnote he adds “The Holy Spirit is cited as a reward for: ‘obedience to the law’ (*Mech.* 113-14); ‘learning and doing (the law)’ (e.g. *Lev. R.* 35.7; b. *Ber.* 17a); ‘good works’ (*Num. R.* 10.5; *Ruth R.* 4.3); “the proclamation of the Torah’ (*Cant. R.* 1.1.8-9); ‘devotion to Israel’ (*Num. R.* 15.20); ‘study of the Torah’ (*Eccl.R.* 2.8.1).

we may cast off the chief—nay rather the whole burden of our sins, and having received the seal by the Holy Ghost, may be made heirs of eternal life.<sup>202</sup>

When Cyril begins to view water baptism as the seal of the Holy Spirit, he is starting to depart from an earlier way of looking at it.<sup>203</sup>

When we move from water baptism as a preparation for the Holy Spirit, to water baptism as a seal of the Holy Spirit, we are starting down the road of risking the distinctive aspects of water baptism verses baptism with the Holy Spirit. The terminology which covers these activities, and which distinguishes them one from the other, is here starting to confuse the church. For Tertullian, there is no confusion, and for Cyril the confusion is only partial, but by comparing the two writers, separated by 170 years, we can observe the slide.

For Tertullian and Cyprian, the gifts of the Spirit are after water baptism and occur later in response to prayer.

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<sup>202</sup> Cyril of Jerusalem. Catechetical Lecture IV.32, Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Vol. 7, (Peabody Massachusetts: Hendrickson Publishers, 1995. Reprint of Christian Literature Publishing company, 1894.) p. 26

<sup>203</sup>There is an interesting phrase in Clement of Alexandria who may be contrasting water baptism with the seal of the Spirit: “And what place is there any longer for the repentance of him who was once an unbeliever, through which comes forgiveness of sins? So that neither is baptism rational, nor the blessed seal,<sup>10</sup> nor the Son, nor the Father. But God, as I think, turns out to be the distribution to men of natural powers, which has not as the foundation of salvation voluntary faith.”<sup>10</sup> Either baptism or the imposition of hands after baptism. [For an almost pontifical decision as to this whole matter, with a very just eulogy of the German (Lutheran) confirmation-office, see Bunsen, *Hippol.*, iii. Pp. 214, 369. Clement of Alexandria. “The Stromata, or Miscellanies, III,” Ante-Nicene Fathers; vol. 2 .] Alexander Roberts & James Donaldson, eds., (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson Publishers, 1994) 349.

Therefore, for them, the Baptism with the Holy Spirit cannot be the same as water baptism.

Therefore, blessed ones, whom the grace of God awaits, when you ascend from that most sacred font of your new birth, and spread your hands for the first time in the house of your mother, together with your brethren, ask from the Father, ask from the Lord, that His own specialties of grace and distributions of gifts may be supplied you. “Ask,” saith He, “and ye shall receive.” Well, you have asked, and have received; you have knocked, and it has been opened to you.<sup>204</sup>

The anointing of the Holy Spirit takes place after baptism and is not the same as baptism and this anointing is comparable to the Old Testament anointing of the priests which followed the washing with water.

After this, when we have issued from the font, we are thoroughly anointed with a blessed unction, (a practice derived) from the old discipline, wherein on entering the priesthood, *men* were wont to be anointed with oil from a horn, ever since Aaron was anointed by Moses. Whence Aaron is called “Christ” from the “chrism” which is “the unction;” which, when made spiritual, furnished an appropriate name to the Lord,

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<sup>204</sup> Tertullian, “On Baptism”, Chapter XX, p. 679

because He was “anointed” with the Spirit by God the Father; as *written* in the Acts “For truly they were gathered together in this city against Thy Holy Son whom Thou hast anointed.” Thus, too, in our case, the unction runs carnally, (*i.e.* on the body,) but profits spiritually; in the same way as the *act* of baptism itself too is carnal, in that we are plunged in water, but the *effect* spiritual, in that we are freed from sins.<sup>205</sup>

Cyril also recognizes that these two events are not the same, but he is less clear on the subject.

I do not deny that many in the early centuries eventually saw water and Spirit baptism as the same thing, or at least the two were bound up together. But this was not always the understanding. This was a position they eventually came to because the spiritual realities of Spirit baptism became less and less frequent and more and more a formality. Church leadership needed these gifts, but not the ordinary people. But in the church of Acts it was different.

Chrysostom recognized that his century was different than the earlier church. “In those times even ordinary persons were gifted with the Holy Ghost....”<sup>206</sup> His statement can only infer that in his day they were not so gifted, yet he does not deny that Christians in his day have the Holy Spirit.

He also acknowledges that, in the beginning, the spiritual realities of water baptism were not the same as Spirit baptism. They were divided. However, by his day

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<sup>205</sup> Tertullian, “On Baptism”, Chapter VII, p. 672.

<sup>206</sup> Chrysostom. Homily I, The Acts of the Apostles. NPNF Vol 11, p. 3.

they had merged under one heading. He is reminded of this as he considers the upper room and its “baptism.” How can there be a baptism if there is no water?

But why does Christ say, "Ye shall be baptized," when in fact there was no water in the upper room? Because the more essential part of Baptism is the Spirit, through Whom indeed the water has its operation; in the same manner our Lord also is said to be anointed, not that He had ever been anointed with oil, but because He had received the Spirit. Besides, we do in fact find them receiving a baptism with water [and a baptism with the Spirit], and these at different moments. In our case both take place under one act, but then they were divided. For in the beginning they were baptized by John; since, if harlots and publicans went to that baptism, much rather would they who thereafter were to be baptized by the Holy Ghost.<sup>207</sup>

Furthermore, Chrysostom notices that a gap between the first experience of God and the baptism of the Holy Spirit seems to be normal. Indeed, he gives several examples of those who had to wait on God or “watch.” Elisha had to watch before receiving the double portion of the Spirit. In the case of Paul, “grace did not come to him immediately, but three days intervened, during which he

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<sup>207</sup> Chrysostom. Homily I, p. 7.

was blind; purified the while, and prepared by fear.”<sup>208</sup> Then Chrysostom, using the example of Paul as his premise, compares the experience at Pentecost by saying, “neither did he immediately send the Spirit, but on the fiftieth day.”<sup>209</sup> In each case they had to wait for their baptism of the Spirit.

In this paper we have not considered the role that speaking in tongues plays in the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Is it just one of the gifts of the Spirit or does it play an additional role as initial evidence of the Spirit baptism itself? Neither the Bible nor any church father makes any direct statement one way or another. We are left to come to our conclusions by way of deduction and preponderance of evidence. The way that Tertullian refers to what happened at Cornelius’ house does raise an interesting question. Luke describes what happened: “*While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word. And they of the circumcision which believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost. For they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God.*”<sup>210</sup> Tertullian, relying upon Luke, describes it slightly differently:

Finally, granting that upon the centurion Cornelius, even before baptism, the honorable gift of the Holy Spirit, together with the gift of prophecy besides, had

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<sup>208</sup> Chrysostom, Homily I, p. 7.

<sup>209</sup> Chrysostom, p. 7.

<sup>210</sup> Acts 10:44-46. KJV.

hastened to descent, we see that his fasts had been heard.<sup>211</sup>

There are two conclusions we might draw from Tertullian's language. He might believe that only the descent of the Holy Spirit and prophecy have any significance, and tongues is such a small matter that it is not even worth mentioning. On the other hand, Tertullian may not have mentioned speaking in tongues because, in his mind, speaking in tongues and the gift of the Holy Spirit are inseparable.

### **The disciples of Acts 19**

The disciples of Acts 19 offer an important sidelight on the question of when salvation occurs and how water baptism and spirit baptism are different. From the Pentecostal viewpoint, this passage is important because it distinguishes between the two baptisms and because it affirms the doctrine of subsequence.

When Dunn describes the Ephesian disciples of Acts 19, he denies they are Christians when Paul arrives. He has two reasons. First, Dunn seizes upon their ignorance of the issues relating to water baptism and Baptism in the Holy Spirit. From that starting point, he leaps, without evidence, to the conclusion that they were also ignorant about Jesus.<sup>212</sup> Dunn once again goes too far in his polemical pursuit. Just three sentences before, Luke had written that Apollos “*taught about Jesus accurately, though he knew*

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<sup>211</sup> Tertullian, “On Fasting”, Ante-Nicene Fathers, Vol. 4 Alexander Roberts, and James Donaldson, eds., (Massachusetts: Hendrickson Publishers, 1994), pg. 107.

<sup>212</sup> Dunn, p.83.

*only the baptism of John.*”<sup>213</sup> But Dunn argues that because they only knew the baptism of John, not baptism in Jesus name, they could not have been saved. Dunn denies Luke’s premise statement. Chrysostom asked the important question: “If this man knew only the baptism of John, how is it that he was ‘fervent in the Spirit,’ for the Spirit was not given in that way?”<sup>214</sup>

Luke first tells us why these twelve disciples had gaps in their knowledge about the Holy Spirit. Luke’s explanation does not satisfy Dunn. Like the Samaritans, he must strip them of their relationship to Jesus. Apollos taught about Jesus accurately, and presumably these disciples understood what Apollos said. Indeed, Chrysostom indicates it was for this very reason that Paul tied the Apollos information with the baptisms of Acts 19.<sup>215</sup> But for a convenient moment, Dunn becomes a sacramentalist, insisting that only in baptism can one become a Christian. To counter Dunn’s view, Robert Menzies has written:

Dunn’s argument at this point is based on the idea of ‘believers’ being without the Spirit. However, this objection fails to take into account the fact that the narrative as it currently exists (particularly vv.2-4) has been significantly shaped by Luke. The dialogue between Paul and the Ephesians is a Lukan construction which highlights the Ephesians’ need of the Spirit’s enablement

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<sup>213</sup> Acts 18:25.

<sup>214</sup> St. Chrysostom, Homily XL, The Acts of the Apostles. NPNF, Vol 11, p. 246.

<sup>215</sup> Ibid, p 246.

and its normal prerequisite, Christian baptism. Paul would undoubtedly have related the story differently, for the potential separation of belief from reception of the Spirit *simpliciter* is presupposed by the question, 'Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?' <sup>216</sup>

Throughout his book, Dunn relies excessively upon Paul's statement "*And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Christ.*"<sup>217</sup> Without considering how the rarely used phrase "Spirit of Christ" might differ from other references to the Holy Spirit, Dunn amplifies this into an overarching statement which exceeds all other statements on the subject. He makes it the gatekeeper of all truth relating to the Spirit. Luke is not free to use his own terminology without passing through Paul's gate. The gatekeeping phrase so dominates Dunn's thinking that he cannot hear Luke's statements on the subject. He rules Luke out as though it was Paul's intention that his statement should drown out Luke. (Both Fee and Dunn become oddly silent here as to Paul's primary intent with this verse). Dunn brings a subtle change to Paul's statement. Paul uses possessing the Spirit of Christ as a defining characteristic of being a Christian particularly as it relates to holy living. Dunn says "it is Paul's doctrine that a man receives the Spirit *when* he believes" (emphasis his).<sup>218</sup> Under Dunn's pen, it changes from an element relating to the definition of character, to an

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<sup>216</sup> Menzies, Part II, Chpt.11, Section 2.5.2, Empowered for Witness, (Sheffield Academic Press), P.223.

<sup>217</sup> Romans 8:9.

<sup>218</sup> Dunn, p. 87.

element relating to sequence. This idea was not Paul's intention at all. Nonetheless, thereafter, if the sequence does not fit, then Luke cannot be allowed to mean other than what is allowed by the sequence.

Before we return to Dunn's analysis of Acts 19, I would like to reflect further on the treatment of the Romans 8 passage in church history. Dunn and Fee use it, not as Paul intended, but to argue that since receiving the Spirit is the definition of salvation, then there really is no such thing as subsequence. Not only is Dunn and Fee's application removed from Paul's intent, it is not found in the church fathers. For example, St. John Chrysostom views the passage as a trinitarian statement. "...where the Spirit is, there Christ is also."<sup>219</sup> This defines the nature of the Trinity. The passage may relate to character, as in Paul, or it may express the nature of the Trinity, as in Chrysostom, but there is nothing detrimental to the idea of subsequence.

Returning to Acts 19, Dunn's second reason is actually a denial of the meaning of the term that Luke uses to refer to those whom Paul met. Dunn admits that the term disciples "in Acts usually equals Christians."<sup>220</sup> However, because in this case, the term is not preceded by a definite article it "probably implies that the twelve did not belong to 'the disciples' in Ephesus—a fact confirmed by their ignorance of basic Christian matters."<sup>221</sup> His whole argument dangles by a thread attached to something that isn't there, the definite article.

Why does Paul use the term "disciples" at all? Dunn says it was a "mistaken presumption" on Paul's part that he

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<sup>219</sup> St. John Chrysostom, *The Epistle to the Romans*, Homily XIII. *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, Vol. 11. (Hendrickson, 1994) p. 436.

<sup>220</sup> Dunn, p. 84.

<sup>221</sup> Dunn, p. 84.

discovered and quickly rectified by baptizing them. When Dunn says it was a “mistaken presumption” he admits that Paul presumed they were Christians. Indeed, Dunn admits that the use of the word “disciples” even without the definite article, “requires some connection with Christianity.”<sup>222</sup>

Dunn offers no explanation for how Paul happened to meet these disciples when he came to the fourth largest city in the Roman Empire. Did Paul happen to meet them in the market, button-holing them in a kind of “have you ever heard of the four holy spiritual laws” approach? Or, in that vast pagan city, did Paul meet them under the narrower auspices of the church where Apollos preached?

Once again, Dunn must take away the salvation of these disciples. If they were indeed Christians before receiving the Baptism in the Holy Spirit, then his argument goes under the water as quickly as these Ephesian disciples did, and only the Pentecostals emerge from it.

But even if Dunn is right and the disciples were not truly disciples after all, Luke’s way of phrasing the encounter affirm the doctrine of subsequence. Luke first notes they were baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus. Surely by now, receiving the correct baptism, Dunn can accept that they were Christians and had received the Holy Spirit in salvation.

*On hearing this, they were baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus. When Paul placed his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came on*

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<sup>222</sup> Dunn, p. 84.

*them, and they spoke in tongues and prophesied.*<sup>223</sup>

Are we to think that Luke has the preacher's disorder of redundancy? If being baptized indicates that the Holy Spirit has been received, why does Luke say that they received the Holy Spirit when Paul laid his hands on them? Is his second sentence repeating the same thing over and over again in a very redundant and repetitious manner? Hundreds of times I have laid hands on people and they immediately began speaking in tongues. There was no gap in time, they began to speak in the same instant. If, when Paul laid his hands on them, they began speaking in tongues, does Luke the doctor know that even Holy Ghost anointed lungs don't operate under water? Or, does he mean to say that, after being baptized, they began to speak in tongues? When Luke reported the anointing of Jesus, he was precise enough to write that Jesus was praying when the Spirit came upon him. Does he lose that precision here, or does he really believe that just as the anointing of the Spirit came on Jesus after his baptism, as he was praying, that it also came on these disciples?

In Acts 19, the disciples receive the Baptism in the Holy Spirit, either some time after salvation, or immediately after salvation. In either case, it is after salvation, thus demonstrating the doctrine of subsequence.

Chrysostom clearly understood the theological problem that Dunn struggles with. However, Chrysostom had a more simple explanation. He said, "...it was likely they

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<sup>223</sup> Acts 19:5-6.

had the Spirit, but it did not appear.”<sup>224</sup> The Holy Spirit was present in the lives of these disciples from the moment of salvation but it did not “appear” until hands were laid upon them. Interestingly, this is precisely the position that Kelian McDonnell took some sixteen centuries later.

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<sup>224</sup> Chrysostom, Homily XL, The Acts of the Apostles. NPNF, vol 11, p. 246.



## Imparting Spiritual Gifts

*Imparting and receiving spiritual gifts was something that continued well after a person was a Christian.*

It is clear that one generation from the Apostles, the people were eager for spiritual gifts. This was not limited to novices, but it was also true of bishops, presbyters, and deacons. But the very disciples of the Apostles were involved in imparting and receiving spiritual gifts.

Ignatius was a disciple of the Apostle John as was Polycarp. Ignatius was involved in imparting spiritual gifts. This is important for two reasons. First, it establishes that people other than the Apostles were imparting spiritual gifts. Second, it establishes that the spiritual gifts were still in operation after the Apostles, that spiritual gifts did not die out with the Apostles.

Wherefore, with great joy, through his desire to suffer, he came down from Antioch to Seleucia, from which place he set sail. And after a great deal of suffering he came to Smyrna, where he disembarked with great joy, and hastened to see the holy Polycarp, [formerly] his fellow-disciple, and [now]

bishop of Smyrna. For they had both, in old times, been disciples of St. John the Apostle. Being then brought to him, and having communicated to him some spiritual gifts, and glorying in his bonds, he entreated of him to labor along with him for the fulfillment of his desire; earnestly indeed asking this of the whole Church (for the cities and Churches of Asia had welcomed the holy man through their bishops, and presbyters, and deacons, all hastening to meet him, if by any means they might receive from him some spiritual gift), but above all, the holy Polycarp, that, by means of the wild beasts, he soon disappearing from this world, might be manifested before the face of Christ.<sup>225</sup>

Much later in time, Origen still views gifts of the Spirit as being received well after salvation. Specifically he mentions gifts of wisdom as coming to those who are worthy. The gifts come to those who had been “previously sanctified.” Such a description clearly separates the gifts from the moment of salvation.

...those who have been previously sanctified by the Holy Spirit are again made capable of receiving Christ, in respect that He is the

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<sup>225</sup> The Martyrdom of Ignatius, Chapter 3. Ante-Nicene Fathers, Vol. 1, p. 130. While not all these works are considered equally authentic, it still can serve as a window on how the early centuries viewed such things. See The Apostolic Fathers, Second edition, translated by Lightfoot and Harmer, edited by Holmes (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Book House, 1989) p. 82-83.

righteousness of God; and those who have earned advancement to this grade by the sanctification of the Holy Spirit, will nevertheless obtain the gift of wisdom according to the power and working of the Spirit of God. And this I consider is Paul's meaning, when he says that to "*some is given the work of wisdom, to other the work of knowledge, according to the same Spirit.*" And while pointing out the individual distinction of gifts, he refers the whole of them to the source of all things in the words, "*There are diversities of operations, but one God who worketh all in all.*"<sup>226</sup>

What happened to Polycarp, and what Origen describes, is similar to what happened to the disciples in Acts 4, where they were filled again with the Holy Spirit and did the work God had for them.

## **Laying On of Hands**

This text does not indicate the method by which the spiritual gifts were imparted. But because of its attachment to the person, it seems obvious that he laid hands upon them. This was a practice that was common in biblical days and continued on in the church.

The book of Hebrews identifies six doctrines or teachings that were considered elementary or basic to the

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<sup>226</sup> Origen, "Origen De Principiis, Book 1", *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, Alexander Roberts, and James Donaldson, eds., (Peabody, Massachusetts, Hendrickson Publishers, 1994), Vol.4, pg. 255

faith. They are laid out in such an order as to appear to be progressive of the Christian faith. One teaching leads to another. Dunn notes this progression. He says, “as far as baptism is concerned it seems that instruction about it had to be given before repentance and faith could be truly established.”<sup>227</sup>

It is particularly significant that laying on of hands follows baptism. This is the same pattern we have seen in Tertullian, Cyril, and others of the ancients. In those cases, after baptism, the person would have hands laid upon them to receive the gifts of the Holy Spirit. With Ignatius and Polycarp we observe the same process.

*Therefore let us leave the elementary teachings about Christ and go on to maturity, not laying again the foundation of repentance from acts that lead to death, and of faith in God, instruction about baptisms, the laying on of hands, the resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment.*<sup>228</sup>

Fee would have us believe that the anointing of the Holy Spirit is part of salvation. He identifies “the empowerment for life, with openness to gifts and the miraculous...” as one of the five components of conversion.<sup>229</sup> We could give him the benefit of the doubt and say that Fee is reflecting the values of Origen. However, that would undermine Fee’s reluctance regarding the doctrine of subsequence. When he speaks of this openness to gifts and the miraculous as flowing from

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<sup>227</sup> Dunn, p. 208.

<sup>228</sup> Hebrews 6:1-2.

<sup>229</sup> Fee, p. 117.

salvation, he is uttering spiritual fluff because in so saying he infers that there is some special link that would not be equally true of any other spiritual effect. Is there anything in the Christian life that could not be described in the same way? Therefore to single out spiritual gifts and the miraculous is to infer that these are somehow uniquely related to salvation. This is nothing more than a theological bone, devoid of meat, tossed to the memory of Assemblies of God dogs. Indeed, it is so lacking in substance, it is only a picture of a bone.

But it hardly seems that the writer of Hebrews shares Fee's vision. If these six items are indeed as sequential as they appear, then the laying on of hands follows baptism. Dunn observes that "'baptism' is distinct from 'laying on of hands' and cannot be used as a title for the complete rite of initiation, let alone for the total event of conversion-initiation."<sup>230</sup> Hence the gifts of the Spirit must also follow baptism. We do not rely on the strength of Hebrews 6 alone to make this point. It follows from this whole discussion. Hebrews 6 simply adds one more piece to the complete picture.

Origen adds his opinion to those who say that the baptism of the Holy Spirit is subsequent to water baptism.

And therefore the expression is competently applied to the Holy Spirit, because He will take up His dwelling, not in all men, nor in those who are flesh, but in those whose land has been renewed. Lastly, for this reason was the grace and revelation of the Holy

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<sup>230</sup> Dunn, p 208.

Spirit bestowed by the imposition of the apostles' hands after baptism.<sup>231</sup>

There are various scriptures that indicate the role of laying on hands.<sup>232</sup>

*When Simon saw that the Spirit was given at the laying on of the apostles' hands, he offered them money.*<sup>233</sup>

*For this reason I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands. For God did not give us a spirit of timidity, but a spirit of power, of love and of self-discipline.*<sup>234</sup>

It may also be that laying on of hands was the main way in which a person passed into the higher offices in the church. For this reason, Paul warns against doing this too quickly, without knowing the actual spiritual condition of the person receiving the laying on of hands, especially if it is for spiritual leadership. The context of laying on hands has to do with elders:

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<sup>231</sup> Origen, "Origen De Principiis, Book 1", Ante-Nicene Fathers, Alexander Roberts, and James Donaldson, eds.,(Peabody, Massachusetts, Hendrickson Publishers, 1994), Vol.4, pg. 254

<sup>232</sup> The church fathers see the laying on of hands also as having to do with forgiveness of sins, particularly for those who were previously saved, but fell away.

<sup>233</sup> Acts 8:18

<sup>234</sup> 2 Timothy 1:6-7

*The elders who direct the affairs of the church well are worthy of double honor, especially those whose work is preaching and teaching. For the Scripture says, "Do not muzzle the ox while it is treading out the grain," and "The worker deserves his wages." Do not entertain an accusation against an elder unless it is brought by two or three witnesses. Those who sin are to be rebuked publicly, so that the others may take warning. I charge you, in the sight of God and Christ Jesus and the elect angels, to keep these instructions without partiality, and to do nothing out of favoritism. Do not be hasty in the laying on of hands, and do not share in the sins of others. Keep yourself pure.<sup>235</sup>*

In the Church Fathers, laying on of hands became the way in which spiritual gifts were imparted. Pentecostals allow for the Spirit to be poured directly on seekers as in the case of the first Pentecost and at the house of Cornelius. In fact, we generally expect it will happen that way. We also lay hands on people to receive the gifts. We do not want to create the impression that laying on of hands was the only way gifts were imparted. The seven deacons of Acts were known to be full of the Spirit before hands were laid upon them. Nonetheless, the laying on of hands took on greater force as time went on.

The Church Fathers struggled with heretics. One of their main defenses was to appeal to their direct line to the

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<sup>235</sup>1 Tim 5:17-22

Apostles. In each generation, the head that received gifts from the preceding generation became the hand that passed it on. Laying on of hands was not the option, it was the norm.

...in the days of Moses, the Spirit was given by laying on of hands; and by laying on of hands Peter also gives the Spirit. And on thee also, who art about to be baptized, shall His grace come, yet in what manner I say not, for I will not anticipate the proper season.<sup>236</sup>

When Cyril speaks like this, he is following a much older tradition. For Clement of Alexandria, important things were conveyed by the laying on of hands.

For the apostle says, “All other things buy out of the shambles, asking no questions,” with the exception of the things mentioned in the Catholic epistle of all the apostles, “with the consent of the Holy Ghost,” which is written in the Acts of the Apostles, and conveyed to the faithful by the hands of Paul himself.<sup>237</sup>

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<sup>236</sup> Cyril of Jerusalem. Catechetical Lecture XVI.26, Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Vol. 7, (Peabody Massachusetts: Hendrickson Publishers, 1995. Reprint of Christian Literature Publishing company, 1894.) p. 122.

<sup>237</sup> Clement of Alexandria, “The Stromata, or Miscellanies, XV” Ante-Nicene Fathers; vol. 2 Alexander Roberts & James Donaldson, eds., (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson Publishers, 1994) 427.

Robert Menzies has tried to emphasize the laying on of hands as a commissioning for ministry. In many respects, the baptism of the Holy Spirit is a commissioning for ministry. But when he takes that idea to its logical conclusion he ends up moving away from the view which the early church held on this subject. He says:

It appears that the primary focus of the rite can be either healing or commissioning, or, as in the case of Paul, both (9.17; cf. 22.14-15; 26.16-18). Since the rite is clearly not related to healing in Acts 8.17 and 19.6, it is not unreasonable to assume that in these instances it forms part of a commissioning ceremony. I therefore suggest that Peter and John incorporate the Samaritans, not into the church, but into the missionary enterprise of the church. This involves commissioning the nucleus of Samaritan believers for service in the church's mission through the laying on of hands because those commissioned have not yet received the prophetic enabling necessary for effective service (cf. 9.17; 19.6), unlike the seven (6.6) or Paul and Barnabas (13.3). Thus the Samaritans are commissioned and empowered for the missionary task which lay before them.<sup>238</sup>

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<sup>238</sup> Menzies, Part II, Chpt.11, Section 2.2, *Empowered for Witness*, (Sheffield Academic Press. 1994), P.212.

He wants to show that the Samaritans were not receiving the laying on the hands as initiation into the faith. In this he is correct. But he misses the mark when he suggests that the laying on of hands was a commissioning for missionary work. This is not at all how the early church saw this. When hands were laid upon the Samaritans, they were receiving the baptism of the Holy Spirit in the usual Pentecostal way. There is no evidence of any commissioning for missionary work either in the text or in subsequent references to the incident. On the contrary, the historic churches developed their idea of confirmation from this incident. In doing so they showed that they always believed that it was a genuine impartation of the Spirit, or more precisely, a confirmation that the Holy Spirit had already been received in salvation. I do not want to take anything away from the Spirit's Baptism as a fundamental for ministry or from the brilliant and humble ministry of Robert Menzies. On the other hand, we should not move so quickly to the mission that we overlook the more fundamental concept of the Baptism of the Spirit as a normal next step in the Christian life.

### **The Centrality of Spiritual Gifts in the Late Second Century**

The various writings of the period bear strong witness that the gifts of the Spirit were a defining mark of the Church. Ignatius defines the church with seven descriptive phrases. In his view, this is the Church:

Ignatius, who is also called Theophorus, to the Church of God the Father, and of the beloved Jesus Christ, which has through

mercy obtained every kind of gift, which is filled with faith and love, and is deficient in no gift, most worthy of God, and adorned with holiness: the Church which is at Smyrna, in Asia, wishes abundance of happiness, through the immaculate spirit and word of God.<sup>239</sup>

Of the seven, two have to do with the Church originating with the Father and Jesus, and two have to do with the gifts of the Spirit. The other three deal with love, holiness, and worthiness. From such a list, no one could argue that spiritual gifts are at the periphery of the Church. Rather, they are defining elements in the same degree as love and holiness. Furthermore, these are not gifts limited to four or five, but every gift is included.

For this purpose thou art composed of both flesh and spirit, that thou mayest deal tenderly with those [evils] that present themselves visibly before thee. And as respects those that are not seen, pray that [God] would reveal them unto thee, in order that thou mayest be wanting in nothing, but mayest abound in every gift.<sup>240</sup>

The period of Justin Martyr is around 165 AD, later than Ignatius and Polycarp. The progression of time does nothing to diminish the gifts of the Spirit.

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<sup>239</sup>Epistle of Ignatius to the Smyrnaeans, preface Ante-Nicene Fathers, Vol. 1 p. 86.

<sup>240</sup>Epistle of Ignatius to Polycarp, Ch. 2 Shorter Version, Ante-Nicene Fathers, Vol. 1 p. 94.

...who are also receiving gifts, each as he is worthy, illumined through the name of this Christ. For one receives the spirit of understanding, another of counsel, another of strength, another of healing, another of foreknowledge, another of teaching, and another of the fear of God.

To this Trypho said to me, “I wish you knew that you are beside yourself, talking these sentiments.”

And I said to him, “Listen, O friend, for I am not mad or beside myself; but it was prophesied that, after the ascent of Christ to heaven, He would deliver us from error and give us gifts. The words are these: ‘He ascended up on high; He led captivity captive; He gave gifts to men.’ Accordingly, we who have received gifts from Christ, who has ascended up on high, prove from the words of prophecy that you, ‘the wise in yourselves, and the men of understanding in your own eyes,’ are foolish, and honor God and His Christ by lip only.”<sup>241</sup>

Justin lets us know that the Church is still alive in the Spirit.

For the prophetical gifts remain with us, even to the present time. And hence you

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<sup>241</sup>Dialogue with Trypho, Ch. 39. ANF, Vol. 1 p 214.

ought to understand that [the gifts] formerly among your nation have been transferred to us.<sup>242</sup>

*Spiritual gifts at the end of the second century*

We have similar and also dramatic spiritual gifts being exercised in the times of Iraneaus that is between 120 and 202 AD. What is particularly powerful about his account is that he seems to suggest that miracles and other gifts of the Spirit were very common, and were of the same type done by Jesus and the Apostles. It suggests that God's power, revealed in the gifts, was not meant to be diminished over time. He contrasts the gifts exercised in the church with the lying wonders of the heretics.

Moreover, those also will be thus confuted who belong to Simon and Carpocrates, and if there be any others who are said to perform miracles -- who do not perform what they do either through the power of God, or in connection with the truth, nor for the well-being of men, but for the sake of destroying and misleading mankind, by means of magical deceptions, and with universal deceit, thus entailing greater harm than good on those who believe them, with respect to the point on which they lead them astray. For they neither confer sight on the blind, nor hearing on the deaf, nor chase away all sorts of

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<sup>242</sup>Dialogue with Trypho, Ch. 82. ANF, Vol. 1 p. 240.

demons -- [none, indeed,] except those that are sent into others by themselves, if they can even do so much as this. Nor can they cure the weak, or the lame, or the paralytic, or those who are distressed in any other part of the body, as has often been done in regard to bodily infirmity. Nor can they furnish effective remedies for those external accidents which may occur. And so far are they from being able to raise the dead, as the Lord raised them, and the apostles did by means of prayer, and as has been frequently done in the brotherhood on account of some necessity -- the entire Church in that particular locality entreating [the boon] with much fasting and prayer, the spirit of the dead man has returned, and he has been bestowed in answer to the prayers of the saints -- that they do not even believe this can be possibly done, [and hold] that the resurrection from the dead is simply in acquaintance with that truth which they proclaim.

Since, therefore, there exist among them error and misleading influences, and magical illusions are impiously wrought in the sight of men; but in the Church, sympathy, and compassion, and steadfastness, and truth, for the aid and encouragement of mankind, are not only displayed without fee or reward, but we ourselves lay out for the benefit of others our own means; and inasmuch as those who

are cured very frequently do not possess the things which they require, they receive them from us...<sup>243</sup>

If the gifts were so powerfully exercised at the end of the second century, and we see similar accounts late in Augustine's life in the fifth century, then plainly, the gifts were not meant to disappear. They are for today.

Further, if the receiving of spiritual gifts was not part of salvation, but was a definitive act subsequent to salvation, then we cannot argue that the gifts are inherently connected to salvation. The gifts of the spirit flow from the baptism of the Spirit. Just as Jesus did not begin his charismatic ministry until after being anointed with the Spirit, so we say that the baptism of the Spirit is the event that begins our charismatic ministry.

In the next chapter, we intend to show that this use of the gifts of the Spirit is at the very center of what it means to serve Christ.

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<sup>243</sup> Irenaeus Against Heresies, 2.31.2-3, ANF, Vol. 1 p. 407.



## **Spiritual Gifts— Defining the Church**

Spiritual gifts are not at the periphery of the Church. Rather, they form one of the defining characteristics of the Church. We come to this conclusion by considering the words of Jesus to his disciples before the Ascension, and by considering the emphasis brought by the early Church Fathers.

*After Easter, consider what the disciples had*

**Following the resurrection, the disciples were treated to the best Bible preaching known to man.** In Luke 24 and in the other post-resurrection appearances, Jesus taught them powerful Bible studies:

He said to them, "This is what I told you while I was still with you: Everything must be fulfilled that is written about me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms." Then he opened their minds so they could understand the Scriptures.

He told them, "This is what is written: The Christ will suffer and rise from the dead

on the third day, and repentance and forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things.

I am going to send you what my Father has promised; but stay in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high.

**As a result of these visitations of the Lord, they had great joy and tremendous worship.**

*When he had led them out to the vicinity of Bethany, he lifted up his hands and blessed them. While he was blessing them, he left them and was taken up into heaven. Then they **worshipped him** and returned to Jerusalem with **great joy**. And they stayed continually at the temple, **praising God**.<sup>244</sup>*

If churches today had these elements in place, they would think they had everything, because we believe great worship and great Bible study defines a great church. But Jesus was not satisfied with that for his church. He had something more for the disciples. Luke gives us this perspective:

*In my former book, *Theophilus*, I wrote about all that Jesus began to do and to teach until the day he was taken up to heaven, after giving instructions through the Holy Spirit to the apostles he had chosen. After*

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<sup>244</sup>Luke 24:50

*his suffering, he showed himself to these men and gave many convincing proofs that he was alive. He appeared to them over a period of forty days and spoke about the kingdom of God.*

*On one occasion, while he was eating with them, he gave them this **command**: "Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised, which you have heard me speak about. For John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit."*

*So when they met together, they asked him, "Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?"*

*He said to them: "It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by his own authority. But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."<sup>245</sup>*

I think about this Scripture from a pastoral point of view. It is clear that Jesus expected more for his church than Bible study and worship. He expected that the church would be baptized with the Holy Spirit. Without that, even with the other, they were not complete. Jesus was setting the pattern for his Church. Indeed, as we have shown, this was also the pattern of Jesus himself. As he was ready to

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<sup>245</sup> Acts 1:1-8

enter ministry, he received the anointing of the Holy Spirit. Now he is urging it upon his followers.

The early Church understood that the dimensions of Acts 1 and 2 were not optional but fundamental. It formed the defining characteristic of the Church. Those who take the view that Pentecost was the birthday of the Church do so because they believe that the Church was not complete without the baptism of the Holy Spirit. I take the view that the Church was born when Jesus breathed the Holy Spirit into his disciples. However, my point that spiritual gifts are essential rather than peripheral is confirmed in the more general view that the Church is not truly complete without the gifts of the Spirit which accompany the baptism of the Holy Spirit. And if the Church is not complete without the gifts of the Spirit, then we cannot say that it was fully born until such gifts were received.

In this section, we are taking the view that the early church believed that only in the reception of spiritual gifts was the church formed. Another way of saying it, is that the Spirit, expressed in the gifts, is the defining characteristic of a church. This was the view of Irenaeus. He said, where the Spirit is, there is the church, and where the Church is, there is the Spirit. Further, this presence of the Spirit is evidenced by the presence of “every kind of grace”, more commonly known to us as the gifts of the Spirit.

For this gift of God has been entrusted to the Church, as breath was to the first created man, for this purpose, that all the members receiving it may be vivified; and the [means of] communion with Christ has been distributed throughout it, that is, the Holy Spirit... “For in the Church,” it is said,

“God hath set apostles, prophets, teachers,” and all the other means through which the Spirit works... For where the Church is, there is the Spirit of God; and where the Spirit of God is, there is the Church, and every kind of grace; but the Spirit is truth.<sup>246</sup>

This is a powerful statement. In his view, you could put an equal sign between Church, Spirit, and every kind of grace. That is, you will not find one without the other. They are defining characteristics. But Irenaeus is not alone in his assessment.

**According to the oldest first century writings we have, outside the Bible, Church unity and Church order were based on the gifts of the Spirit.**

For Clement, there are two essential elements in what the Church is. First, we are preserved in Christ Jesus. Second, we are related to each other based on the spiritual gift that each exercises. The spiritual gifts are not some optional or secondary element. Rather, they form the whole basis of the relationship within the Church.

Let our whole body, then, be preserved in Christ Jesus; and let every one be subject to his neighbor, according to the special gift\* bestowed upon him. Let the strong not despise the weak, and let the weak show

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<sup>246</sup>Irenaeus “Against Heresies” 3.24.1, Ante-Nicene Fathers, Vol. 1, p. 458.

respect unto the strong. Let the rich man provide for the wants of the poor; and let the poor man bless God, because He hath given him one by whom his need may be supplied. Let the wise man display his wisdom, not by [mere] words, but through good deeds. Let the humble not bear testimony to himself, but leave witness to be borne to him by another. Let him that is pure in the flesh not grow proud of it, and boast, knowing that it was another who bestowed on him the gift of continence. Let us consider, then, brethren, of what manner of beings we came into the world, as it were out of a sepulcher, and from utter darkness. He who made us and fashioned us, having prepared His bountiful gifts for us before we were born, introduced us into His world. Since, therefore, we received all these things from Him, we ought for everything to give Him thanks; to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen.

(\* Literally, “according as he has been placed in his charism.”)<sup>247</sup>

In this vision of the Church, which flows from the Apostolic age, it is clear that Clement places great importance upon the gifts of the Spirit. It goes without

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<sup>247</sup> The First Epistle of Clement to the Corinthians, Chapter 38 Ante-Nicene Fathers, Vol. 1. p. 15. (\*Lightfoot has translated it: “to the degree determined by his spiritual gift.” The Apostolic Fathers, (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Publishing, 1989) p. 49.

saying that gifts of the Spirit were prevalent in his time since they formed the basis of relationship.

***Because of the importance of spiritual gifts, Paul said each believer should eagerly desire the best spiritual gifts.***

*Follow the way of love and **eagerly desire spiritual gifts**, especially the gift of prophecy. For anyone who speaks in a tongue does not speak to men but to God. Indeed, no one understands him; he utters mysteries with his spirit. But everyone who prophesies speaks to men for their strengthening, encouragement and comfort. He who speaks in a tongue edifies himself, but he who prophesies edifies the church.<sup>248</sup>*

From studying Corinthians, a clear impression is acquired. Spiritual gifts were a significant part of the Church in Corinth. Was that an aberration, or typical of the Churches? The fact that the letter to Corinth gained wide acceptance and became part of the canon, indicates that the early Church felt it had value beyond its original audience. (Could we say that they used it beyond the author's intent?) We look at it as another indication of the prevalence of spiritual gifts in the Church. We also see it as indicating the actual purpose of gifts.

What is the purpose of the gifts? To help the Church. What are the best gifts? The best ones are those that strengthen, encourage and comfort, those that help the Church the most! What is the definition of the Church? It

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<sup>248</sup> 1 Corinthians 14:1-4

is the people of God working according to their gifts that God has given them.

From the Pastoral point of view, we should be calling upon God and calling upon the people for movement toward the release of the gifts of the Spirit in the Church. We say to God, restore your church in the power of the Holy Spirit so that every task, every work, every person, every service, every meeting, will be in that power. Our hope is, like the early Church, we might relate to one another according to the gift of the Spirit that God has given us. We pray that once again the church will be known as the place where the Spirit is, and where the Spirit is, there is the church.

A faithful Protestant is weary by now. Can all these strange people in distant times and places have more to say to us than Calvin and Luther? Why can't we just use the Bible to settle all this? What a Protestant wants is exegesis not church fathers! Can I offer a defense of the church fathers, even before the inevitable question is asked?

**Requiem for the Reformation  
or  
How did we get so many Protestants  
in the Pentecostal Church?**

It is hard to remember the old man in the positive way I know I should. He lived right next door and was mostly friendly, so I don't want to say too much bad about him. Besides, he did so much good and lived to such a ripe old age. In a lot of ways, we might not have anything if he hadn't been willing to leave the old country and move here, starting fresh with nothing.

However, these last few years of senility nearly exhausted the family resources. He spent most all the money that was saved over the years. Even most of the hard assets are gone. And his great-grandkids are shot to hell, at least those that still believe there is such a place.

He started out to give his kids freedom of conscience, and that is what they had. But then their kids decided that freedom of conscience meant one truth was the same as another, that everything was relative and it only mattered what they themselves thought. Now the great-grandkids don't even bother with truth, they just think everybody should leave them alone. They've turned into libertarians.

But now that the old boy is dead, we have three problems. First, where do we find a casket big enough? Second, will his descendants admit that he is dead so we can bury him? And third, how can we get all his relatives out of our house? They moved in here while he was sick, but now there seems to be more of his family in here than our family.

I've been thinking about all this and wondering how in the world things ended up like this!

It all started a long time ago....

### ***Sola Scriptura* and the law of unintended consequences.**

The Scriptures are alone the rule of faith and practice. From the Scripture alone, Salvation could be found. This idea took on singular force over the last five centuries. We will consider how the idea has shaped the American experience.<sup>249</sup>

A favorite Reformation text was 2 Tim 3:15, 16:

*...and how from infancy you have known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness,...*

Any passage which speaks of the Scripture as leading to salvation was pressed into Reformation service. So John

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<sup>249</sup> *Political Sermons of the American Founding Era*, p. 61. "The Essential Rights and Liberties of Protestants" by Elisha Williams, 1744. p. 62.

20:31, *"These things are written that you might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you might have Life through his name,"* became evidence of the sufficiency of Scripture alone. Similarly, John 5:13, *"These things have I written, that you may know that you have eternal Life, and that you may believe on the Name of the Son of God,"* was evidence that God did not need the hierarchy, only the Scripture.

If the Scripture is alone, then the opinions of others cannot be of force, because if they were, then the Scripture would not be alone as the means of faith. Williams, an important preacher of the American Revolutionary period, said:

Now inasmuch as the Scriptures are the only rule of faith and practice to a Christian; hence every one has an unalienable right to read, inquire into, and impartially judge of the sense and meaning of it for himself. For if he is to be governed and determined therein by the opinions and determinations of any others, the scriptures cease to be a rule to him, and those opinions or determinations of others are substituted in the room thereof.<sup>250</sup>

So quite naturally, a progression of ideas took place. If Scripture is alone, then who is to say what leads to Salvation. That would put them in the place of Scripture. But if "they" cannot say what leads to Salvation, that only

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<sup>250</sup> Ibid., p. 63.

leaves “me” to make the decision. The common man is empowered.

Thus, a corollary to *sola Scriptura* was that the common man must judge Scripture (truth) for himself.

Every man has an equal right to follow the dictates of his own conscience in the affairs of religion. Every one is under an indispensable obligation to search the scripture for himself (which contains the whole of it) and to make the best use of it he can for his own information in the will of God, the nature and duties of Christianity. And as every Christian is so bound; so he has an unalienable right to judge of the sense and meaning of it, and to follow his judgment wherever it leads him; even an equal right with any rulers be they civil or ecclesiastical.<sup>251</sup>

In America, we can lay the concept of religious freedom at the feet of “*sola Scriptura*.” The Reformation was the father of our uniquely American view of religious freedom.

But it was not for America that the concept came into being. It was to correct abuse within the church. Without a doubt, the church had grown exceedingly seedy prior to the Reformation. Clergy and laity alike knew changes had to be made. We certainly do not regret many of the changes that were brought into the church during the Reformation.

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<sup>251</sup> Ibid., p. 61.

In order to break the stranglehold of the church hierarchy, the reformers postulated the idea that Scripture alone was sufficient to Salvation. Their “*sola Scriptura*” concept was a polemical mechanism to defeat the hierarchy and empower the layman in his relation to God. After all these centuries, who are we to judge that they were wrong to use such an idea to defeat the hierarchy?

The question is not whether “*sola Scriptura*” was an appropriate polemic, but is it universally true? When John said that he wrote so that they might know that they have eternal life, did he mean to exclude all other knowledge? Did John mean to contradict Paul’s witness of the created order?

*For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities-- his eternal power and divine nature-- have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse.<sup>252</sup>*

Given what Paul has written here, I doubt if he would have accepted the Reformation’s notion of “*sola Scriptura*.” Certainly the early church knew nothing of such a concept. Yet they did believe in the superiority of the Scriptures to all other revelations. Cyril affirms this when he speaks to his students awaiting baptism:

Even to Me, who tell thee these things, give not absolute credence, unless thou receive the proof of the things which I announce from the Divine Scriptures. For this

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<sup>252</sup> Romans 1:20

salvation which we believe depends not on ingenious reasoning, but on the demonstration of the Holy Scriptures.<sup>253</sup>

Cyril lived in the heady days when the faith had swept the empire into its fold. Indeed he preached that sermon in the newly dedicated Church of the Holy Sepulcher built by order of Emperor Constantine himself. They could rely upon the Scripture because they were king of the hill. But previous generations of church fathers spoke in an entirely different way. They believed that God had revealed himself in a variety of ways, including the way of the reasonings of the Greeks. For them, all previous revelations had their focal point in Jesus, but they would not have said that the Scripture alone contained the revelation of God.

Clement of Alexandria showed that the Christian way is a new way of worship. It does not continue the old ways, but is something entirely different.

For we find in the Scriptures, as the Lord says: “Behold, I make with you a new covenant, not as I made with your fathers in Mount Horeb.” He made a new covenant with us; for what belonged to the Greeks and Jews is old. But we, who worship Him in a new way, in the third form, are Christians. For clearly, as I think, he showed that the one and only God was known by the Greeks in a Gentile way, by

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<sup>253</sup>Cyril of Jerusalem. Catechetical Lecture IV.17 Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Vol. 7, (Peabody Massachusetts: Hendrickson Publishers, 1995. Reprint of Christian Literature Publishing company, 1894.) p. 23.

the Jews Judaically, and in a new and spiritual way by us.<sup>254</sup>

We might choose to argue about what he said, but at least we can conclude that he believed that Greeks could have come to a knowledge of God, and therefore to salvation, without even one Scripture. In thinking like this, they were following Paul in his witness of creation as a revelation of God. Even so, they were more interested in the conclusions the Greeks arrived at by means of logic and reason.

However, during the Reformation, all these others paths disappeared. The witness of creation, the reasonings of the Greeks, and every other path except the Scripture, went away. For the reformers, it was the early “doctors of the church” who had allowed the church to go astray. So, it was “the baby out with the bath water.” The good with the bad, throw them all out, and start over with the Scripture alone. The only trouble is, they did not truly eliminate the church fathers, they just replaced the 1500-year-old fathers with new ones.

Where does the law of unintended consequences come in? All the church fathers disappear as unnecessary because the Scripture alone is sufficient. If it is sufficient, we do not need anyone else. With the ancient church fathers gone, it is possible for the new fathers to substitute their new exegesis of Scripture, free of the restraints of theology that had guided the church during the first three centuries.

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<sup>254</sup> Clement of Alexandria, “The Stromata, or Miscellanies,” 6.5 Ante-Nicene Fathers; Vol. 2, p.489.

In this, an irony is produced. We now pay high regard to the thinking about Scripture of the reformers, while diminishing the role of the church fathers. We replace a tradition now 2,000 years old, with one 500 years old, and think we have made progress. It is a double irony that the reformers thought they were bringing the church back to what it was like in the New Testament era. What they actually succeeded in doing was wiping out the witness of those who saw the New Testament first applied.

This is freedom indeed! Now, we think we can interpret scripture without reference to the first witnesses. Modern exegetical wizards go to great lengths to show how words are used, even in the non-biblical literature, as a way of showing the meaning of the words within Scripture. This is all good and adds insight. We appreciate the contribution. But how is it reasonable to ignore the interpretation of those who had read both the secular literature and the Scripture in their native language? They read the New Testament with the understanding that being in the immediate culture would bring.

In the first three centuries such Protestant thinking would never have been allowed. Listen to Irenaeus on this subject!

True knowledge is [that which consists in] the doctrine of the apostles, and the ancient constitution of the Church throughout all the world, and the distinctive manifestation of the body of Christ according to the successions of the bishops, by which they have handed down that Church which exists in every place, and has come even unto us, being guarded and preserved, without any

forging of Scriptures, by a very complete system of doctrine, and neither receiving addition or [suffering] curtailment [in truths which she believes]; and [it consists in] reading [the work of God] without danger and without blasphemy; and [above all, it consists in] the pre-eminent gift of love, which is more precious than knowledge, more glorious than prophecy, and which excels all the other gifts [of God].<sup>255</sup>

A Protestant Irenaeus would have ended after the first phrase. In this, many modern Pentecostals are consummate Protestants. Fee is among them. He can leap directly from the 20<sup>th</sup> century, over the early centuries of biblical interpretation, and land upon the original text and proclaim its meaning. Even when he disagrees with those who were one or two generations from the original hearers, he is comfortable in doing so because the Reformation killed the early church fathers long ago and the dead offer no resistance.

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<sup>255</sup> Irenaeus. "Against Heresies." 4.33.8. ANE, Vol. 1, p 508.



