

# Luke's History of the Holy Spirit

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The two longest books in the New Testament—the Gospel of Luke and the Acts of the Apostles—were written by the Gentile co-laborer of the Apostle Paul, Luke “the beloved physician” (Col. 4:14). Serving as “the historian of Pentecost,”<sup>1</sup> Luke has furnished the Christian Church the most replete source of historical information on the Holy Spirit to be found in the Scriptures from a single writer. In Acts he has recorded the historical fulfillment of that which all four Gospels have preserved as John the Baptist’s prophecy concerning the Christ’s foremost ministry, that of baptizing with the Holy Spirit (Mt. 3:11; Mk. 1:8; Lk. 3:16; Jn. 1:25-27, 33).

Luke’s selection and presentation in the third Gospel of material on the activity of the Holy Spirit naturally leads up to the Paraclete passages in John’s Gospel, chapters fourteen through sixteen, and to the phenomena in the book of Acts. Impressed by this welding of the third Gospel to the Acts by means of the Spirit-emphasis in each book, Lonsdale Ragg was moved to affirm,

The Day of Pentecost, of which St. Luke is the unique historian, and to which his Gospel . . . may be said to lead up as to a climax, forms a link between the Synoptic and Johannine conceptions of Jesus . . . it is Luke who in his picture of the descent of the Holy Spirit “records the moment and means” by which the disciples became conscious of a real (though not corporeal) presence of the Master ever abiding with them. “This conviction came to the disciples on the Day of Pentecost, and it changed the sphere in which the Master was present with them from an external to an internal one. It formed thus the transition from the Synoptic Conception of Jesus to that which was the basis of the Pauline and Johannine Conceptions.”<sup>2</sup>

In this study the Father’s *promise* of the Holy Spirit, the Son’s *pouring out* of the Holy Spirit, and the Holy Spirit’s *presence* in the Church have been successively considered in the light of the Luke-Acts documents.

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<sup>1</sup> Lonsdale Ragg, *St. Luke* (“Westminster Commentaries” [London: Methuen & Co. Ltd., 1922]), p. xxxvii.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. xxvi.

## I.

The third Gospel closes (Lk. 24:49) and the book of Acts opens (Acts 1:4) with specific reference to “the promise of the Father.” The Old Testament prophet Joel had given the prophecy of God pouring out, in the last days, His Spirit upon all flesh, regardless of sex, age, class or race (Acts 2:17-18 cf. Joel 2:28ff). This predictive emphasis on the Spirit’s forthcoming function was central in John the Baptist’s preaching concerning the coming Messiah’s work (Lk. 3:16), and was continued by Christ during His earthly ministry (Lk. 11:13; 12:12). During His post-resurrection instruction to the disciples, Christ urged the necessity of their “waiting for the promise of the Father” (Acts 1:4). They were to tarry in Jerusalem until they had received that promise which would mean to them “power from on high” (Lk. 24:49). After the Holy Spirit had fallen in baptismal power upon the disciples in Jerusalem on the Day of Pentecost, Peter stood up before the throng of worshipers in the city and declared to them that the strange phenomena they were witnessing that day were but the fulfillment of Joel’s prophecy of the Spirit’s advent in a new relation to all men qualified to receive the Spirit (Acts 2:17ff). He climaxed his first sermon in the new era of the Spirit’s ministry by promising the gift of the Spirit to all who were called by God, to all who answered the call in penitence, and who accepted baptism in Jesus’ name as evidence of their faith in Him for the remission of their sins (Acts 2:38-39).

Luke has cited once voice from the Old Testament period (Joel’s), two voices from the transitional period between the closing of the age of the law and the full establishment of the Gospel age (John’s and Jesus’), and one from the Gospel age (Peter’) to focus attention upon the Holy Spirit as the promised gift of the Father. Joel spoke of the Spirit’s universal availability and activating ministry in visions, dreams and prophecy; John spoke of the Spirit’s purging as by fire those receiving the Messianic baptism; Jesus spoke of the Spirit’s empowering and teaching the disciples; and Peter reiterated the Spirit’s universal availability, due to the ascension of the risen Christ, upon the condition of having received the remission of one’s sins.

## II.

To his inquirers John the Baptist insisted that the Messiah’s baptism was needed even after they had received the baptism with

water for the remission of their sins. John specifically designated it as the baptism bestowed by the Christ. Following His resurrection Jesus said to His disciples, “. . . behold, *I send forth* the promise of my Father upon you . . .” (Lk. 24:49). On the Day of Pentecost, Peter unhesitatingly affirmed, “This Jesus did God raise up, whereof we all are witnesses. Being therefore by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, he hath poured forth this, which ye see and hear” (Acts 2:32-33).

John, the risen Christ, and Peter each declared Jesus the Christ to be the mediator of the Holy Spirit from God the Father to the waiting believers. Here, doubtless, is the best source for the theological teaching that the Spirit proceeds from both the Father and the Son.

While the procurement of the Holy Spirit from the Father upon Christ’s ascension and the outpouring of the same on the Day of Pentecost marked a new beginning in the history of redemption, yet the Holy Spirit had been actively present during the previous dispensation. In the Old Testament period the prophets had been moved upon in prophetic utterances: such as David who foretold Judas’ failure, betrayal of Christ, tragic end and replacement (Acts 1:16ff); and Isaiah who foresaw the national failure of Israel in rejecting the Gospel message concerning the Lord Jesus Christ (Acts 28:25-31). Not only did the prophets foresee and speak by the Holy Spirit, but the people unto whom they spoke were also confronted by the Holy Spirit and for the most part resisted both the prophets and their message, thereby resisting the Holy Spirit Himself (Acts 7:51-53).

During the transition from the Old Testament dispensation to the New, extending from shortly after Gabriel’s visit to Zacharias in the Temple to the Day of Pentecost, the Holy Spirit was manifestly present among God’s people as had not been known since the days of Malachi.<sup>3</sup> This new outburst of the Spirit’s work issued in the miraculous conception of the child in the Virgin Mary’s womb (Lk. 1:35).

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<sup>3</sup> F. Godet, *A Commentary on the Gospel of St. Luke* (New York: Funk & Wagnalls Co., 1887), p. 69; H. B. Swete would hold this outburst of the Spirit’s work as parallel to that of the days of the Maccabees; *See: The Holy Spirit in the New Testament* (London: Macmillan Co. Ltd., 1909), p. 12.

One vast difference distinguishes the Conception of our Lord from other miraculous conceptions. . . . The Holy Spirit sanctified the flesh on which it wrought. Of the Child of Mary while yet unborn . . . it is said that He shall be known as *holy*, even as *son of God*. . . . The result of this Divine intervention is to be seen in the human life of the Lord; in His sinlessness, His entire consecration, His sense of the Fatherhood of God, from the dawn of consciousness to His last breath. The entail of sin was broken at last, and one born of a woman was, even as man, holy and a son of God.<sup>4</sup>

The Holy Spirit also produced the divine afflatus in prophecy upon Elizabeth (Lk. 1:41-45), Mary (Lk. 1:46-55), Zacharias (Lk. 1:67-79), Simeon and Anna (Lk. 2:25-38), and filled John the Baptist from birth who eventually went forth in the spirit and power of Elijah to turn the hearts of many Israelites back to the God of their fathers (Lk. 1:15-17).

Not only was Jesus conceived by the Holy Spirit, but He was especially anointed (Acts 10:38; Lk. 3:21-22; 4:17-19,21), filled and empowered by the Spirit for service (Lk. 4:1). Led by the Spirit into the wilderness, He encountered the Tempter for forty days and came forth as victor in the power of the Holy Spirit to begin His ministry in Galilee (Lk. 4:1-2, 14). Luke has indicated that Jesus found His deepest delights and highest joys *in* the Holy Spirit (10:21).

Even before Pentecost Luke had specifically shown that the Holy Spirit *filled* individuals (John, Zacharias, Elizabeth, Simeon, and Jesus), *empowered* them (John and Jesus), *led* them (Simeon and Jesus), *prophesied* through them (Elizabeth, Zacharias, Simeon, John and Jesus), and *produced* in them joy (Elizabeth, Zacharias, Simeon and Jesus).

At Pentecost, however, something new was introduced. "The Acts in fact is a history of 'the new dispensation'; and that is why it lacks a definite conclusion. These twenty-eight chapters are but *the beginning* (i 1, xi 15): we are still living under the dispensation of the Spirit."<sup>5</sup> As the Advent of the Son of God (Lk. 1:35) was marked by inaugural signs, first at His birth (Lk. 1:26ff, 41f; 2:8ff, 25-38) and then at His baptism (Lk. 3:21-22), so the dispensational advent of the Spirit was marked by inaugural signs (Acts 2:1-4).

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 27f. (It does not belong to the present study to consider the credibility of the Gospel narratives of the Conception of Christ since they are part of the first and third Gospels as we have received them.)

<sup>5</sup> Richard Belward Rackham, *The Acts of the Apostles* ("Oxford Commentaries" [New York: Edwin S. Gorham, 1902]), p. xxxviii.

There came the *sound* of wind rushing, the *vision* of tongues parting asunder as of fire and sitting upon each one of them, and the *speaking* in other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance. The distribution of the Spirit upon each head “evidently pointed to the truth that the Paraclete had come to dwell not only with the society as a whole, nor only with the officers of the society, but with all its members.”<sup>6</sup>

The significance of these inaugural signs was given by Peter in response to the Jerusalem-multitude’s inquiry, “What meaneth this?” (Acts 2:12). Peter’s interpretation of the event was that it was the fulfillment of Joel’s prophecy which had been made possible by the once crucified but now risen and ascended Jesus of Nazareth who had “received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit” and “poured forth this” which they saw and heard (2:33). The signs were the evidence *on earth* that the resurrected Jesus had been exalted at the right hand of God in heaven, had been made by God “both Lord and Christ,” and procured for “all flesh” the possible fullness of God’s Spirit (2:17-39). Peter’s interpretation of the significance of the signs on the Day of Pentecost was to inform the religious but non-Christian audience of both the dispensational and the supra-dispensational meaning of the crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension of Christ and the descent of the Holy Spirit. But when interpreting that same event (along with a similar one occurring later among Gentiles in Caesarea) to the body of believers in that first general conference of the early Church, Peter declared that the baptism with the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost meant to each recipient the purifying of his heart by faith (Acts 15:8-9). To those outside the Christian fellowship Peter related Pentecost objectively both to what had preceded it and what was to follow (Acts 2), but to those inside the fellowship Peter gave the subjective and personal aspect of what occurred when the Spirit fell upon them (15:8-9).

After the historic Pentecost, other *initial* out-pourings of the Holy Spirit came, doubtless indicating that while a new dispensation had begun it must be corporately and/or individually experienced by all groups of believers.

Following the Jerusalem-Pentecost *for Jews* consisting of the original apostles and scores of disciples of the Lord, Philip’s con-

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<sup>6</sup> Swete, *op. cit.*, p. 72.

verts in Samaria—circumcized but only part Jewish by race—received their pentecostal baptism with the Spirit (Acts 8:12, 14-17). Saul's personal "Pentecost" in Damascus (9:17-18) three days after he met the Lord Jesus on the road to the city (9:27) marks the third-recorded outpouring of the Spirit. The fourth initial pouring forth of the Spirit upon a body of believers was upon the uncircumcised but God-fearing Gentile household in Caesarea (10:44). A like reception came to some disciples (probably Apollos' converts; *see*: Acts 18:24ff) in Ephesus under Paul's ministry (19:5-7). These five *initial* outpourings of the Spirit were distinctive, but repeated "infillings" of the Spirit were experienced subsequently by apostles and disciples. Without having forfeited their newly-found relationship to the Spirit these men were given a "special influx of power" to meet the emergencies which had arisen in the pathway of service for their Lord.<sup>7</sup> *Initially baptized* (and "filled"—2:4) *with the Spirit* in the upper room, Peter was subsequently "filled" (aorist tense) with the Spirit at least two different times (4:8, 31). The same was true of other apostles and Jerusalem believers (4:31). Paul was initially "filled" with the Spirit (9:17) and subsequently "filled" again when facing a crucial situation (13:9). While there was the abiding fullness of the Spirit to be enjoyed (6:5; 7:55; 11:24), there were also additional enduements for special circumstances in Christian life and service.

### III.

Of the eighty-eight times in the New Testament that the "Spirit" is *characterized* the "Holy Spirit," Luke has employed the name fifty-three times, twelve in his Gospel, and forty-one in Acts. But he also uses "the Spirit of the Lord" (Lk. 4:18; Acts 5:9), "the Spirit" (Lk. 2:27; 4:14; Acts 8:29), "my Spirit" (i.e., God's Spirit; Acts 2:17-18), and "the Spirit of Jesus" (Acts 16:7) when speaking of "the Holy Spirit." From this linking and equating of the Holy Spirit with "God's Spirit," "the Spirit," "the Spirit of the Lord," and "the Spirit of Jesus," it is not difficult to understand the trinitarian's insistence that there are ample scriptural bases for believing in the essential unity but tri-personal character of the Godhead.

Rackham was confident that Christians are "saved from Sabelianism (the idea that the *Son* and the *Spirit* are only names for

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<sup>7</sup> A. T. Robertson, *Word Pictures in the New Testament* (Nashville: Sunday School Board of the Southern Baptist Convention, 1930), III, 181.

different aspects of God) by the distinct assertions of the Spirit's personality. He [the Holy Spirit] speaks with the emphatic first person: 'go with the men, for *I* have sent them,' 'Separate *me* Barnabas and Saul' " (10:19-20; 13:2; cp. 8:29, 39; 11:12; 13:4; 16:6-7).<sup>8</sup> Further, Luke has set forth the Holy Spirit as *leading* Jesus (Lk. 4:1), as *producing joy* in Him (Lk. 10:21), as *teaching* the disciples what to say under trial (Lk. 12:12), and as capable of being *blasphemed* (Lk. 12:10). Speaking against the Son of man (a personality) is a pardonable sin, Jesus affirmed, but blaspheming the Holy Spirit is an unpardonable sin. Since personality is the highest reality known to men, it is very improbable that sinning against something less than personality—if the Holy Spirit is not personal—would merit greater condemnation than sinning against the person of the Son of man. In the Acts, the personality of the Spirit has been further implied by His *speaking* (21:11; 28:25), by His *forbidding* and *prohibiting* (16:6-7), by His being *pleased* (15:28), *tried* (5:9), *lied to* (5:3), and *resisted* (7:51). ". . . though the Holy Spirit is not definitely hypostastized in the New Testament, as a person in the unity of a tri-personal Essence, personal qualities are freely attributed to it as an agent in the field of human experience."<sup>9</sup> Since the Holy Spirit fulfills "the whole of our Lord's personal functions toward the Church . . . Teacher, Director, Protector, Counsellor—this invests Him with all the essential attributes of that which we understand by personality."<sup>10</sup> And even if "the Holy Spirit does not receive the name of God, if there is no statement in regard to the godhead of the Spirit . . . the fact is implied in passages which attribute to the Spirit the Divine prerogatives . . ."<sup>11</sup>

According to the Luke-Acts account, John the Baptist, Jesus, and Peter characterized the dispensational promise of the Spirit as a *baptism* (Lk. 3:16-17; Acts 1:5; 11:15-17). As John's water-baptism symbolized a washing or purification for the remission of sins (Lk. 3:3), so Jesus' Spirit-baptism was a purification of the heart (Acts 15:8-9).<sup>12</sup> To those already having obtained the remission of their sins, Jesus spoke of the remaining evil in their

<sup>8</sup> Rackham, *op. cit.*, p. lxxv.

<sup>9</sup> Swete, *op. cit.*, pp. 290-91.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 292.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 288.

<sup>12</sup> See: L. Berkhof, *Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1946), pp. 630-1.

nature (Lk. 11:13; *Illustre testimonium de peccato originali*—Bengel.) and assured them that the Father would give the *Holy Spirit* upon their asking for Him. When Peter interpreted the subjective side (of the Father's gift) of the baptism with the Holy Spirit to the first general council of the Christian Church, he spoke of it as a purification of the believers' hearts (Acts 15:8-9).

While Acts 15 is recognized by some New Testament scholars as "the most important in Acts,"<sup>13</sup> yet many widely received studies on the Holy Spirit have utterly neglected a proper treatment of Acts 15 as the divinely-inspired interpretation of the *essential*, subjective significance of Pentecost.<sup>14</sup> The idea of purification in Christ's Spirit-baptism antedated the power-emphasis and, as far as the record of Acts goes, seems to have been uppermost in the Apostle Peter's mind when he is last heard from in Luke's writings (Acts 15:7ff). Pentecost was the inaugural of the Holy Spirit's supreme dispensational ministry—that of producing purity and sanctity of spirit in the believer. This "ethical side of the Spirit's nature and work" is emphasized in the very name given the Spirit—the *Holy Spirit*.

Twice Jesus characterized the Spirit's coming upon the disciples as an endowment with *power* (Lk. 24:49; Acts 1:8). This was the objective side of the Spirit's work in and through the believers. *Purity* was the subjective need to care for the remaining sin-problem of the disciples, but *power* met the objective demand for facing their constant service-problem. This bestowal of power was connected with the disciples' witnessing to others of their risen Lord. Long before Pentecost Jesus had "called the twelve together, and gave them power and authority over all demons, and to cure diseases. And he sent them forth to preach the kingdom of God, and to heal the sick" (Lk. 9:1-2). Later, to the Seventy also, Jesus gave *power* to heal the sick, cast out demons, and preach the kingdom of God (Lk. 10:9, 19). If Pentecost was an impartation of power above and beyond that which the twelve already knew, it

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<sup>13</sup> F. J. Foakes-Jackson, *The Acts of the Apostles* (New York: Richard S. Smith, Inc., 1931), p. 129.

<sup>14</sup> See: W. E. Biederwolf's *A Help to the Study of the Holy Spirit*; A. J. Gordon's *The Ministry of the Spirit*; Abraham Kuyper's *The Work of the Holy Spirit*; G. Campbell Morgan's *The Spirit of God*; R. A. Torrey's *The Person and Work of the Holy Spirit*; and Merrill F. Unger's *The Baptizing Work of the Holy Spirit*.



must have been *primarily* a subjective change within believers, and secondarily a persuasiveness with others in making the then invisible Christ a present, living reality. Power received at Pentecost further enabled the disciples to endure joyfully sufferings for Christ (5:40, 41; 16:23-25), to face willingly martyrdom for Christ (21:13), and *to be* Christ-like in attitude toward their enemies (7:55, 59, 60). *Power to be* Christ-like seems to transcend the *power to do* extraordinary wonders in service whether before or after Pentecost. The quality of spirit in the disciples, rather than their quantum of service, marks the major emphasis in Acts.

The *fruit* of the Spirit abounded in the lives of the Spirit-filled believers. One of those fruit much in evidence in both Luke and Acts was joyful *praise*. The Gospel begins (1:14) and ends (24:52) and is suffused throughout with the note of joy. That special quality, "itself the gift of the Holy Ghost," burst forth on one unique occasion in the daily life of the Lord (10:21).<sup>15</sup> "The immediate effect of the Spirit is to make men utter *the mighty works of God*, and magnify him: praise is the normal attitude of the Christian life: after persecution, controversy, or success, alike they *glorify God . . .*"<sup>16</sup> (2:4, 11: 10:46: 2:47; 4:24; 11:18; 13:48; 21:20; 16:25; 27:35; 28:15). "The early Christians lived in a state of *exultation or gladness . . .*"<sup>17</sup>

Other *consequents* of Pentecost were the Spirit's bestowal of spiritual gifts and guidance in service. The Spirit selected personnel and times and places for service and so synchronized them as to enable Peter, Philip, Paul and others to achieve amazing results (2:40-43; 8:29, 39; 10:19: 13:2, 4; 16:6-7). While the Spirit Himself was a *gift* from the Father and the Son to the Church (11:17; 2:33), He also gave gifts to various believers. The Spirit's gifts included tongues (2:4; 10:46; 19:6), prophecy (11:27-28; 21:9-11), healings (5:14-16; 8:7), and miracles (6:8; 19:11-12). He chose some to be apostles (14:4), some prophets (11:27; 13:1; 21:9), some evangelists (21:8), some elders ("presbyters"—20:17) or overseers ("bishops"—20:28), and others deacons (6:1-6) and teachers (13:1) for the extension, government and instruction of the Church.

<sup>15</sup> Ragg, *op. cit.*, p. xxxix.

<sup>16</sup> Rackham, *op. cit.*, p. xxxvi.

<sup>17</sup> *Loc. cit.*

To what extent has Luke (in Luke-Acts) formulated for the Christian Church the moral *conditions* requisite to obtaining the gift of the Spirit in His dispensational fullness?<sup>18</sup> *First*, it is quite clear that the Spirit is the Father's gift to those who have become *His spiritual children* by faith in Jesus Christ. John the Baptist prophesied of the Messiah's Spirit-baptism as that which the penitent and forgiven (symbolized by receiving water baptism) were to receive after the Christ had come (Lk. 3:3, 7-8, 15-17). Jesus' pre- and post-resurrection ministries dwelt upon the promise of the Spirit to His own discipled-friends (Lk. 12:1, 4, 12), to those who had obtained the forgiveness of sins (Lk. 11:1, 13; 12:12; Lk. 24:47-49; Acts 1:4-5, 8). After the 120 were Spirit-baptized and the assembled multitudes in Jerusalem asked, "What meaneth this?" (2:12), Peter interpreted the strange, new event as the fulfillment of Joel's prophecy, assuring his listeners that the promise of the Holy Spirit was *to them, to their children, and to all* that are afar off, even as many as the Lord their God should call unto Himself (Acts 2:38-39). But only upon the condition that they repent of their sins and accept baptism in the Name of Jesus Christ as their Saviour from sin could they share in the promised-universal diffusion of God's Spirit (2:17-18). Throughout the Acts those without a personal faith in Jesus as Saviour are called to repentance and forgiveness through His name and in no instance are they offered the promised gift of the Spirit as their first step in salvation (Acts 2:38; 3:17-19; 5:31; 13:38-39; 17:29-31; 20:20-21; 26:16-18). Those scholars who have viewed "the birth of the Spirit" (justification and regeneration) and "the baptism with the Spirit" as occurring simultaneously in this Dispensation have cited Cornelius' household as a demonstration of their position (Acts 10). Quite clearly Cornelius' household before receiving their "Pentecost" were devout, God-fearing, praying, obedient and believing—as far as they understood the Christian message (10:2, 4, 22, 30-31, 33, 36-37ff). This writer has failed to find in Acts one individual or group receiving the promised-baptism with the Holy Spirit about whom exegetical evidence cannot be produced that forgiveness of

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<sup>18</sup> "In the case of the household of Cornelius, Peter describes the one experience by 'poured out,' 'fell upon,' 'received,' 'baptized,' and 'gave,' and then said it was like Pentecost which therefore was also an 'endowment' and a 'filling.'" See: W. E. Biederwolf, *A Help to the Study of the Holy Spirit* (Boston: James H. Earle & Co., 1903), pp. 96-7.

sins through faith in Jesus Christ was already a possibility if not a reality prior to obtaining the gift of the Spirit.

*Secondly*, the *knowledge* that the Holy Spirit is promised to the believer was a second conditioning factor in receiving Him. John's prophecy, Jesus' promises, and Peter's preaching brought the knowledge of the Spirit's availability to many disciples, but evidently Cornelius' household did not know the Spirit was for them until Peter's visit, and the Ephesian disciples did not know that the Spirit was as yet given to believers until Paul reached them (19:1-4). This knowledge must extend to knowing "how much more" willing the Father is to give the Spirit than parents are to give good gifts to their children (Lk. 11:13).

In addition to *believing* on Jesus' name for forgiveness of sins, and *knowing* that the Spirit is for all believers—irrespective of location, season, class, race, age or sex (Acts 2:17-18, *passim*)—there must be a *seeking* after Him, as evidenced by prayer. Jesus taught His disciples to ask the Father for the Spirit (Lk. 11:13), and to tarry or wait before the Father for the Spirit (Lk. 24:49; Acts 1:4). The apostles and brethren did as commanded, *continuing steadfastly in prayer* (1:14). When Peter and John went to Samaria to lead Philip's converts into the fullness of the Spirit they first *prayed* for them that they might receive the Divine gift (8:14-15ff). When Ananias was instructed by the Lord to go to Paul (then called "Saul") that he might "be filled with the Holy Spirit" (9:17), the Lord informed Ananias that Paul was *praying* (9:11). Cornelius was *seeking* in prayer to have his spiritual deficiency met when the answer came which issued in the Caesarean Pentecost (10:2-4, 9-20, 30-31).

Two more qualifying conditions necessary to obtaining the gift of the Holy Spirit have been set forth in Acts. Peter declared that *obeying* the Spirit's will and leadership regardless of the cost in disfavor from the world or discomfort to one's self was prerequisite to this new relationship (Acts 5:32, 29; 10:33, 44; *See*: Lk. 12:12). Peter further affirmed that *believing* for the immediate fulfillment of the Father's promise brought to the seeking disciples the purifying baptism and empowerment with the Spirit (Acts 15:8-9; 11:17).

To the discerning interpreter of Luke-Acts there are sufficient *correctives* with which the Christian is safeguarded against contemporary misconceptions concerning the gift and work of the Holy

Spirit. Acts has shown that the Spirit's fullness may and should be experienced by large congregations as instanced by the apostles and disciples in Jerusalem (*ca.* 120—1:15), by smaller groups as in Caesarea ("many"—10:27) and in Ephesus ("about twelve men"—19:7), by families as in Caesarea (10:2, 7, 22, 24; 11:12, 14), and by each individual as in Paul's case (9:17). This gift of the Heavenly Father is not confined to especially sacred seasons such as the Day of Pentecost (2:1) or to sacred places such as Jerusalem (2:1, 5). Even the despised territory of the Samaritans (ch. 8) and the gateway city to the Asiatic Gentiles (ch. 19) experienced the outpouring of the Spirit in Pentecostal fullness.<sup>19</sup>

The initial outward signs of the Spirit's fullness varied almost as much as the nationalities and localities of the recipients. The Jewish apostles and disciples in Jerusalem witnessed *three signs*—the *sound* as of a rushing mighty wind, the *sight* of cloven tongues like as of fire, and the *speech* in other languages of the Spirit-baptized believers. The Samaritans as far as the record goes had *no outward signs*. Paul's reception of the Spirit's fullness is not specifically marked by external phenomena, except the restoration of his eyesight (ch. 9). The devout Caesarean Gentiles witnessed *one sign*—the speaking in tongues (10:46)—whereas the Jewish believers in Ephesus received *two signs* when the Spirit came to them (19:6). Obviously there was no external pattern of signs set up in Acts for the Church to follow in subsequent generations relative to the individual or corporate enduement with the Spirit. Luke has guarded against the false view that any one or combination of signs is evidence of the baptism with the Spirit.

Sometimes the Holy Spirit was received *immediately* after becoming a disciple as did Paul (9:27, 17), sometimes *shortly* after beginning the Christian life as in the case of the Samaritans (8:12, 14-16), and at times after a *longer* period of discipleship as in the case of the 120, and the twelve at Ephesus. Some have viewed the Gentiles at Caesarea as receiving the Spirit's fullness simultaneous with their finding pardon. The whole description of Cornelius and his household as devout worshippers of the God of Israel and the fact that they had already heard and known of the good tidings of

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<sup>19</sup> As a day in redemptive history marked by the external phenomena of that event, Pentecost is unrepeatable. But the spiritual possibility and necessity in each generation of each believer experiencing at Christ's hands the baptism with the Holy Spirit ever remains.

peace by Jesus Christ the Saviour made them already acceptable to God—for they feared God as they knew Him and wrought righteousness insofar as light had come to them (*See*: 10:2, 4, 7, 22, 30-37; 11:9, 12).

The ritual of water baptism and of laying on of hands also are without a fixed formula in the Acts. Sometimes water baptism was not immediately connected with receiving the Spirit, as instanced by the 120 in Jerusalem (chs. 1, 2). In fact, there is no account given in Acts of the water baptism of those who were Spirit-baptized on the Day of Pentecost. Sometimes water-baptism preceded, by a short but unknown period of time, the baptism with the Holy Spirit—as at Samaria (8:12, 14-17); one outpouring of the Holy Spirit was *immediately* preceded by water-baptism—as in the experience of the Ephesian disciples (19:5-6); and in one, if not two, cases the Holy Spirit fell upon men before being baptized with water in the Name of Jesus Christ—as at Caesarea and probably Damascus (10:47-48; 9:17-18). Quite probably the lack of a divinely fixed pattern in regard to the relation between experiencing water (ritual) and Spirit (real) baptism is to safeguard against holding the sacraments as the mode of receiving the Holy Spirit.

The ritual of “the laying on of hands” in receiving the gift of the Spirit follows no set order in Acts. The Holy Spirit fell upon the 120 and upon the Gentiles in Caesarea without the mediating act of this ceremony, whereas He came upon the Samaritan believers, Paul and the Ephesian disciples in conjunction with this rite. An important difference in these latter cases needs to be observed. In Samaria and Ephesus, apostles officiate in the ceremony, but at Damascus, when the foremost apostle to the Gentiles was both filled with the Spirit and baptized with water, *a certain devout disciple*, Ananias by name, was divinely appointed to officiate in the laying on of hands (9:10, 12, 17; 22:12-16). Could this lack of a set ritual by a special class of men be the Divine safeguard against a false clericalism and ecclesiasticism?

It seems amply clear that the pouring forth of the Holy Spirit is not conditioned by signs, sacraments, rituals, numbers, places, seasons, races, classes or offices. What does seem unalterably true is that only disciples are eligible to be Spirit-baptized and that upon the condition of obedient faith.

If power for service, for sign-working, for prophesying and preaching the Kingdom of God was known by the apostles and the

seventy before the Day of Pentecost, what dispensational *changes* occurred on that historic day which remain throughout the Church Age? Pentecost immediately rendered the Jewish-Christian believers *relatively* independent of the Temple and its services, and the Gentile disciples *utterly* free from any Jewish ritual or ceremony. The Spirit's fullness in believers was evidence that God dwelleth not in temples made with hands (Acts 7:44-53; 17:24-31), but in human personalities, regardless of race or class, which have submitted themselves to the crucified but risen Jesus of Nazareth whom God had made both Lord and Christ (2:36). Now without intervening priests or man-manipulated sacrifices each believer by the Spirit has access to God through Jesus Christ and becomes the dwelling-place of God on earth. The Book of Acts is a historical account of the transition from that which was objectively and ceremoniously observed in the Temple of Jerusalem *to that which it typified* for subjective realization in character in Spirit-filled believers anywhere in the world. Here in Acts has been demonstrated the Pauline emphasis that "the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit."