



THE PROMISE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

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THE PROMISE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

The purpose of the Old Testament was to prepare Israel for a new dispensation of God's work on earth through the Holy Spirit. When John the Immerser came as the voice of one crying in the wilderness, all Israel was sensitized to the fact that something was near. John prepared the people to accept Jesus. Jesus then came preaching the gospel of the kingdom. Throughout His ministry, Jesus led the disciples to the summation of all the prophets' prophecies concerning the redemption of man. Throughout His ministry, He also promised the coming of the Holy Spirit. He made specific promises to the apostles. He made promises concerning the work of the Spirit during the new dispensation that was to come after His death and resurrection. When the Spirit was poured out on the day of Pentecost in A.D. 30, the world has never been the same since.

INTRODUCTION

The Holy Spirit was active in the Old Testament and before His outpouring on the day of Pentecost in A.D. 30. His work among the early fathers and prophets is often not as clear as we would like it to be. This is especially true concerning the spectacular events that occurred before and at Mount Sinai. However, during His work through the prophets of Israel we have a clear picture of His activity in revelation and inspiration. Our understanding of the present work of the Spirit among Christians must begin with an understanding of His work through the Old Testament fathers and prophets.

The purpose of this chapter is to formulate a general foundation upon which we can establish New Testament interpretations of the person and work of the Spirit. This is important because the New Testament Scriptures were written to Jewish Christians whose religious terminology and understanding was estab-

lished by the person and work of the Holy Spirit in the Old Testament Scriptures. Therefore, one of the first principles of interpretation for understanding the teaching of the Holy Spirit in the New Testament is to understand the teaching of the Holy Spirit in the Old Testament. The Old Testament must be our first commentary on the New Testament.

We live in a world of "reverse interpretive" in the religious world of Bible study. By this I mean that people who are religious in nature, read their religious experiences **into the Bible**. This practice of reading modern-day experiential religion into the pages of the Bible has caused great confusion in the religious world. This manner by which people have understood biblical teachings concerning the Holy Spirit have greatly distorted correct Bible interpretations concerning the Holy Spirit. Since one's understanding of the work of the Holy Spirit

is often a very emotional approach to biblical interpretation, we would expect the highly emotional to lose some of their objectivity when approaching the Bible in determining exactly what is taught in the Scriptures concerning the work of the Spirit. We must remember that our final conclusions concerning this subject must not be determined by what we feel, but by what the Bible actually says. The Holy Spirit, through the word that He inspired to be written, must be allowed to define His person and work.

Surrounding the concept of the biblical occurrence of the baptism with the Holy Spirit, there is much confusion. Men have read their present-day emotional experiences into the text of Scripture in an effort to find biblical proof for their ecstatic emotional experiences. Some have said, “**In practically every denomination throughout the world today there are men and women who are experiencing the baptism of the Holy Spirit and speaking in other tongues**, just as that little group in the Upper Room in Jerusalem did on the day of Pentecost [emphasis mine, R.E.D.].”^{16:71} It is taught by some that today “the baptism in the Holy Spirit accomplishes a remarkable and wonderful work within the believer.”^{17:12} In fact, it is claimed that some “**have had the experience of being baptized in the Holy Spirit before ever reading about it in the Scriptures or even understanding it** [emphasis mine, R.E.D.].”^{17:29} Concerning the promise of the baptism with the Holy Spirit, it is also stated, “It is an experience that changed the lives of the

early believers, and is doing the same for those who accept it today, **for it is the promise of the Father to us** as well as those of the apostolic age [emphasis mine, R.E.D.].”^{16:72} Therefore, it is affirmed that people today can receive the baptism with the Spirit by asking of the Father. One can be baptized in the Spirit as the apostles were so baptized in Acts 2.

There are a host of other distorted views concerning the work of the Holy Spirit as the above that are constantly circulated throughout the religious world. These views are often so distorted and confused that it makes it almost impossible for people to gain a correct view of the Holy Spirit from what is taught in the Bible. In fact, those religious groups who have given up the Scriptures as the only authority for determining religious belief and practice, will never come to a knowledge of the truth on this matter if they continue to refuse to allow the Bible to be our final textbook on these matters. When experiential events in one’s life in the absence of Bible knowledge controls what one believes, he or she will not be able to gain a correct understanding of the Holy Spirit.

This chapter is an introduction to the work of the Holy Spirit in relation to the lives of the apostles. We must remind ourselves that our understanding of any work of the Spirit must be limited to the Spirit-inspired definition of His work that is explained in the Bible. In other words, we would know nothing of the Spirit if the Spirit had not revealed to us His presence and work through the written word.

Since it is easy for men to be misled by delusions (2 Th 2:10-12), then we must assume that God wants us to go directly to His word in order to determine our understanding of what the Spirit does in the life of the Christian.

We must note also that in prophecies of the Holy Spirit in the Old Testament and gospel records, **emphasis is on the work of the Spirit**. As one studies the prophecies of the Spirit in the Old Testament, there is always an emphasis on what the Spirit was going to do. Both John and Jesus maintained this same emphasis in their ministries. In other words, the prophets are not so much in-

terested in explaining the presence of the Spirit as they are about what the Spirit does or will do. Their emphasis was on the work of the Spirit at His time in history when He would play a very important role in beginning and continuing the dispensation of the church.

It is for this reason that we would conclude that the Spirit works today throughout the world. This is the work of God in bringing all things to a conclusion in order to usher the saints into eternal dwelling. When we study the New Testament, therefore, we investigate what the Spirit is doing in the lives of the saints.

Chapter 1

The Promise Of The Holy Spirit

In order to understand the work of the Holy Spirit in the lives of the early Christians and our lives today, we must first have a general understanding of the work of the Holy Spirit as it is revealed in the Old Testament. Before the wonderful events of Acts 2, the Holy Spirit was active in the lives of individuals through the period of history that is recorded in the Old Testament. He was not idle during the days before the giving of the Old Testament law to the Jews on Mount Sinai. He was most active during the time from creation to Sinai, but especially active during the history of Israel. The Spirit indwelt and worked through special people in the Old Testament in order to accomplish God's eternal scheme of redemption. The Father reigned over the universal kingdom of

mankind. He worked through the Holy Spirit in order to direct humanity to the cross of Jesus.

A. The Spirit's indwelling and work before Mount Sinai:

There are not many statements in the Bible concerning the work of the Spirit before the giving of the Old Testament law to the Jews on Mount Sinai. However, the statements that are given reinforce the principle that the Spirit has always been at work in the affairs of the created world.

1. *The Spirit worked in creation.*

The first mention of the Holy Spirit in the Old Testament is Genesis 1:2. After the initial creation of all things, "*the*

Spirit of God was hovering over all things.” From this we would assume that the Spirit actively worked in creation, though by Jesus “*all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth*” (Cl 1:16). However, “*by His Spirit He adorned the heavens*” (Jb 26:13). David said, “*You send forth your Spirit, and they are created: and you renew the face of the earth*” (Ps 104:30). In some way, therefore, the Spirit had a very active role in creation. As a part of the Godhead, we must assume that every manifestation of the Godhead, the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, worked together in order to bring all things into existence.

2. The Spirit worked in revelation.

God created man and revealed through chosen individuals, laws by which man was to live. Revelation was the work of the Spirit in order to reveal God and His work to man. Therefore, during the Old Testament era God in “*various times and in different ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets*” (Hb 1:1). Pharaoh of Egypt recognized that the Holy Spirit indwelt Joseph. Moses recorded, “*And Pharaoh said to his servants, ‘Can we find such a one as this, a man in whom is the Spirit of God?’*” (Gn 41:38). Because of Joseph’s close relationship with God, Pharaoh could perceive that the Spirit was in him. Because of this close relationship with God, Joseph interpreted dreams as a result of the work of the Spirit in his life.

B. The indwelling and work of the Spirit in the Old Testament:

On Mount Sinai God revealed His law to the chosen people of Israel. The choosing of Israel began a long history of God’s work in this one nation in order to bring the Redeemer into the world for the salvation of man. Throughout the centuries of God’s work with Israel, the Spirit worked in chosen men in order to preserve Israel until the coming of the Messiah. The purpose for the choosing of Israel was to preserve the seedline for the Seed. Therefore, the work of the Spirit in Israel was to preserve Israel for the coming of the Redeemer of the world.

1. The Spirit was “upon” them.

Several statements are made in the Old Testament concerning the Holy Spirit being **upon** a particular individual. By the use of the word “upon” it is meant that in some way the Holy Spirit worked through a particular individual in order to accomplish either a specific or general work of God. For example, Samuel told Saul that “*the Spirit of the Lord will come upon you, and you will prophesy*” (1 Sm 10:6). The Spirit did come **upon** him “*and he prophesied*” (1 Sm 10:10). The result of the Spirit’s coming upon Saul was that he prophesied. He spoke forth the word of God. Another example is the coming of the Spirit upon Balaam. “*The Spirit of God came upon*” Balaam and he **spoke by inspiration the oracles of God** (Nm 24:2ff). The result of the Spirit’s coming upon Balaam was that he also spoke the word of God by inspiration. “*The Spirit of the Lord came upon Jephthah*” (Jg 11:29; see also Jg 14:6,19;

15:14; Is 59:21; 61:1). From these examples it is clear that the coming of the Spirit **upon** someone resulted in something miraculous happening. The miraculous that happened was that Saul prophesied and Balaam spoke the oracles of God. The coming of the Spirit upon someone, therefore, must be interpreted as a miraculous event with miraculous consequences.

2. The Spirit was “in” them. It is also said in the Old Testament that the Spirit was **in** the prophets. By use of the word “in” reference is made to a **close relationship** between the Spirit and the one in whom the Spirit dwelt. We must not conclude that by use of either the words “upon” and “in” that the Scriptures are seeking to convey the location of the Spirit in reference to the one who is influenced by His direction. In the context wherein the influence of the Spirit is mentioned, a metaphorical interpretation must be understood. We must not think that we can locate God. It is in Him that we live, move and have our being (At 17:28). When the Scriptures speak of His being in us, therefore, something more than a literal use of the word “in” is meant. It is for this reason, that the interpreter must look beyond the literal meaning of the words “upon” and “in” when studying the subject of the work of the Spirit with man.

The Old Testament reveals how close God worked with those He used to guide Israel. God worked so close to the one who was inspired that it is stated that the Spirit actually was in that person. The Spirit was **in** Joseph (Gn 41:38). Joshua

was “*a man in whom*” was the Spirit of God (Nm 27:18). Nebuchadnezzar recognized that the Holy Spirit was in Daniel (Dn 4:8,18). So did others (Dn 5:11,14). Nebuchadnezzar recognized that the Spirit was in Daniel because of Daniel’s miraculous prophecy and interpretation of dreams. The Spirit was in all the true prophets of Israel. Isaiah stated that God had put the Spirit “**within them**” (Is 63:11). Peter said that “*the Spirit of Christ who was in them*” indicated the things to come (1 Pt 1:10-12). When the Spirit was in someone in the Old Testament, that particular person had a special close relationship with the Spirit which resulted in his participation with the miraculous activity of Deity. When the Spirit was in them, we must not think of location, but of a working relationship. The working relationship resulted in the miraculous activity of the one in whom the Spirit dwelt.

3. The Spirit “entered” them. By the Spirit’s use of the word “enter” we would assume that the phraseology is expressing a miraculous activity through the particular person in whom the Spirit dwelt. Here is why. God said to Ezekiel, “*I will speak to you*” (Ez 2:1). Ezekiel explains, “*Then the Spirit entered me when He spoke to me, and set me on my feet; and I heard Him who spoke to me*” (Ez 2:2; 3:24). This “entering” resulted in the Lord speaking **directly** to Ezekiel. It resulted in the Lord revealing visions **directly** to Ezekiel. I would say, therefore, that this was a miraculous entering with miraculous results.

It must again be emphasized that the “entering” does not emphasize a locat-

ing of the Spirit. God, the Spirit could, in human terms, “enter” Ezekiel from across the universe. I say this in order to again caution us about placing our literal definitions on words that the Spirit had to use in order to convey what He was doing. What He was doing through Ezekiel was directing the prophet to speak by inspiration of the word of God.

4. The Spirit “filled” them. To be “filled” with the Holy Spirit meant that the one filled was miraculously given knowledge or ability to accomplish a work for God. Concerning the construction of the tabernacle, the Lord said to Moses of Bezaleel, “*And I have filled him with the Spirit of God, in wisdom, in understanding, in knowledge, and in all manner of workmanship*” (Ex 31:3). Bezaleel was given the knowledge by which to construct the tabernacle. The word “filling” was used to emphasize something that was done, not somewhere the Spirit went. The result of the filling by the Spirit is explained by Micah. “*But truly I am full of power by the Spirit of the Lord*” (Mc 3:8). The result of the filling of the Spirit was miraculous activity that was directed toward accomplishing God’s work. In these “fillings of the Spirit” individuals were miraculously given the will of God and directed by the Spirit. They were given knowledge. They were filled with knowledge in order to accomplish God’s purposes.

In view of the context of the above statements concerning the work of the Holy Spirit in the affairs of man, three conclusions must be drawn.

a. The Spirit was working. All of the above concepts concerning the relationship of the Holy Spirit with individuals refer to the work of the Spirit in the Old Testament. When the Spirit was upon an individual it was the same as the Spirit being in that person or that person being filled with the Spirit. The result of the “in”, “upon” and “filling” was the same. The Spirit was accomplishing a work. His relationship with the individual was to accomplish a specific work in order to accomplish the purpose of God with the nation of Israel.

b. The Spirit was working miraculously. As a result of one being “filled,” or “entered,” or “come upon” by the Spirit, something miraculous was accomplished. Though the result of the miraculous work varied from one person to another, the work was still miraculous. Bezaleel was miraculously instructed to build the tabernacle. Daniel and Joseph were miraculously empowered to interpret dreams. Micah, Isaiah and all the prophets were miraculously able to speak prophecy. All were miraculously endowed with ability, wisdom or knowledge which was given specifically by the Holy Spirit to accomplish God’s purposes.

c. The Spirit was working miraculously through selected individuals. God was selective concerning those to whom He gave the Spirit in the Old Testament. He spoke to Israel “*by His servants the prophets*” (2 Kg 24:2). Through Jeremiah God said, “*Since the day that your fathers came out of the land*

of Egypt until this day, I have even sent all My servants the prophets” (Jr 7:25). The Spirit worked **in** the prophets in order to direct Israel (Ne 9:30). Nehemiah wrote, “**You also gave Your good Spirit to instruct them ...**” (Ne 9:20). Upon these special men and women whom He chose to be heralds of His message, God gave the Holy Spirit. In other words, during the Old Testament times God was selective. He was selective in order to instruct certain individuals to proclaim His will to the nation of Israel. Abraham, Isaiah, Deborah, Daniel and others were special people of God to whom was assigned the Spirit of revelation and inspiration. However, there would be a time when this would change. The Spirit would be given to all classes of people. He would be poured out on all flesh.

C. Prophecy concerning the promise of the Holy Spirit:

At the time of the existence of national Israel, the prophets prophesied that there was a time coming when God would expand the work of the Holy Spirit outside the use of selected individuals in Israel. There would be a time when the Spirit would not be upon or in a special class of people. Prophecies of this time contained a “**promise**” of God concerning things to come. Specifically, God promised a great outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon every class of individual of His people. He would pour out the Spirit upon both Jew and Gentile, both male and female, servant and slave. The Old Testament records the prophecies of the

promise. In the gospel records Jesus leads the Jews to the fulfillment of this promise. In Acts 2 the promise is initialized. From the apostles in Acts 2, the promise goes forth to all flesh.

There are several key prophecies of the Holy Spirit in the Old Testament. The prophecies of Joel and Ezekiel are central to the establishment of the church on Pentecost in A.D. 30.

1. God promised through Joel an outpouring on all flesh. Joel 2:28-32 is a very significant prophecy concerning the Holy Spirit. It is a foundation prophecy concerning the activity of the Holy Spirit in the New Testament church. In Acts 2:16,17 Peter quoted this prophecy and made direct application of it to the Pentecost events of Acts 2:1-4. Therefore, Peter’s reference to this prophecy introduces us to the significance of the promise here in reference to the Holy Spirit.

And it shall come to pass afterward that I will pour out My Spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions. And also on My menservants and on My maidservants I will pour out My Spirit in those days. And I will show wonders in the heavens and in the earth: blood and fire and pillars of smoke. The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the coming of the great and awesome day of the LORD. And it shall come to pass that whoever calls on the name of the LORD

shall be saved. For in Mount Zion and in Jerusalem there shall be deliverance, as the LORD has said, among the remnant whom the LORD calls.

The following are important points to understand in the prophecy of Joel 2:28-32:

a. “Afterward”: The events about which Joel 2 speaks would come to pass **afterward**. In quoting this prophecy on the day of Pentecost, Peter interprets “afterward” to mean “last days,” **a reference to the last days of the Jewish Commonwealth**. The promise would be fulfilled after the return of the Jews from the dispersion of the Babylonian and Assyrian captivities. It would take place during the end of God’s special work with the nation of Israel. The prophecy would find its fulfillment after the captivities and after the almost four hundred years of “inspirational silence” from the prophet Malachi to the days of John the Immerser. During the four hundred years following the work of the prophet Malachi, there was no inspired prophet in Israel until the time of Jesus and John. The fulfillment of this prophecy, therefore, would mark the end of the inspirational period of silence. It would also signify the beginning of the last days of the Jewish Commonwealth. The outpouring would take place in the last days, not at the beginning of the last days. This was a promise made to Israel. Therefore, the faithful of Israel waited in anticipation concerning the time when it would be fulfilled.

b. “Pour out My Spirit”: Reference here is to the **manner** by which the Spirit would come or be given. “Pour out” is a figure of speech, a metaphor. It must not be taken literally. Water is literally poured out of a bucket. But we must not think of the Spirit being literally poured out on all flesh as water is poured out of a container. Deity is not poured out like water from a bucket. We must not interpret the manner by which the Spirit is to come upon all flesh in a literal sense. In view of the fact that the Spirit was already with Jesus (Mt 3:16) and was with the apostles (Mt 10:19,20) before Acts 2, we would interpret the pouring forth of the Spirit to refer to a time when men (the apostles) would be immersed in the will of the Spirit at the beginning of the age of the Spirit. The Spirit would come upon those whom He would inspire to accomplish the purpose for which He was poured out.

In Joel 2 **God’s initiative** is emphasized in contrast to man’s ability or righteousness to warrant the reception of the Spirit. From the perspective of when Joel wrote, **this outpouring would be something that God would do**. It would not be something that men would do in order to call upon the action of God. God was going to do something, but not something in response to the pleas or actions of man.

In preparing the way for Israel to accept the crucifixion and Acts 2 events, Zechariah prophesied, *“And I will pour on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem the Spirit; then they will look on Me whom they have pierced;*

they will mourn for Him In that day there shall be great mourning in Jerusalem” (Zc 12:10,11). In that day, the Lord says, “I shall have **poured out My Spirit ...**” (Ez 39:29). God promised, “**I will pour My Spirit on your descendants**” (Is 44:3; see 32:15). The outpouring of the Spirit would be accomplished in a day that God planned. It would be a specific event. **The result of the outpouring would lead men to mourn over Someone they had pierced.** In these prophecies the stage is being historically set for the coming Savior.

c. **“All flesh”**: It must first be understood that “all flesh” does not refer to believers and unbelievers. We do not understand this from the prophecy itself. However, when we continue our study to the ministry and teachings of Jesus, the “all flesh” will be narrowed down first to the apostles, and then to “those who believe.” In other words, the Spirit will first be poured out on the apostles. From the apostles, it will then go to all those who believe through the laying on of the apostles’ hands.

In the context of Joel 2, what follows the statement of “all flesh” explains what is meant by the outpouring on all flesh. Sons and daughters, old men and young men, menservants and maidservants are included in the “all flesh.” **The Spirit would not be poured out on a special class of prophets as in the Old Testament Jewish dispensation.** He would not be given only to special old men who were prophets of the special Jewish people. **He would be poured out on sons, daughters, old men, young men,**

male and female, servants and slaves. The emphasis here is not so much that the Spirit would be given to every individual, but that **He would be given to every class of individuals.** The outpouring would be in contrast to how the Spirit was given during the Old Testament era. Under the Old Testament law the Spirit was given to selected older prophets who were a class of men by themselves (2 Kg 24:2; Hb 1:1). A time was coming, however, when even the lowest class of society (servants and slaves) would receive the Spirit as the esteemed aged prophets of the Old Testament.

d. **“Shall prophecy”**: Not only would the outpouring be miraculous when the Joel 2 prophecy was fulfilled, the result of the outpouring would be miraculous. Prophecy is first the speaking forth of the word of God. Throughout both the Old Testament and New Testament, the definition of prophecy is the preaching of the word of God. However, in reference to inspired prophecy, the preaching or teaching of the word of God was by inspiration of the Holy Spirit. The Old Testament and New Testament prophets spoke by inspiration in view of the absence of the inspired written word of God that was preached and taught by uninspired New Testament prophets. In the context of the promise of Joel 2, inspired prophecy is under consideration. The direct result of the outpouring would be manifested by the inspired work of prophecy by men and women after the outpouring.

e. **“Wonders”**: Verses 30-32 of Joel 2 continue the prophecy of what God

would do in the last days. The metaphors in these passages refer to the finality of the Jewish Commonwealth. The fall of celestial bodies in prophetic literary language was used to figuratively portray the termination of earthly kingdoms (See Is 13:9,10; 34:4; MI 4:1,5,6). The sun usually referred to the president or king of the nation. The moon and stars referred to the governors, generals and captains who received their power from the king. When a nation was to fall, the Old Testament prophets figuratively portrayed such by the fall of the sun, moon and stars. Joel did the same in reference to national Israel. He was prophesying a time when the Jewish Commonwealth would be terminated. The outpouring of the Spirit in the last days, therefore, was a signal of the end of national Israel in the eyes of God.

f. “The great and awesome day of the Lord”: The word “day” refers to the time when God would begin the end of national Israel. It was a great and awesome day for believers. It would be a sad day for those who would not be of those who believe. The “day of the Lord” would be a day of judgment for those who would not accept the results of the outpouring of the Spirit.

g. “Shall be saved”: Salvation here does not refer to salvation from the calamity that would come upon national Israel. Salvation would be for those who would turn to God by “calling on His name.” This salvation would be redemptive in reference to sin, though the ones who would accept the Lord would be saved from the destruction of A.D. 70,

the time of the destruction of national Israel through the fall of Jerusalem.

Since the prophecy of Joel 2 is the prophecy that was quoted by Peter in reference to its fulfillment in Acts 2, this prophecy becomes special in the Old Testament. However, we must keep in mind that other prophets spoke of the same events about which Joel spoke. Though other prophecies are not as much in detail as Joel 2, other prophets collaborate with what Joel prophesied.

2. Promise of the Spirit within: Ezekiel looked beyond the restoration of Israel from captivity of Babylon. He prophesied of a time when Israel would have a changed attitude; they would have a spirit of obedience. Ezekiel 36:24-28 is a significant prophecy of a special time that was to come.

For I will take you from among the nations, gather you out of all countries, and bring you into your own land. Then I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean; I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and from all your idols. I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will keep My judgments and do them. Then you shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers; you shall be My people, and I will be your God.

Verse 26 of Ezekiel 36 discusses a **new attitude** as opposed to Israel's rebellion and stiffnecked attitude before the captivity. They would have a spirit of obedience to the one God as opposed to serving the idols of many gods.

In verse 27 God says, "*I will put My Spirit within you ...*" (See Ez 37:14). It would be good to compare this prophecy with a similar prophecy of the same time period to which Ezekiel looked. In Jeremiah 31:31-34 God affirmed that during this new time, "*no more shall every man teach his neighbor ... for they shall all know Me ...*" (Jr 31:34). The Jewish babies did not know the Lord when they were born into a covenant relationship with God. They had to be taught to know the Lord as they grew up in the Jewish nation. However, during the period which was coming, **those who were spiritually born of the word of God would already know the Lord at the time of their infancy.** Christians walk in the statutes of God because they have been begotten by the Spirit-inspired word of God (See 1 Pt 1:23). They know God when they are born into Christ. Herein is the concept that the ones coming into a covenant relationship with God would have the Spirit in them because of their close relationship with the will of God

from their infancy as part of His heritage. They will have been people who responded to the gospel of Christ that was preached through the medium of words. At the time of their birth, they "knew God." The Spirit will have worked in them through the preaching of the gospel message in order to bring them to the cross.

The above prophecies established anticipation in the Jews' hearts concerning the coming promise. The setting was thus established for the coming of the Spirit. A great day was coming when God would do something great in Israel. The Jews, as in all prophecy, did not fully understand all the implications of the promises. Nevertheless, they were expecting something. Therefore, when John and Jesus came preaching the kingdom, the Jews were awakened to the promise and the imminent fulfillment of the prophecies.

All prophecies concerning the Spirit center around what the Spirit would do through inspiration and miracle. Therefore, when we come to the fulfillment of the prophecies, we must focus on what the Spirit would do. Emphasis is not on locating the Spirit here or there, but on the work of the Spirit in reference to accomplishing the work of God to bring the saved into eternal dwelling.

Chapter 2

Jesus And The Promise Of The Holy Spirit

We now come to the New Testament, and first of all to the ministry of John. As a prophet of God, John went forth "*in the spirit and power of Elijah*" (Lk 1:17;

Mt 11:9,10). As a prophet, he was the forerunner of Jesus. It was his work to prepare the minds of the people for the coming of the Messiah. At the time of

John's coming, the Holy Spirit was working through Simeon and Anna. "*The Holy Spirit was upon*" Simeon (Lk 2:25-28). Anna was a Spirit-inspired prophetess (Lk 2:36). The Spirit was in both of them for the purpose of calling people's attention to the coming of both John and Jesus.

After Jesus was baptized, the Holy Spirit descended "*upon Him like a dove*" (Mk 1:10). We do not know exactly how this transpired. A simile is used to refer to the coming of the Spirit. The Spirit did not incarnate into the form of a physical dove. He descended **like** a dove (Mt 3:16). "*Then Jesus, being filled with the Holy Spirit, returned from Jordan [where He was baptized] and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness*" (Lk 4:1).

John 3:34,35 is significant concerning the power by which the Spirit worked in the life of Jesus. John recorded, "*For He whom God has sent speaks the words of God, for God does not give the Spirit by measure. The Father loves the Son, and has given all things into His hand.*"

Jesus spoke the "*words of God*" by inspiration of the Spirit (See 2 Tm 3:16,17). In other words, His inspiration was full. Inspiration is always full and complete because of what John says God's work is in inspiration, "*for God does not give the Spirit by measure.*" This is a general statement concerning God's work through inspiration. Because the Father loved the Son, He gave "*all things into His hand*" at the time of Jesus' ministry. This included full inspiration which is always the Father's system of inspiration. In other words, there is no

such thing as partial inspiration when it comes to the work of the Holy Spirit. There is no such thing as measures of inspiration. As John stated, God does not give the Spirit by measures of inspiration.

It is not my belief that John 3:34,35 teaches a "portioning out" of the Holy Spirit. The context of the passage is discussing inspiration, **not some personal influence**. In inspiration it has never been God's policy to "*give the Spirit by measure.*" To make this passage refer to a "portioning out" of the Holy Spirit seems to be an interpretation that is directly contrary to the principle that it teaches concerning the work of God in inspiration. In inspiration God always worked completely. The statement by John is a negative statement affirming that in inspiration God never worked in a manner that was either obscure or partial. Terry stated:

It is quite biblical to talk about measures of faith or of Christ's gift (referring to charismatic gifts and ministries – Rom. 12:3 and Eph. 4:7), **but it is not biblical to speak of measures of the Spirit. The words "unto him" in John 3:34 in italics indicate that there are no corresponding words in the Greek original.** A literal translation of the phrase would be "**for He does not give the Spirit by measure.**" **The passage says plainly that there is no such thing as "measures of the Spirit."**^{14:193}

Throughout His ministry, Jesus made various promises concerning the coming

of the Holy Spirit. We must understand these statements of promise in view of the Old Testament prophecy of Joel 2 and similar prophecies. Joel's prophecy centered around a miraculous outpouring of the Spirit with miraculous results. Throughout Jesus' ministry, He affirmed the coming fulfillment of this miraculous outpouring.

A. Jesus promised a baptism with the Holy Spirit.

In Matthew 3:10-12 John said of the work of Jesus,

*And even now **the ax is laid to the root of the trees.** Therefore every tree which does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance, but He who is coming after me is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. **He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.** His winnowing fan is in His hand, and **He will thoroughly clean out His threshing floor,** and gather His wheat into the barn; but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.*

John said to all those who came out to hear his preaching and see his immersing that the One coming would "**baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire**" (vs 11). We must assume that John had Joel 2:28 in mind when he made this statement. By inspiration, what John stated was in view of the events of both the day of Pentecost in A.D. 30 and the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70, though John

did not know of these events in the future. However, by inspiration he figuratively foretold that something was coming.

Seated therefore in the historical context of the prophecy and fulfillment of the Joel 2:28 passage, John makes the statement of verse 11. The statement applies to two groups, **the obedient and the disobedient. The obedient would be baptized with the Spirit. The disobedient would be baptized with fire.** However, not all the obedient were baptized with the Spirit as is historically pointed out by the fulfillment of this prophecy as recorded in the book of Acts. Only the apostles, who in the context of Matthew 3 do not yet exist as apostles, were baptized in the Spirit in Acts 2. The result of the Holy Spirit baptism, however, affected the entire church. In fact, it was the event of this baptism that began the unveiling of the prophecy of John.

The baptism of fire refers primarily to the destruction of the Jewish disobedient in A.D. 70 with the destruction of Jerusalem. However, not all the disobedient were baptized in fire because not all disobedient Jews were destroyed in A.D. 70. Therefore, John is saying that representatives of the group of obedient would be baptized with the Spirit—the apostles. Likewise, representatives of the group of the disobedient would be baptized with fire—the Jewish hierarchy in Jerusalem in A.D. 70. Nevertheless, all the disobedient will eventually be destroyed by the baptism of fire in the eternal destruction of hell.

Some have proposed an alternative meaning of the baptism of fire by applying its reference to Acts 2:3. Some affirm that the tongues as of fire that sat upon each one of the apostles in Acts 2 was the baptism of fire. However, I do not agree with this interpretation because the “setting upon” of the tongues of fire is not an “immersion in” (or, “baptism of”) fire. Secondly, the significance of the tongues of fire in Acts 2:3 was probably only for the purpose of giving a visual indication to the almost 120 people present that it was only the apostles who had been baptized with the Spirit. The tongues of fire and the speaking in tongues were the Spirit’s reaffirmation that the Twelve were the true Christ-sent apostles whom He had immersed.

B. Jesus would give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him.

Jesus stated, *“If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him”* (Lk 11:13). The parallel passage to this promise is Matthew 7:11. In Matthew’s account, Jesus said that the Father would *“give good things to those who ask Him.”* By comparing these two passages we would conclude that the meaning is that the Father was to give the good things (plural) **of the Spirit**. In other words, as a result of the coming of the Spirit, the recipients would receive “good things.” The Luke passage is a metonymy, that is, **the cause is placed for the effect**. The Holy Spirit is the

cause. The effect are the good things. The Holy Spirit is stated as the cause in the text of Luke 11:13 for the good things about which Matthew wrote in Matthew 7:11. When the Spirit works in His dispensation, He would produce good things. **Luke emphasizes the cause. Matthew emphasizes the effect.**

We will later see that these good things would be the miraculous gifts and inspired word of the Spirit that were given for the good of the church. Emphasis in Matthew 7:11; and Luke 11:13, therefore, is not on the actual receiving of the Holy Spirit, but on that which the Spirit would bless those who ask of the Father. This passage is not teaching that one should pray for the Holy Spirit. It is teaching that the disciples should pray for the good things that were to come from the Spirit.

The events of Acts 8 would be a fulfillment of the statements made by Jesus that are recorded in both Luke 11:3 and Matthew 7:11. When Peter and John came to Samaria after the preaching of Philip, Luke recorded, *“Now when the apostles who were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent Peter and John to them, who, when they had come down, prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit”* (At 8:14,15). Peter and John came down to Samaria to lay hands on those who had been immersed. When they did, the Holy Spirit came upon them (At 8:18). Though the apostles, Peter and John, had been given the authority to lay hands on people in order that the disciples receive the Holy Spirit, it was evidently

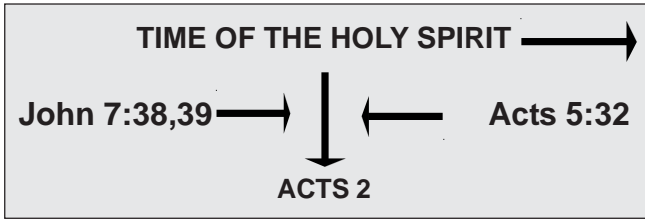
the choice of the Spirit as to whom He would come. For this reason, Peter and John

prayed that the baptized believers of Samaria might receive the Spirit by the laying on of their hands.

A second illustration of the fulfillment of Luke 11:3 and Matthew 7:11 would be 1 Corinthians 14:13. Paul wrote to the Corinthian church, “Therefore let him who speaks in a tongue pray that he may interpret.” Reference here was to the one in the Corinthian church who had already had hands laid on him to receive the gift of speaking in languages (tongues). He could pray that he also receive the gift of interpretation. In this context, therefore, it was the choice of the Spirit to give an added gift. It was the choice of the Spirit to distribute to each member of the church as He so willed (1 Co 12:11). If members had had hands laid on them by the apostles, then they could pray that the Spirit distribute to them the appropriate gift to be used in their ministry of edification of the church.

C. Jesus promised that the Spirit would be given.

In John 7:38,39 John recorded, “*He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water. But this He spoke concerning the Spirit, whom those believing in Him would receive; for the Holy Spirit*



was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.”

The

promise of the outpouring had not yet happened at the time Jesus made the statement that is recorded in John 7:38. Jesus thus made this statement in view of the coming of the Holy Spirit. John recorded, “... *the Holy Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.*” The word “given” is not in the Greek text, though the interpretive addition of the word does no harm to the meaning. The passage should literally read, “... *the Holy Spirit was not yet*” In other words, **it was not yet the time of the Holy Spirit.** A time would come when the Spirit would play a major role in revealing all truth in order to establish and edify the church. The Spirit had worked from creation to the cross. However, His miraculous work was consummated in the revealing of all truth and in giving inspired guidance to the church in the first century.

The word “Spirit” is without the article (the), and thus, **reference is to what the Spirit would accomplish. Jesus is discussing an operation, or work of the Spirit, not His person.** The word “Spirit” without the article expresses the manifestation of the work of the Spirit. Emphasis would not be on the person of the Spirit, though the cause of the work is the Spirit Himself. Nevertheless, Jesus was emphasizing what the Spirit would do during His time of work.

During the time of the Spirit, the Spirit would do His work in carrying out God's work of redemption among men. In John 7:38,39 Jesus and John connect the "giving" of the Holy Spirit with the ascension of Jesus. The "giving", or time of the Spirit, would begin sometime after Jesus' ascension. In Acts 1 Jesus ascended. In Acts 2 the Spirit came. John 7:38,39 looks forward to Acts 2. Acts 5:32 looks backward.

The commentary passage of Acts 5:32 looks **backward** to the Acts 2 event. *"And we are His witness to these things,"* Peter stated, *"and so also is the Holy Spirit whom God has given to those who obey Him."* "All flesh", that is, all classes or groups of believers, were beginning to be given the miraculous gifts of the Holy Spirit in Acts 2. Only the apostles on the day of Pentecost received the baptism of the Spirit. However, we would assume that they immediately laid hands on all disciples present and upon the three thousand who were baptized in order that the gifts be spread to all those who believed. By the time of Acts 5, "all flesh" had begun to receive the gifts.

The "living water" of John 7:38 is a reference to the miraculous gifts that came through the laying on of the apostles' hands after Acts 2. These gifts came forth from the early Christians who had received the Spirit in the miraculous manner of the apostles laying on of their hands. The purpose of the blessing of the gifts was the good that came from the miraculous gifts. The good that came from the gifts was the edification of the church and the evangelization of the

world (See 1 Co 12-14). The emphasis of John 7:38,39, therefore, is on the result of the Holy Spirit's coming. The result was the good things of the miraculous gifts. The result of the gifts was the edification of infant churches which did not have the written word of God. The long-lasting result of the Holy Spirit's outpouring was the recorded inspired Scriptures which continue with the church throughout the centuries.

The visible good things that came forth from the Holy Spirit were the miraculous gifts of the first century. However, we would not conclude that the Spirit has ceased to work simply because we are not empirically perceiving His work. God still works all things together for the good of the saints (Rm 8:28). He is still the God who is able to work exceedingly abundantly above all that we think (Ep 3:20). Simply because the Christian does not perceive the work of the Spirit through the senses today, does not mean that He has ceased to work.

Since the Spirit continues to work today, then we would have to conclude that John 7:38,39 also includes the non-miraculous work of the Spirit in the lives of Christians. Since we cannot conclude that the Spirit ceased to work simply because He ceased to work in a non-miraculous manner, then we must view John 7:38,39 from the viewpoint that Jesus was referring to the totality of the work of the Spirit in the Christian's life until Jesus comes again. Though the initial fulfillment of Jesus' prophecy referred to the miraculous reception of the Spirit, we must not discount the continuing work

of the Spirit in our lives today.

D. Jesus promised that the Spirit would be in the apostles.

In His personal conversation with the apostles in John 14, Jesus promised them,

*And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever—the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells **with** you and will be **in** you. I will not leave you orphans; I will come to you (Jn 14:16-18).*

In the context of what Jesus said above it is imperative to understand that Jesus was in a **personal discussion with the eleven apostles**. (More on this later.) He was here making a promise to these eleven who would have a special relationship with the Holy Spirit after the events of Acts 2.

Jesus said to the apostles concerning the Spirit, “*He dwells **with** [meta] you and will be **in** you [en humin]*” (vs 17). In verse 16 Jesus said that the Comforter (Helper) would abide with (*meta*) them forever. Verse 26 is a commentary on what is meant by the Spirit being with them in verse 17. Jesus said to the apostles that the Spirit would teach them “*all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you [apostles].*” **A miraculous relationship with the Spirit, therefore, is under discussion.** The apostles would be inspired

by the Holy Spirit to both remember what was personally taught them by Jesus, as well as to receive all truth.

In some way, the Helper (the Holy Spirit) would be with them as Jesus was with them. However, Jesus was with them in personal physical presence, but the Spirit would not be with them in this manner. He would be with them in a close relationship, but not in an incarnate presence. The Greek word *allon* (translated, “another”) refers to **another of the same kind**. “Thus the Holy Spirit would be another Comforter of the same kind or like Jesus.”^{12:211} In the text of John 14 Jesus was comforting the apostles by telling them that the Spirit would be in them in the dispensation to come. They would not be left without help. They would not be left as orphans.

Verse 17 is often confusing. It must first be noted that there is a variant reading in the Greek text here about which translators disagree. The variant concerns the tense of the verb, whether it should be present or future tense. The *King James* and *American Standard Version* hold to the future tense of the verb by translating that the Spirit “**shall be in you.**” The *New International Version* maintains this translation in the text, but adds the footnote that some early manuscripts read “and is.” However, the United Bible Societies Greek text has stayed with the **present tense** (*en humin estin*), though Marshall’s text maintains the future tense. Many translators have opted for the present tense. Welmouth translated, “*You know Him, because He remains by your side and is in you.*”

Lamsa translated, "... because he abides with you, and **is in you.**" The *New English Bible* reads, "... he dwells with you and **is in you.**" However, the *New English Bible* adds the footnote, "Some witnesses read 'shall be'." In view of the variant reading of this text, it would not be wise to overemphasize the meaning of the text.

In view of the Holy Spirit being **in** the Old Testament prophets and the Spirit's work with and in the apostles during the ministry of Jesus, **it would be a consistent interpretation to say that the present tense of the verb is correct here.** The Spirit was in them before Acts 2 in the sense that He was also in the prophets throughout the Old Testament. The disciples had already been on many preaching tours where they spoke by inspiration of the Holy Spirit and worked miracles (See Mt 10:5ff; Lk 10:1ff). On the other hand, the Spirit would also be "in" the apostles after Acts 2. It is my understanding that in this context Jesus is discussing both. He is reaffirming the close relationship of the Spirit with and in them **at that time they were with Jesus in His earthly ministry.** They had worked many miracles during Jesus' ministry and preached on many occasions. But Jesus is also affirming that the Spirit would continue His close relationship **with** and **in** them in the time to come. They would not be left orphans.

The same phrase (*en humin*) is also used in verse 20 of John 14 in reference to Jesus. In **that day**, the day of the coming of the Spirit in Acts 2, Jesus would be **in them.** What does He mean? In

John 10:38 Jesus said, "... believe that the Father is **in Me, and I in Him.**" This same concept is expressed again in John 14:10,11. The Greek word *en* is used in both contexts to describe a **close personal relationship.** When *en* is used in reference to Deity, there must always be a metaphorical understanding of how the word is used. In reference to Deity's relationship with humanity, it is also consistent to assume that a metaphorical meaning is in the mind of the Spirit. When Jesus made the statement of John 10:38, the Father was **in heaven.** However, Jesus was **on earth.** Nevertheless, they were in one another by common goal, purpose and work. Jesus is explaining to the apostles in John 14:17 the same concept. **He is discussing the close relationship the Spirit had with them at the time they were personally with Jesus.** If we read the future tense into the text of John 14:17, Jesus is then pointing them toward the close relationship they would have with the Spirit after Acts 2. The passage, therefore, is discussing the indwelling of the Spirit as they allowed the Spirit to control their lives by their voluntary commitment to the will and work of God. This indwelling presence of relationship was with them during the ministry of Jesus. The same relationship would continue with the apostles after the ascension of Jesus.

Verse 18 of John 14 reemphasizes Jesus' reassurance of the apostles in the above thought. Jesus would not leave them as orphans. The Greek word *orphanous* is only used here and in James 1:27 in the New Testament. Jesus wants

the disciples to know that Deity will stay with them when He personally departs from their presence. They would not be left without a divine Helper. This concept harmonizes with John 16:13 and John 14:26.

E. Jesus promised a relationship based on His word.

In His personal prayer for the apostles immediately before the denial and crucifixion, Jesus prayed, *“I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word; that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me”* (Jn 17:20-23). In this context Jesus discusses the relationship between the Father, Son, apostles and *“those who will believe in Me through their word.”* Jesus used the Greek preposition *en* in order to emphasize a relationship between the Father, Son and apostles. This Greek preposition emphasizes a close relationship between Deity and the disciples.

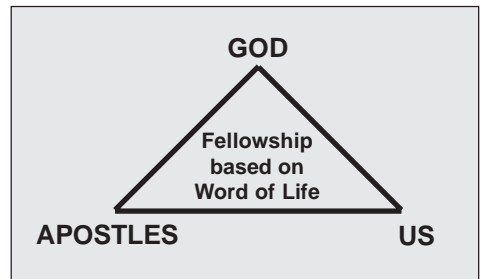
The Greek preposition *en* is sometimes difficult to understand. In their Greek lexicon, Bauer, Arndt and Gingrich stated concerning the use of *en*, *“The uses of this preposition are so many-sided, and often so easily confused, that a strictly systematic treatment is impossible.”*¹⁸: *“en”* However, in their definition of the preposition in the way Paul and John often used it, they state that it is used *“to designate a close personal relationship ... [emphasis mine, R.E.D.]”* Thayer’s lexicon

agrees with this, but further explains that *en* is used ...

... locally ... of that in which any person or thing is inherently fixed, implanted, or with which it is **intimately connected** ..., of a person to whom another is **wholly joined** and to whose power and influence he is subject, **so that the former may be likened to the place in which the latter lives and moves.** So used in the writings of Paul and John **particularly of intimate relationship with God or with Christ**, and for the most part involving contextually the idea of power and blessing resulting from that union [emphasis mine, R.E.D.].²⁴: *“en”*

The significance of the above is important. Because the Spirit was to have such a close relationship with the apostles according to John 17:20-23, He would be considered **in them**. Though He and the Father would be in heaven, they would be **in** them by close relationship because of the Spirit’s work through the apostles to carry out the mission of God on earth. This oneness would be evidence to the world that they were truly His disciples.

Here again is the emphasis on what



the Spirit was going to do in His dispensation of work. The “metonymies” of the prophecies, therefore, **are statements concerning the coming of the person of the Spirit, but the meaning is on what the Spirit was going to do when He comes.** When we interpret these prophecies of the Spirit, therefore, we should understand that the prophets are emphasizing the work of the Spirit.

In reference to the time when Jesus was with the apostles, the authority of the disciples over the supernatural was coming. Such authority would allow the apostles and early Christians to command the miraculous from the environment of God to touch the physical environment of this world. The result would be miraculous events in history. These miracles would indicate a very close relationship between God and those with whom He chose to work. In the working of miracles, the apostles were actually given control to manifest the realm of Deity. No greater close relationship would be enjoyed until eternity.

The above close relationship is often not emphasized when interpreters stress a literal locality of the Spirit. In other words, by stressing that the Holy Spirit was actually and literally inside the Old Testament prophets and New Testament apostles, the beauty of the close working relationship with which the Spirit worked in the apostles’ lives through inspiration and miraculous works is often lost. The unity of the Godhead with humanity is majestically expressed with the preposition “in” in many contexts of the New Testament. We are often distracted from

the close working relationship we have with God by concentrating on a literal meaning of the preposition “in.” I would challenge Bible students to think beyond efforts to locate the Spirit of God in order to focus on the work of the Spirit in the lives of the believers.

During the ministry of Jesus, the close working relationship between Deity and the apostles was first manifested by the disciples’ submission to the word of Jesus. In the context of John 17, Jesus was praying for unity among all those who “*believe in Me through their word*” (vs 20). A parallel and commentary passage is found in 1 John 1:3. John communicated the “*Word of Life*” in order that his fellow readers “*may have fellowship with us; and truly our [the apostles’] fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ.*” John 17:20-23 and 1 John 1:3 are parallel. Both contexts emphasize the oneness of believers which is based upon a common belief in and obedience to the word of Jesus. In other words, the word of truth is the foundation upon which fellowship is established with both the Godhead and the representatives (the apostles) through whom all truth was revealed. If one refuses to obey the truth of God’s word, therefore, he cannot have a relationship with either God or the apostles.

Again, I would caution Bible interpreters in using human understandings of time and location to refer to Deity. Because of our physical being and presence, we are here or there in relation to one another or some object. A man stands apart from another because the two

individuals are different bodies and can therefore be located at different places. However, God is spirit. To **“localize” God in a particular place is to humanize His presence.** God is “in heaven” simply because there is no other way in human terms to express the concept of His “location.” He is in heaven, but here. In Him we live, move and have our being (At 17:28). This does not mean that heaven is here. It simply means that God cannot be placed in a location as a man. For this reason, therefore, we must be careful not to place human characteristics on God in a literal sense as we would on man. We should also be careful not to place physical locations on the Holy Spirit. This is one reason why I find it difficult to “localize” the Spirit of God in relation to the location of a man. The presence of the Holy Spirit is greater than His indwelling in any man.

F. Jesus promised the promise of the Father.

Luke 24:28-49 is very important context concerning the fulfillment of the promise that God made through Joel. The statements of this context were made by Jesus **after** His resurrection and **before** His ascension. At the time Jesus made these statements, the fulfillment of the promised Spirit of Joel 2:28 would be fulfilled in a short time.

It is important to first understand to whom Jesus was speaking when He made these statements. Jesus was resurrected on Sunday morning. He appeared to the apostles. On the same day, possibly in

the afternoon, He appeared to two men on the road to Emmaus (Lk 24:13). After He revealed Himself to these two men, and ate some food with them, they returned to Jerusalem (Lk 24:33). They arrived in Jerusalem late Sunday night, or possibly early Monday morning (Lk 24:33). They found the apostles still together and others gathered with them. They proclaimed that they had seen Jesus. As they said these things to those who were gathered, Jesus appeared in the midst of them, and subsequently, made the statements of this context. We must assume, therefore, that what Jesus said in the context of Luke 24:36-49 was made to those who were gathered on this occasion. This would include the apostles and those who were with them.

In the context of Luke 24, Jesus said to those who were gathered, “*Behold, I send the **Promise** of My Father upon you; but tarry in the city of Jerusalem until you are endued with **power from on high.***” When the promise initially came, it would **endue**, or empower, the ones upon whom it came. The power would originate “from” (*ek* - “out of”) heaven. The meaning here is that the ones who would receive the promise would be endued with power. The promise would be **from** the Father. The **power** would originate from the heavenly environment.

It is often difficult to determine exactly to whom Jesus was making reference in Luke’s account when He made the statements of verse 49. The difficulty comes in determining the antecedent of the pronouns of the text. However, when considering the historical context of those

who were gathered on this Sunday evening, it is clear that Jesus was speaking to the group that was gathered on that occasion. But keep in mind that Jesus does not state how they would be endued with power from on high. In the prophecy of Joel 2, Joel only stated that the Spirit would be poured out upon “all flesh.” Jesus does not here talk about the baptism with the Holy Spirit. He simply states that the promise would come. It would come first to disciples in Jerusalem.

The book of Luke was written to Theophilus. Theophilus probably had only this letter and the book of Acts to understand the events of Jesus’ life, and especially the details concerning the final activities and teachings of Jesus prior to His ascension. We, therefore, must understand the statements of 24:28-49 from the same standpoint as Theophilus.

Verse 33 seems to establish the antecedent for the pronouns of the rest of the chapter. “*So **they** rose up that very hour and returned to Jerusalem, and found the **eleven** and **those** who were with them gathered together.*” Gathered here in this meeting are **the two disciples** to whom Jesus had appeared on the road to Emmaus. The **eleven apostles** are present. There are also “**those**” who are not identified, but undoubtedly were the women and others, possibly Justus and Matthias. Throughout the remainder of this context, therefore, consistent interpretation would force us back to this verse in order to determine the antecedent of the pronouns “they,” “them,” and “you.”

Verse 36 states that Jesus appeared to all of the above while they were assembled. In verse 44 “*He said to **them**,*” that is, He addressed all His disciples, including those immediate disciples who were present at this appearing. “*He opened **their** understanding that they might comprehend the Scriptures*” (vs 45). Verse 48 states, “*You are witnesses of these things.*” We know from Acts 1:21-23 that there were several men who had “*accompanied us [the apostles] all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us*” (At 1:21). Of these men, Barsabas (Justus) and Matthias were nominated to be special witnesses with the apostles. Lots were cast and Matthias was chosen to “*become a witness with us [the apostles] of His resurrection*” (At 1:22). The apostles were not the only witnesses of Jesus’ life and resurrection.

In Luke’s account, therefore, we would not be wrong to assume that there were many witnesses “of these things” to which Jesus referred in the context of Luke 24:48. We might refer to these as “general witnesses” in view of the fact that the apostles were His “special witnesses.” These general witnesses gave testimony of the resurrection. According to 1 Corinthians 15:6, there were at least five hundred of these general witnesses of the resurrection to whom Jesus appeared at one time.

In view of the above, therefore, **verse 49 is Luke’s general application of the promise of Joel 2:28 to all believers.** “*Behold, I send the Promise of My Father upon you.*” Here again, the pronoun “you” would find its antecedent in the

group of verse 33. This is in harmony with the promise of Joel 2:28 which states that the Spirit would be poured out upon all flesh. It is also in harmony with Mark 16:17,18 where Jesus affirmed that “*those who believe*” would manifest the miraculous power of the Holy Spirit in their lives.

Luke’s account does not explain **how** all who believe would receive the promise. Jesus simply commands, “*Tarry in the city of Jerusalem until you are endowed with power from on high*” (vs 49). We have no problem in understanding that Luke’s account is emphasizing the “*enduing with power*” by the Holy Spirit upon “all flesh.”

Luke is general as the prophecy of Joel 2:28 is general. However, when we come to Luke’s account to Theophilus in Acts 1, Luke is specific. He is specific because in Acts 1 he discusses the baptism with the Holy Spirit and who would receive such while the disciples waited in Jerusalem. He is specific in naming **the apostles** as the actual recipients of the baptism. He is specific in Acts 2 in defining that this is what historically happened. The apostles were initially endowed with the power of the Holy Spirit by the baptism with the Spirit in Acts 2:1-4. However, this power of the Holy Spirit was passed on to the rest of the disciples through the laying on of the apostles’ hands (At 8:18).

It has been traditionally argued that the statement of Luke 24:49 refers **specifically** to the apostles. In comparing Acts 1:8 to this verse, it would be a convincing argument in view of the fact that

Acts 1:8 is specifically made to the apostles. However, the Acts 1:8 passage is in the context of the baptism with the Holy Spirit which was specifically made to the apostles. It is not necessary to force Luke 24:49 to apply only to the apostles in the context. This is true because the promise of the Spirit was to all “who believe.” In Mark 16:15-18 Jesus expands the miraculous activity of the Spirit to all who believe. The fact is, therefore, that one does not have to confine Luke 24:49 to the apostles alone simply because the promise of the Spirit and the endowment of miraculous power went beyond the apostles both in promise and in historical fact. Philip had such power in Acts 8:13. Though he had been endowed with power from the Holy Spirit, he had not been baptized in the Spirit as the apostles. He and the other disciples who had the miraculous gifts were endowed with power by the laying on of the apostles’ hands.

Keep in mind also that the statements of Luke 24 took place either the Sunday evening of the resurrection or early Monday morning. On the other hand, the events wherein Jesus made the promise of the baptism of the Holy Spirit to the apostles took place about **forty days later**. Jesus made the promise of the baptism with the Spirit at the time just before He ascended to the Father (At 1:9).

Now consider the entire group of the 120 disciples of Acts 1:15 who were obeying Jesus’ command to wait in Jerusalem until they had been given the promise of Luke 24:49. “***But tarry in the city of Jerusalem until you are en-***

dued with power from on high.” Do we see the first mention of these disciples in Luke 24:33? Probably so. There were the eleven, the two men from Emmaus and the others. Luke 24:49 is a command that all who were in the meeting of Luke 24:33 be in Jerusalem for the great revival and outpouring event of the Holy Spirit on the apostles. This would infer, therefore, that the 120 disciples of Acts 1:15 could have been present in Luke 24:33. For some reason, at least, they were all present and together when the Holy Spirit came in Acts 2.

G. Jesus promised the baptism with the Holy Spirit to the apostles.

This brings us to the historical context of the meeting of Acts 1:1-8 which took place about forty days after the meeting of Luke 24. Luke is specific in this context as to whom the baptism with the Holy Spirit would apply. The antecedent of the pronouns “they,” “them” and “you” in this context is the **apostles** of Acts 1:2. On this occasion, which was different from the meeting and appearance of Luke 24, Jesus promised the apostles, “*You shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now*” (vs 5).

Luke also records in verse 4, “*He commanded them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the Promise of the Father, ‘which,’ He said, ‘You have heard from Me’.*” Jesus had discussed this promise with the apostles at some time **during His ministry**. This discussion was surely within the statements of

John 13 - 17, as well as in the promise of John 7:38,39. The promise, the Holy Spirit, would be given to them. The **promise** would specifically teach the apostles all things and bring to their remembrance all that Jesus had personally taught them (Jn 14:26). The **promise** would reveal to them all truth (Jn 16:13). The promise would be something miraculous, inspiring and direct. The promise, therefore, was directed toward all activities of the Holy Spirit. The promise was something very significant. It was something prophesied by the prophets of old. It was something for which the Jewish faithful had been waiting for centuries. It was the miraculous outpouring and empowering of the Holy Spirit upon all classes of believers that was mentioned by Joel.

In the context of Acts 1, however, Jesus has the apostles in mind when He stated, “*But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses of Me ...*” (At 1:8). Though there were many witnesses of Jesus’ resurrection, in some way the apostles were the special witnesses of Jesus. This is brought out in the apostles’ selection of Matthias to be “*a witness with us of His resurrection*” (At 1:22). These special witnesses would not only receive power when the Holy Spirit came upon them in a baptismal manner, they would receive the authority to give miraculous gifts to others. They were thus special in that Jesus personally called them to give witness to His resurrection. The power of their witness would be in the confirming miracles that they would

work. Through the exercising of the authority to impart the promise of the Holy Spirit to others, the blessings of the promise would go to all who are afar off.

Joel had first prophesied that the outpouring of the Spirit would be upon all flesh. In Luke 24 Jesus stated that the promise would go to those believers who were gathered with Him the Sunday or Monday after His resurrection. In Acts

1, Jesus narrowed down the recipients of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit to the apostles. However, from the baptism with the Holy Spirit in Acts 2, the outpouring of the Spirit would benefit all those who believe through the laying on of the apostles' hands. In this way, the fulfillment of Joel 2 could go to all those who believe. All would benefit from the outpouring of the Holy Spirit throughout all history.

Chapter 3

The Promise To The Apostles

The baptism with the Holy Spirit was specifically promised to the apostles. Acts 2 is a record of this historical event which happened in A.D. 30 in the city of Jerusalem. This marked the beginning of a new dispensation, a dispensation that will continue until the time when Jesus comes again. The Pentecost event was the fulfillment of the promise. On this day came the “good things” of the apostles that were promised by Jesus to the disciples.

In discussing the baptism with the Holy Spirit, we must understand that the Bible teaches that the Acts 2 event was a onetime historical event. It was onetime in the sense of what was accomplished with the apostles on Pentecost has never happened since. If this is true, then there is no baptism with the Holy Spirit today. If this baptism was specifically promised to the apostles, then it was not given all Christians throughout all history. There are two specific things to remember con-

cerning the baptism with the Holy Spirit. One is that **Jesus is the administrator** of this baptism. The other is that Jesus promised that **His apostles would receive this baptism**. The first point reveals the origin of the baptism and the second reveals the ones on whom the Spirit came on Pentecost. The origin of the baptism of the Spirit was Jesus. The ones on whom the Spirit came in a baptismal manner were the apostles.

A. Jesus was the administrator of the Spirit.

The Father told John, “*Upon whom you see the Spirit descending, and remaining on Him, this is He who baptizes with the Holy Spirit*” (Jn 1:33). In Matthew 3:11 John the Immerser stated that the One who would come after him would “*baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire*” (See Mk 1:8; Lk 3:16). These are references to what Jesus would do.

He would be the one who would baptize with the Holy Spirit. The point is that God is the one who would **give the Holy Spirit** (1 Th 4:8), but **Jesus would be the administrator of the baptism with the Holy Spirit**. No man would have such power or authority. The baptism with the Holy Spirit, therefore, was not left to the self initiative of the Holy Spirit. God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit worked as one in order to bring about the baptism with the Holy Spirit on the apostles in A.D. 30.

B. The promise of the baptism was made to the apostles.

It is important to understand that the baptism with (or “in”) the Holy Spirit was a promise made exclusively to the apostles. As previously discussed, John 13-17 is a key context in understanding this point. As stated before, it must be clearly understood that these few chapters contain a conversation **between Jesus and the eleven apostles** (Judas had already left the group to betray Jesus.) This was a **personal** conversation. In the context of this meeting, Jesus directed specific statements to His chosen eleven. Everyone else, including ourselves, are included only in a **secondary sense**. By secondary, I mean that these promises are made to us in an **indirect way**. They apply to us only in the sense that Jesus commanded the apostles to teach us “*to observe all things that I have commanded you*” (Mt 28:20). We must keep in mind that in the Matthew 28:20 passage, Jesus told the disciples to teach what was **com-**

manded, not what was promised specifically to them. In John 13-17 Jesus made some promises specifically to the apostles that are not made to us today.

Anything that is stated in the context of John 13-17 would apply to us only when Jesus said it applied to us. We cannot arbitrarily claim promises that were made in this personal meeting of Jesus and the disciples. The statements of John 13-17 apply to us only when Jesus takes the application of what He said outside the immediate discussion with the apostles. In the context we are directly addressed when Jesus made such statements as “*If anyone ...*”. We are the “anyone” when we believe on Jesus. Keep in mind, however, that when reading these chapters, only those statements that are directly associated with the “anyone” would apply to us today.

If we say that everything in John 13-17 applies to all Christians of all ages, then we have left ourselves in a position of not allowing Jesus to make **specific promises exclusively to His chosen apostles** without having those promises apply to all Christians of all time. However, Jesus did make special promises to the apostles which do not apply to us today. These chapters of John contain some of these promises.

This personal conversation between Jesus and His apostles began in the first part of chapter 13. It extends through the end of chapter 17 with the prayer of Jesus. In John 15:26,27 Jesus promised the apostles, “*But when the Helper comes, whom I shall send to you [apostles] from the Father, the Spirit of*

truth who proceeds from the Father, He will testify of Me. And you [apostles] also will bear witness, because you have been with Me from the beginning.” The apostles had been with Jesus from the beginning. Therefore, they would be His special witnesses because they had been with Him from the beginning of His ministry. It was to these apostles that Jesus is directing these very important promises. One of these special promises was the coming of the “Helper,” the Holy Spirit.

In John 14:26 Jesus personally promised the apostles that the “Helper” or “Counselor” would ***teach you [apostles] all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you***” (Jn 14:26). Jesus said that He would *“pray the Father”* that **they** (the apostles) receive this “Helper” (Jn 14:16). The Greek word *paracletos* is used here and is translated in different versions either “Helper,” “Counselor,” or “Comforter.” This same word is also used in reference to Jesus in 1 John 2:1 concerning Jesus’ relationship to Christians. It is unfortunately translated “comforter” in John 14:26 and 15:26 in the *King James Version* and *American Standard Version*. The *New International Version* translates it “Counselor”, which is better. However, this translation still does not convey the complete meaning of the word. The word refers to one being an “advocate,” “lawyer,” or “helper.” Vine emphasizes that the meaning is in reference to one who is “called to one’s aid It was used in a court of justice to denote a legal assistant, counsel for the

defense, an advocate.”^{26:208} This is the meaning in the context of John 14. Jesus promised that He would not leave the apostles desolate (Jn 14:18). The counseling, helping advocate, the Holy Spirit, would come and be with them as He had personally been with them throughout His ministry.

The “Spirit of truth” would come from the Father and bear witness of Jesus (Jn 15:26). However, He would not come unless Jesus went away (Jn 16:7). In the context of John 13-17, Jesus is on His way to the throne of David. The Holy Spirit was about to come to the apostles as their helper to begin the new dispensation of preaching the gospel to the world.

In this context it is crucial to know the specific things that the Spirit of truth would do when He came upon the apostles. Notice the following three things that the Holy Spirit would do for the apostles when He came to be their helper in the new dispensation to come:

1. ***The apostles would receive all truth.*** Jesus promised that the Spirit ***“will teach you all things”*** (Jn 14:26) and ***“guide you into all truth”*** (Jn 16:13). This promise of Jesus to the apostles included the receiving of all truth. No one would need to teach the apostles for the Spirit would **directly** teach them. This should be enough evidence to prove that this promise is not for us today. We must be taught the Scriptures in order to know the truth. We must study the Bible in order to discover the “all truth” which was revealed directly to the apostles

through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. The apostles were immersed into the will of the Holy Spirit, and thus received all truth which they delivered to the church.

2. *The apostles would be reminded of Jesus' teachings.* The Spirit would **bring to the apostles' remembrance** all that Jesus had personally taught them during His personal ministry on earth (Jn 14:26). This statement of John 14:26, and the promise therein, is further proof that this context is a conversation between Jesus and His apostles. How could the Spirit bring to our remembrance today those things we never learned from a personal walk and conversation with Jesus while He was on this earth? The apostles were there. They personally received the teaching of Jesus. It was the work of the Holy Spirit that they not forget what they saw and heard (See 1 Jn 1:1-3). This promise of Jesus was not for us today. It was for the apostles.

3. *The apostles would be told the things to come.* Jesus promised, "*He [the Holy Spirit] will tell you things to come*" (Jn 16:13). Things that were to come were revealed to the apostles. Specifically, information concerning the destruction of Jerusalem was revealed to the apostles in order to guard the church from the calamity of the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70. The book of Revelation is also a fulfillment of this promise. In Revelation John speaks of things which must shortly come to pass in the lives of those to whom he wrote (Rv 1:1). Once again, the emphasis of the message that was given by Jesus in John 13-17 was directed specifically to the apostles.

In His personal conversation with His apostles after His resurrection and prior to His ascension, Jesus became more specific concerning the effects of the baptism with the Holy Spirit upon the apostles. Only a **few days** before Pentecost, Jesus promised the apostles, "*For John truly baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now*" (At 1:5). The pronoun "you" in this verse finds its antecedent in verse 2. The promise of this context, therefore, is made to the **apostles**. Jesus was saying that in a few days the apostles would be baptized with the Holy Spirit. In the Luke 24 context Jesus had made a general promise by stating, "*Behold, I send the **Promise** of My Father upon you; but tarry in the city of Jerusalem until you are endued with power from on high*" (Lk 24:49).

Though given at different times, the thoughts of Luke 24:49 and Acts 1:8 are similar. Jesus was making a general statement concerning the reception of the promise in Luke 24. The promise was specifically made to the apostles in Acts 1 because in Acts Jesus was discussing the baptism with the Holy Spirit which only the apostles would receive and did receive. Acts 1:8 was a definite promise to the eleven because the antecedent of the "you" in verse 8 is the eleven apostles of verse 2. "*But you [apostles] shall receive power;*" Jesus promised, "*when the Holy Spirit has come upon you ...*" (At 1:8). It was the apostles that would initially receive this power from the Father. They would receive the first good things of the promise. The apostles would be

baptized with the Holy Spirit. This promise was to “all flesh,” but it would first be fulfilled in the baptism with the Spirit upon the apostles. The effect of this baptism, therefore, would go to “all flesh” as promised in Joel 2:28. Through the laying on of the apostles’ hands, the promise would go to those who believe.

All Christians today are the descendants of those who originally believed and had hands laid on them by the apostles. Every Christian throughout history, therefore, has benefitted from the miraculous blessing that was bestowed on the early disciples by the laying on of the apostles’ hands.

Chapter 4

The Apostles Receive The Promise

Acts 2 is the beginning of the fulfillment of the promise of God concerning the outpouring and baptism with the Holy Spirit. There are many misunderstandings concerning this fulfillment. As we study through the letter of Acts, we must remember that all things should be studied in the context of their historical happening. Since the prophecies concerning the future were not fully understood when they were made, then we should allow the historical fulfillment of the prophecies to interpret the prophecies themselves. The unveiling of the prophecies concerning the Holy Spirit took place in the first century. Our commentary on the work of the Holy Spirit in this dispensation, therefore, must be the Spirit’s definition of His work that is recorded in the New Testament. This must be our first and final dictionary of the work of the Spirit in this dispensation.

A. Promise and prophecies are fulfilled.

Immediately before His ascension,

Jesus commanded that the apostles tarry in Jerusalem until they were baptized with the Holy Spirit. This exhortation to tarry in Jerusalem was first to all the disciples in Luke 24, but specifically to all the apostles in Acts 1. There were, as a result of Jesus’ command to tarry in Jerusalem, about 120 disciples there on the day of Pentecost in A.D. 30. They were waiting for something, though they did not know exactly what to expect.

Acts 2:1-4 is the first case history of the work of the Holy Spirit to be studied. It is in this historical record of Luke that the apostles received the promised baptism with the Holy Spirit. Unfortunately, it is a common misunderstanding that some believe all the approximately 120 individuals of Acts 1:15 received the baptism with the Holy Spirit in Acts 2:1-4. However, this belief does not harmonize with what the text actually states. The following are reasons why the text does not teach that the Holy Spirit came upon all the 120 disciples in Acts 2:1-4 in a baptismal manner:

1. Only the apostles were baptized with the Holy Spirit in Acts 2:1-4. In the context of Acts 2:1, the antecedent of the pronoun “they” is the apostles of Acts 1:26. Acts 2:1 states, “*Now when the Day of Pentecost had fully come they [the apostles] were all with one accord in one place.*” It was upon this “they” that the Spirit came in verses 2-4. By referring back to Acts 1:26, one can easily determine the antecedent of the third person plural pronouns of Acts 2:1-4. Acts 1:26 reads, “*And they cast their lots, and the lot fell on Matthias. And he was numbered with the **eleven apostles.***” Beginning in 2:1, the pronoun “they” refers back to the apostles of 1:26. By keeping this in mind, it is easily understood that it was the apostles who were baptized in the Spirit in the context of Acts 2:1-4. They were the ones who initially received the good things of the promise.

2. The tongues of fire sat upon the apostles. When the Spirit came on the apostles, there appeared to the entire group “*divided tongues as of fire*” which “*sat upon each one of them*” (At 2:3). The apparent reason for this phenomenon was **to select and identify the true recipients of the baptism with the Spirit among the 120 disciples who were assembled.** The Holy Spirit was not the fire. The text says tongues **as** fire. This is a simile. Whatever it was, it had the appearance of fire. This was the Spirit’s “stamp of approval” upon the apostles alone in order that no one be confused as to who received the baptism with the Spirit. In Luke 6:13 Jesus “*called His*

disciples to Him; and from them He chose twelve whom He also named apostles.” In Acts 2:3 the Holy Spirit in a sense is doing the same thing. He is re-selecting from the group of 120 the Christ-sent apostles who would receive special authority by His baptism. These were the special witnesses of Jesus, and during the event of Acts 2:1-4, the Spirit reaffirms the call of the apostles.

3. Only the apostles spoke with tongues. Those who spoke in Acts 2 were accused of being drunken with wine (At 2:13). “*They are full of new wine.*” The antecedent of the pronoun “they” is the apostles of 1:26. Eleven apostles were thus speaking. In the next verse, Peter, “*standing up with the eleven, raised his voice and said ...*” (At 2:14). It was the eleven who were accused of being drunk with wine because it was only the apostles who were speaking in tongues. Peter joined them in explaining what had happened.

4. Only Galileans were baptized with the Spirit in Acts 2:1-4. All who were baptized with the Holy Spirit in Acts 2 were Galileans (At 2:7). All of the apostles were Galileans (At 1:11). We could rightly assume that not all the 120 disciples of Acts 1:15 were Galileans. Therefore, we must conclude that only the apostles, who were all Galileans, were the only ones baptized with the Holy Spirit on this day.

5. Peter stood up only with the eleven who had been baptized with the Holy Spirit in Acts 2:1-4. Only the apostles received power to speak in other languages (tongues) by inspiration in

Acts 2. All those who were baptized with the Spirit in Acts 2:1-4 spoke in other languages. Notice that it was the **apostles** who were accused of being drunken with new wine (At 2:13). Peter stood up with these who were accused, the apostles, and preached the first gospel sermon (2:14). The approximate 108 other disciples were not accused of being drunk. The proof that they were not the ones speaking in other languages is in the fact that Peter stood up with the eleven other apostles **who were already speaking** (At 2:14). He did not stand up with all the other disciples. They were not speaking. They were just as amazed as all the rest concerning the events that had just happened.

B. The apostles received power and authority.

A distinction should be made between the words “power” and “authority” in reference to the work of God. This distinction is often difficult to see in some translations since the word *dunamis* (power) is sometimes translated with the English word “authority.” Nevertheless, in reference to the work of God, the Greek word *dunamis* is used to refer to **the working or manifestation of the environment of Deity in the physical world.** The Hebrew writer stated that Sarah was given power to conceive (Hb 11:11). The reference is to power from God giving her the **ability** to conceive since she was past the age for women to conceive. In reference to the work of the apostles, Luke recorded, “*And with great*

power the apostles gave witness to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus” (At 4:33). Reference here is again to the miraculous testimony of the Lord. This is what Jesus had promised to the apostles. “*But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you ...*” (At 1:8). Power (*dunamis*), therefore, refers to the direct and miraculous manifestation of God in the affairs of this physical world. The apostles were given authority to unleash this power upon the physical world.

The Greek word which is translated **authority** (*exousia*) refers to “privilege.” The apostles were given authority to reveal truth (Jn 14:26; 16:13). They were given authority to lay open the realm of God in order to change the environment of man. But also, they were given the authority to impart to others the authority to unleash the supernatural through miraculous gifts. This they gave to other Christians by the laying on of their hands (At 8:18). The word *dunamis* (power) is used to refer to this authority in both Luke 24:49 and Acts 1:8. One must see, however, that **authority refers to the individual** who has been given the privilege to release the power of God in the affairs of the material world. **Power refers to what caused the change in the physical world. Authority refers to the one who unleashed the power.**

It is true that previous to the baptism in the Holy Spirit in Acts 2, the apostles and other believers had the authority to unleash the power of God. They could also cast out demons. The fact that they had this power is proven by what they did when Jesus sent out the seventy in

Luke 10. Nevertheless, Acts 2 was special. It was special in that this was a unique day and a unique beginning. It was unique because the promise of Jesus that the Holy Spirit would bear witness of Him came about in Acts 2 (See Jn 15:26). There are two important points that manifest the unique power and authority that was invested in the apostles on the great day of Pentecost as recorded in Acts 2.

1. *The apostles received authority to manifest power by the working of unique miracles.* It was on the day of Pentecost in Acts 2 that “*many wonders and signs were done through the apostles*” (At 2:43). During the time immediately before His ascension, Jesus had promised the apostles this privilege of command over the supernatural (Lk 24:49; At 1:8). On and after the day of Pentecost, the apostles manifested this authority by the working of many miracles.

2 Corinthians 12:12 also indicates that the apostles were invested with special authority over the supernatural which proved their apostleship. Paul wrote, “*Truly the signs of an apostle were accomplished among you*” The word “signs” is **plural**, and thus signifies that the apostles had special authority in the area of working special miracles. Others, as Philip, could work miracles. There was something unique about the miraculous authority of the apostles that other Christians did not possess. The apostles could raise the dead (At 9:36-41). God worked special miracles through Paul in

Ephesus (At 19:11,12). Another sign of a Christ-sent apostle was the following authority.

2. *The apostles received authority to impart spiritual gifts.* The apostles at some time in their lifetime, and before Acts 8, received the authority to impart miraculous gifts. Acts 8:18 teaches that the apostles had this authority. Philip had preached in Samaria and worked many miracles (At 8:6). However, Philip could not impart the ability to work miracles to those who had believed and obeyed the gospel in Samaria. It was the work of the Christ-sent apostles to impart the authority to command the supernatural. “*Now when the apostles who were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent Peter and John to them*” (At 8:14). It was the work of the Christ-sent apostles to impart the ability to work miracles. Peter and John, therefore, were sent to Samaria in order to impart the miraculous gifts to the new disciples.

Simon noticed a very important happening in the context of Acts 8. “*Now when Simon saw that through the laying on of the apostles’ hands the Holy Spirit was given, he offered them money*” (At 8:18). Though misguided, Simon did recognize that it was through the authority of Peter and John, not Philip, that the people **received the Holy Spirit**. Paul was also given such authority. He said that one reason why he wanted to go to Rome was that “*I may impart to you some spiritual gift ...*” (Rm 1:11). He had also imparted a miraculous gift to Timothy. “*Therefore, I remind you to stir up the*

gift of God **which is in you through the laying on of my hands**" (2 Tm 1:6). Do not confuse this statement in 2 Timothy 1:6 with 1 Timothy 4:14 where Paul wrote, "*Do not neglect the gift that is in you, which was given to you by prophecy with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery.*" In 2 Timothy 1:6 the preposition is *dia* in the genitive case, which is translated "by" or "through." **Timothy received a miraculous gift through the laying on of Paul's hands.** However, in 1 Timothy 4:14 the preposition is *meta* in the genitive case, which is translated "with" or "to the accompaniment of." **The correct interpretation is that at the same time the elders commissioned Timothy to the work of an evangelist, Paul also laid hands on him that he receive a miraculous gift of the Holy Spirit.** The elders commissioned him by the laying on of their hands as the church laid hands on Paul and Barnabas in Acts 13:1-3. However, Timothy received a miraculous gift by the laying on of Paul's hands.

When did the apostles receive the authority to impart to others the privilege of unleashing divine miraculous power into this physical world? They did not have this authority before Pentecost in Acts 2. They had the authority **after** Acts 2. The conclusion, therefore, is that they received this authority as a result of the baptism with the Holy Spirit in Acts 2.

The other 108 disciples who were present in Acts 2 did not receive this authority. They did not receive the authority to work the "*signs of an apostle*" (2 Co 12:12). They could not impart the

miraculous gifts. Therefore, they did not receive the baptism with the Holy Spirit as did the apostles.

It must be concluded, therefore, that the early Christians received the fulfillment of the promise of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit of Joel 2:28 in an **indirect manner**. The apostles received the **direct** outpouring of the Spirit in Acts 2. They imparted the miraculous gifts to others by the laying on of their hands. The early Christians partook of the promise of the Holy Spirit in Joel 2:28 by the laying on of the apostles' hands.

C. The Spirit was poured out on Cornelius and his household.

The outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the household of Cornelius in Acts 10 must not be confused with the baptism with the Holy Spirit on the apostles in Acts 2. Cornelius and his family did not receive the authority to do the "signs of an apostle." Neither did they receive the authority to impart miraculous gifts to others. The miraculous outpouring of the Spirit on the household of Cornelius was for a special reason that happened several years after the baptism with the Holy Spirit in A.D. 30 in Jerusalem.

1. There is a difference between the power and baptism with the Holy Spirit. It is crucial to understand that there is a difference between the miraculous power of the Holy Spirit and the **event** of the baptism with the Holy Spirit. There is a clear distinction in the New Testament between the **manner** by which the Spirit

was poured out and the empowering authority which the Spirit gave to the ones on whom He was poured.

The term “baptism” is used as a metaphor and simply explains the **manner** by which the Spirit came upon those who were baptized with the Holy Spirit. The household of Cornelius was baptized in the Holy Spirit in **the same manner as the apostles**. However, this household did not receive the same authority as the apostles to unleash the supernatural in order to work miracles. Peter makes it clear that the outpouring in Acts 10 was like the “baptism with the Holy Spirit” (At 11:16). He also explained that “*God gave them the same gift as He gave us [the apostles] when we believed on the Lord Jesus Christ ...*” (At 11:17). The Greek word *isos* (“same” or “equal”) is correctly translated “same.” Reference is to that which is equal in quality, rank or measure. The outpouring on Cornelius was the same gift as that which was poured out on the apostles in Acts 2. It was a miraculous event of the Holy Spirit. The **manner** by which the household of Cornelius and the apostles received the Holy Spirit was the same. And the immediate **result** of the outpouring was the same, both spoke in languages. However, **the authority which was given was different**. This is true because we have no record of the household of Cornelius having the authority to impart miraculous gifts to other individuals. Nor did they have the authority to work the “signs of an apostle.” Only the apostles could impart miraculous gifts and work the signs of an apostle (At 8:18; 2 Co 12:12).

However, it was the same gift in that it was the same Holy Spirit who came upon them in a baptismal manner in order to empower them to do miraculous works.

There may be some basis for saying that the household of Cornelius did not receive an “equal” outpouring of the Holy Spirit as that which the apostles received in Acts 2. There are those who contend that the case of Cornelius was only an “outpouring” of the Spirit. However, it is difficult to escape the fact that in witnessing this event Peter was reminded of Jesus’ words concerning the baptism with the Holy Spirit in Acts 2 (At 11:16). Peter personally experienced Holy Spirit baptism in Acts 2 and would be a credible witness to affirm the baptismal nature of Cornelius’ experience. It is true that the baptism with the Holy Spirit was specifically promised to the apostles. But it must also be remembered that **only the full authority of that baptism was promised to them**. The apostles received all the authority that came with the baptism with the Spirit. The case of Cornelius was a “like gift.” It was like only in the **manner** by which the Spirit came upon Cornelius and his household. There was a **limited authority** invested in Cornelius and his household. They did speak in languages. Nevertheless, no record is given concerning their being able to work the signs of an apostle. We would justly conclude by saying again that the outpouring with the Holy Spirit upon the household of Cornelius was unique. Nothing like it had happened since Pentecost and nothing has happened like it since Acts 10.

2. The purpose for the outpouring of the Spirit on the household of Cornelius as a divine sign to the Jews that they preach to the Gentiles. The Gentiles had a right to the blessings of the gospel. After the outpouring, it was Peter who proclaimed, *“In truth I perceive that God shows no partiality. But in every nation whoever fears Him and works righteousness is accepted by Him”* (At 10:34,35). The problem that had developed among the Jewish Christians was that they placed little emphasis on the evangelization of the Gentiles. They had not yet fully understood that the “all nations” of the great commission meant more than geographical nations of the world. It meant that they must go to every ethnic group of the world. They had taken the gospel throughout the world to the synagogues of every nation. However, it seems that they had not concentrated on taking the gospel specifically to Gentiles. What God did through the case of Cornelius was to signal to the Jews that they must get serious about getting the gospel to the Gentiles.

When Peter returned to Jerusalem after visiting Cornelius, *“those of the circumcision contended with him”* for going into the house of a **Gentile** (At 11:2). They accused Peter of not being a good Jew because he went into and ate with Gentiles, which thing was contrary to Jewish custom (At 11:3). However, when *“Peter explained it to them in order from the beginning”* (At 11:4) *“they glorified God, saying, ‘Then God has also granted to the Gentiles repentance to life’”* (At 11:18). These Jewish Christians got the

point. The outpouring on the household of Cornelius had accomplished its purpose.

3. The outpouring on the household of Cornelius has not happened since Pentecost. Acts 11:18 is very important here. It is a statement made by the Jewish brethren concerning the **uniqueness** of the event. After Peter’s explanation of what took place at the household of Cornelius, the Jews recognized that God had granted repentance to life among the Gentiles. This statement explains both the **purpose** of the outpouring and its **uniqueness**. The purpose of the outpouring was to prove to the Jewish Christians that the Gentiles were accepted into God’s grace. Evidently, they had not completely recognized this truth which was inaugurated at Pentecost in Acts 2 and commissioned by Jesus in Matthew 28:18-20. This truth was also in the Joel 2:28 prophecy. The baptism with the Spirit upon the household of Cornelius, therefore, signified a **divine approval** that the Jewish Christians should reach out to the Gentiles.

The fact that the Jewish Christians recognized this event as different from every other Christian experience since Pentecost is evidence that this type of event had never happened since Pentecost. This was only the second time that something as this had happened in the early church. It happened for a special purpose. After this purpose was accomplished, there was no need for God to miraculously approve the Gentiles’ acceptance again. God had not given the Holy Spirit in a baptismal manner since

Pentecost in A.D. 30. This is clearly understood in Peter's statement that the event reminded him of Pentecost. And since the event of Acts 10 until today, Jesus has not given the Holy Spirit in such a manner.

There were many cases of baptism in water for the remission of sins in the New Testament from Pentecost to the event surrounding Cornelius' household. However, we have only the records of Acts 2 and Acts 10 of the baptism with the Holy Spirit in the Bible. This clearly indicates that Acts 2 and Acts 10 were unique events. They were events that have never been repeated.

This of course brings up the point as to what is happening among people today who experience what they claim to be a "baptism with the Holy Spirit." Since Acts 2 and 10 were unique events, then there must be another explanation for what people experience today. They certainly are not experiencing a baptism with the Spirit. The fact is that they are experiencing an emotional outburst wherein they lose mental control of themselves. Since this emotional hysteria happens in some church buildings or church services, it is claimed that such is a baptism with the Spirit. But it is not. What has actually happened is that the emotional hysteria of an individual has led one to emotionally and physically collapse in an environment of ignorance (See 2 Th 2:10-12).

4. *The Gentiles received the gift of the Holy Spirit.* The purpose for the outpouring of the Spirit on the household of Cornelius was to convince the Jewish

Christians that they must focus on the Gentiles in their evangelistic efforts. However, the divine initiative of the Holy Spirit baptism on the Gentiles was not only for the purpose of reaffirming their entrance into the kingdom. It was also meant to stir the Jews into Gentile evangelism. The apostles already knew that the gospel was for every ethnic group throughout the world (Mt 28:19,20). Though they may have neglected this ministry since they were still ministering in Jewish Palestine, they knew that the Gentiles must receive the gospel. However, in the case of Cornelius it was God's purpose through the baptism with the Holy Spirit to convince the early Christians that the gifts of the Spirit must also go to the Gentiles. They too must have hands laid on them in order that they receive the miraculous gifts of the Spirit.

Acts 10:45 is a statement of Luke about the reaction of the Jewish Christians who went with Peter to Cornelius. They were astonished "*because the gift of the Holy Spirit has been poured out on the Gentiles also.*" Their astonishment is evidence to the fact that hands had not been laid on the Gentiles to this point in order that the Gentiles receive the gifts of the Holy Spirit. Though Gentiles had been baptized (See At 2:10, "proselytes" were Gentiles by birth), evidently they had not yet been given the miraculous gifts of the Spirit. This may have been the result of the prejudice of the Jewish oriented church in Jerusalem. Or, it may have simply been the lack of opportunity to do so for the Gentiles since the primary work of the apostles was still

among the Jews in Judea at this time. Whatever the case, Luke's record in Acts 10:45 is evidence of the fact that God accomplished the purpose of getting the gift of the Holy Spirit to the Gentiles through the Holy Spirit baptism of Cornelius and his household.

5. The baptism with the Holy Spirit did not mean more than what God intended. The baptism in the Holy Spirit on the household of Cornelius did not do what some have claimed it did for Cornelius and his household. Contrary to the teaching of those who believe that one can be baptized in the Holy Spirit today, the baptism of Cornelius and his household in the Spirit **did not** do the following:

a. It did not make Cornelius and his household devout. Cornelius was already *"a devout man and one who feared God with all his household"* (At 10:2). The purpose of the baptism, therefore, was not to provide a "spiritual experience" for Cornelius and his household. It was not given as an experience that would manifest a spiritual acceptance of either him or his household.

b. It did not cleanse their hearts. When Peter gave account of these events in Jerusalem several years later at a meeting of Judean church leaders, he stated that God *"made no distinction between us [Jews] and them [Gentiles], purifying their hearts by faith"* (At 15:9). In the Greek text of this statement, the article is present before the word "faith." Therefore, the translation should read that God purified *"their hearts by*

the faith." It was **the faith** that cleansed their hearts. **This is the word of faith, the truth, by which we are sanctified** (Jn 17:17; Jd 3). Peter wrote, *"... you have purified your souls in obeying the truth ..."* (1 Pt 1:22). Peter had spoken to the household of Cornelius the word of God which saves (At 11:14; Js 1:21). The household of Cornelius was cleansed by **their obedience to that word** which instructed them to obey the gospel. In this obedience, their sins were washed away in baptism (At 22:16). Therefore, the baptism with the Holy Spirit was not meant to be a salvational event in the lives of either Cornelius or his household.

c. It did not produce faith in their hearts. It is the preached word of God that produces faith in Jesus (Rm 10:17). This preached word produced faith in the hearts of Cornelius and his house. In rehearsing this event, Peter stated that by his mouth the Gentiles heard *"the word of the gospel and believed"* (At 15:7). Therefore, it was through Peter that Cornelius heard the gospel and believed in Jesus. After they heard the gospel, they then were immersed for the remission of their sins.

d. It did not save them. The angel that told Cornelius to send for Peter to come and preach to him, also stated that Peter would be the one *"who will tell you words by which you and all your household will be saved"* (At 11:14). However, the Spirit came upon Cornelius and his household when Peter first began to speak. Peter recalled for the brethren in Jerusalem, *"And as I began to speak, the Holy Spirit fell upon them, as*

upon us at the beginning” (At 11:15). Therefore, they were not saved by the baptism with the Holy Spirit because Peter had not yet spoken to them words by which they could be saved.

In order to be saved, Cornelius and his household had to obey the gospel (2 Th 1:7-9). One obeys the gospel through immersion in water for the remission of sins (Rm 6:3-6; At 2:38). This is why Peter “*commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord*” after the Spirit had come upon them (At 10:48). When he had finished speaking to them “words by which they would be saved”, then they

obeyed the gospel by immersion for the remission of their sins.

The prophecy of the promise of the Holy Spirit that was made in Joel 2:28 was initially fulfilled in Acts 2. The apostles were baptized with the Holy Spirit. They received the authority to work the supernatural in the natural environment of this world. They also received the authority to entrust to others the authority to open the realm of the supernatural in order to work miracles. In this way, the early church was established in the absence of the written word of God.

Chapter 5

Filled With The Holy Spirit

Being filled with the Holy Spirit refers to the work of the Holy Spirit in the life of God’s people. This filling can either be described as miraculous or non-miraculous, depending on the context in which the term is used. It is a biblical teaching that when one fills his life with the Spirit-inspired will of God, he is filled with the Spirit. When one allows his or her life to be directed by the inspired word of God that came to us through the work of the Spirit, then he or she is filled with the Spirit.

One of the first principles of Bible study is to allow the Bible to interpret itself. When a descriptive phrase is used such as “filled with the Spirit,” then it is necessary that the Bible interpreter consult all contexts wherein the phrase is used. Particulars of all contexts must be

considered in order to understand the subject of being filled with the Spirit. Once all contexts have been studied, then the interpreter can form his definitions of what it means to be “filled with the Spirit.”

In order to understand what it means to be “filled with the Holy Spirit”, we must formulate our definition from two sources. First, the phrase “filled with the Spirit” was used in the Old Testament. Because the New Testament was written on the foundation of Old Testament revelation, the biblical interpreter must consult the Old Testament in defining New Testament concepts. The first Christians were Jews. The first inspired teachings and writings of the New Testament were directed primarily to the Jews. Therefore, in order to understand the concept,

“filled with the Spirit”, one must understand how the phrase was used in the Old Testament.

Secondly, a term must be defined by the context in which it is used. In other words, we must limit ourselves to understanding the filling with the Spirit to the understanding of those who first received the Scriptures. How the first readers of the Scriptures understood the filling with the Spirit is how we must understand what it means. We cannot interpret biblical words and concepts by modern-day emotional experiences. The Bible must be allowed to speak for itself. It must be allowed to define its own terms. This is very important in reference to the subject of this chapter.

I would also suggest that a **metonymy** is used by the use of the phrase “filled with the Spirit.” In other words, the Spirit is the cause. The effect is either miraculous activity or a changed and Spirit-guided life by the word of God. Thus the Holy Spirit (the cause) is used instead of the effects of His work. **When one was filled with the Spirit, emphasis is on what that person did as a result of the Spirit’s work through him.** Emphasis would not be on the person of the Spirit, but on the results of the work of the Spirit.

In order to understand this subject, we must examine the contexts of scriptures wherein people were filled with the Spirit. In the Old Testament when the prophets were filled with the Spirit, miraculous activity occurred. As stated before, Bezaleel was filled with the Spirit (Ex 31:3). **He was miraculously given**

knowledge, wisdom and understanding in order to construct the tabernacle. Micah was also full of the Spirit, and thus miraculously spoke the word of God (Mc 3:8). When we come to the New Testament, therefore, we must first understand the filling of the Spirit through the understanding of the Jews to whom Jesus and John came. The following points emphasize the New Testament usage of being filled with the Spirit in reference to the coming of the Holy Spirit on the apostles and early Christians:

A. Zacharias was filled with the Holy Spirit.

Luke 1:67 states, “*Now his [John’s] father Zacharias was filled with the Holy Spirit, and prophesied*” Zacharias was the father of John, the Immerser. He lived **before** Acts 2. It is significant to note that his filling with the Spirit **was not related to a baptism.** He was a man of God who spoke forth God’s word **by the miraculous inspiration of the Holy Spirit.** In this context, therefore, being filled with the Holy Spirit meant miraculous inspiration by the Spirit to speak the word of God.

It is significant to note that when Zacharias and others were filled with the Spirit, **they were filled with a message of God which they spoke.** The message came miraculously. The message originated from God by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. Therefore, two important concepts must be understood in reference to the filling of the Spirit. First, **how** the truth originated places emphasis on the

inspiration by the Spirit (See 2 Tm 3:16,17). Secondly, the **content** of what was revealed was the word of God (2 Pt 1:20,21). This introduces us to how one is filled with the Spirit today. Though the miraculous inspirational filling has passed away, the efforts of perspiration through serious study and obedience continues on. One is filled with the Spirit when he or she allows the word of God to permeate his or her life.

B. Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit.

Luke 1:41 states, *“And it happened, when Elizabeth heard the greeting of Mary, that the babe leaped in her womb; and Elizabeth was **filled with the Holy Spirit.**”* As a result of this filling, by inspiration of the Spirit, Elizabeth blessed Mary (Lk 1:42). It is significant to note that Elizabeth also lived before Acts 2 and her filling with the Spirit was not related to any baptism. Both Zacharias and Elizabeth lived under the Old Testament law. When the Spirit filled them, they both miraculously received and spoke truth as a result of the Spirit’s working in and through them.

C. John was filled with the Holy Spirit.

Luke 1:15 states that John the Immerser was *“**filled with the Holy Spirit, even from his mother’s womb.**”* In conjunction with verse 41, we would interpret this passage to mean that the Holy Spirit had a close relationship with John from the time of his birth. Beyond this

we do not fully understand what is meant by this statement. It would at least mean that the Spirit was with John from the times of his birth. Since he was a chosen messenger to prepare the way for the Messiah, we must assume that he had a special relationship with God from His birth to his death. During his ministry, John spoke the word of God by inspiration of the Spirit in his ministry as the voice of one crying in the wilderness to prepare the way for the Lord. The totality of his life, therefore, was under the direction of the Holy Spirit.

D. Jesus was filled with the Holy Spirit.

Luke 4:1 reads, *“Then Jesus, being **filled with the Holy Spirit,** returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness.”* The clear implication of this passage is the miraculous guidance of Jesus by the Spirit. The Spirit miraculously guided Him into the desert. While in His state of incarnation on earth, Jesus enjoyed a miraculous relationship with the third party of the Godhead. After the temptation of Jesus, He *“returned in the **power of the Spirit...**”* (Lk 4:14). It was because of this Spirit-given power that Jesus worked miracles.

When the Son of God came in the form of man, He gave up an equality with God. He emptied Himself, and took on himself the incarnate flesh of man (Ph 2:5-8). We do not know to what extent He lowered Himself when He became as man. Luke 4:14 simply states that He went forth after the forty days of tempta-

tion in the power of the Spirit. We would assume from this statement that Jesus had emptied Himself in the incarnation to the extent that it was necessary for the Spirit to empower Him with the power of the Godhead. However, these are simply speculations about which we can only imagine and carry on discussions.

E. The apostles were filled with the Holy Spirit.

Acts 2:1-4 states that when the Holy Spirit came upon the apostles in Acts 2:1-4 *“they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance.”* This case defines the result of being filled with the Spirit. The apostles not only miraculously spoke in other languages, they also spoke the word of truth by inspiration. We must again note that in this case also, the work of the Spirit was emphasized, not the person of the Spirit. The result of the coming of the Spirit on the apostles was their work to begin the preaching of all truth that was delivered to them. Their being filled with the Spirit was both instantaneous and miraculous.

F. Peter was filled with the Holy Spirit.

Acts 4:8 states that Peter was filled with the Spirit. When Peter stood before the Jewish religious leaders, Luke recorded of the incident, *“Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them”* Jesus promised the apostles that when the apostles were brought before synagogue

assemblies, rulers and authorities, they must *“not worry how or what you should answer, or what you should say. For the Holy Spirit will teach you in that very hour what you ought to say”* (Lk 12:11,12; Mk 13:11). Acts 4:8 is an example of this promise being fulfilled in the life of Peter. Peter was filled with the Holy Spirit in the sense that the Spirit inspired him concerning what he should say. In Luke 12:11,12 Jesus explains what the “filling of the Spirit” means. In this case reference was directly to miraculous inspiration of the apostles concerning what they must say when standing before authorities who would stop their work. They were filled with the truth of God. Peter was baptized in the Holy Spirit in Acts 2:1-4. However, he was neither baptized in the Holy Spirit or water in order to be filled with the Spirit in the Acts 4 situation. The Holy Spirit **directly** guided what he was to say to the Jewish religious leaders on this particular occasion.

G. Disciples were filled with the Holy Spirit.

Acts 4:31 and 13:52 state that some disciples were filled with the Holy Spirit after two special events.

1. Filled with the Spirit and boldness to speak: After Peter and John were released from prison in Acts 4, they went to a house where they prayed with the disciples. After the prayer, *“they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they spoke the word of God with boldness”*

(At 4:31). This speaking forth the word should be understood in the context of Zacharias, Peter and others who preached and taught by inspiration. This filling of the Spirit resulted in the miraculous work of speaking by inspiration. It resulted in receiving a message to speak.

Here again is a metonymy in reference to the work of the Holy Spirit. The emphasis is not on the Holy Spirit, but on the result of the Spirit's work in the lives of the Christians. The Holy Spirit is mentioned for the effect that resulted from His filling. **The Holy Spirit is the cause.** The effect is miraculous in the sense that the disciples did not receive the message they spoke by personal study. They received it by inspiration. The cause (the Spirit) is mentioned instead of the effect.

2. Filled with joy and the Holy Spirit: Acts 13:52 states, "*And the disciples were filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit.*" This passage may be a case where both the miraculous and non-miraculous indwelling of truth is manifested in the lives of the early disciples. In the miraculous context of the Spirit-inspired prophets in the early church, the prophets themselves were filled with the word of God by the inspiration of the Spirit. The church as a whole was being filled with the word of God through the preaching and teaching ministries of the prophets. In this sense, therefore, there was both a direct and indirect filling of the Spirit.

On the other hand, the Acts 13:52 does not say that each individual was filled with either joy or the Spirit. Em-

phasis may be on the disciples as a **group**. As a group they were filled with joy, though some of them had certainly not caught the spirit of joy. However, as a group they were joyous. The same would be true concerning their possession of the miraculous gifts. The disciples were the group of "*those who believe*" (the church) of Mark 16:15-18. This group possessed the miraculous gifts, though certainly not every individual of the group had received the laying on of the apostles' hands in order to receive a miraculous gift.

In the historical context of the miraculous gifts, we would correctly conclude that those disciples who received the miraculous gift of prophecy received the word of God through inspiration of the Spirit. They were thus filled with the Spirit. Those disciples who did not have the gift of prophecy were being filled with the word of God by earnestly listening to the prophets. They were thus filled with the Spirit in an indirect manner.

H. Stephen was filled with the Holy Spirit.

Acts 6:5 mentions that Stephen was one of the original seven who were all "full of the Holy Spirit." Acts 6:8 states that Stephen was "*full of faith and power.*" As a result of this "filling" he was able to do "*great wonders and signs among the people.*" Those who opposed him "*were not able to resist the wisdom and the Spirit by which he spoke*" (At

6:10). In Acts 7:55 Luke recorded, “*But he, being full of the Holy Spirit, gazed into heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God.*” The result of this filling was that he gazed into heaven and saw the glory of God and Jesus. Therefore, Stephen’s filling with the Holy Spirit meant that he spoke the word of God by inspiration, worked miracles, and saw a vision. Everything surrounding his filling of the Spirit was miraculous.

I. Paul was filled with the Holy Spirit.

In Acts 9:17 Luke recorded what Ananias said to Paul when he first approached him after his three days of blindness. Ananias said, “*Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus, who appeared to you on the road as you came, has sent me that you may receive your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit.*” Ananias was sent to Paul in order that Paul receive two things. He was to first receive his sight. Secondly, he was to be filled with the Holy Spirit. As a result of his filling with the Holy Spirit, he immediately “*preached the Christ in the synagogues, that He is the Son of God*” (At 9:20). By inspiration of the Holy Spirit, therefore, he received and spoke the word of God.

The preaching of Paul on the occasion after Ananias came to him in Damascus is similar to his statement in the context of miraculous gifts in 1 Corinthians 12. He wrote, “*... no one can say that Jesus is Lord except by the Holy Spirit*” (vs 3). What Paul was doing im-

mediately after his baptism in Damascus was the result of what he was discussing in the context of 1 Corinthians 12. In other words, after his baptism in Acts 9:20, **it was by inspiration of the Spirit that he was confessing Jesus as Lord.** Being filled with the Holy Spirit in the 1 Corinthians 12 context meant that one was moved by the Holy Spirit to speak the truth by inspiration that was received from the Spirit. This is precisely what Paul affirmed when he wrote to the Galatians. “*But I make known to you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached by me is not according to man. For I neither received it from man, nor was I taught it, but it came through the revelation of Jesus Christ*” (Gl 1:11,12). Being filled with the Spirit while he was in Damascus not only referred to the miraculous reception of truth, but also to the miraculous proclamation of the truth. Paul’s argument to the Galatian judaizing teachers was that he did not receive his message from teachers. He received it directly from Jesus Christ. This happened in Damascus when he was filled with the Holy Spirit.

On the occasion of Acts 13:9, Paul was also filled with the Spirit. Because of the antagonism of Bar-Jesus, Luke recorded of Paul’s response, “*Then Saul, who also is called Paul, filled with the Holy Spirit, look intently at*” Bar-Jesus. As a result of this filling, Bar-Jesus was struck blind. The point again is that the filling of the Spirit resulted in miraculous activity of the Spirit in the affairs of man. The emphasis is on the result of the filling, not the person of the Spirit.

The statement “filled of the Spirit” made by the inspired writers was given in order that we understand the source of the effect. It was not Paul who personally had the power to carry out the blinding of Bar-Jesus. Because the Scriptures state that this blinding was a result of the filling of the Spirit, the Holy Spirit wants us to know that He was the one who caused the blindness. However, in mentioning Himself as the cause, He wants us to focus on the result of His power.

In the case of Acts 9 when Ananias came to Paul, we must not assume that Ananias laid hands on Paul in order that he be filled with the Holy Spirit. The text does not say this. Acts 8:18 gives credit only to the apostles for having the authority to impart the miraculous gifts of the Spirit, though we would define the filling of the Spirit to be the cause of the miraculous gifts. The term “filled with the Spirit” refers primarily to God coming to man through the work of the Holy Spirit. The miraculous gifts refer to the result of the filling by the Spirit. Christians were either filled with the Spirit directly from God as in the case of the apostles in Acts 2 and the household of Cornelius in Acts 10, or they were filled by the laying on of the apostles’ hands. In Paul’s case in Damascus in Acts 9, he was filled with the Spirit **directly from God**. He affirms this in Galatians 1:11,12. The “filling”, therefore, is the cause; the miraculous gifts were the result. In Paul’s case, the filling of the Spirit in Acts 9 and his receiving the revelation from God in Galatians 1:11,12, refer to the same thing. Through the in-

spiration of the Holy Spirit, the mystery of the gospel was revealed to Paul (See Ep 3:3-5).

J. Barnabas was filled with the Holy Spirit.

Acts 11:24 states that Barnabas was “*a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and of faith.*” Consistency would demand that we understand Barnabas’ filling with the Spirit to mean the same as the above cases. Barnabas was an inspired preacher of the church. He was full of the truth as he was full of faith. In fact, we would say that he was full of faith because he was full of the inspired truth (See Rm 10:17).

K. The Ephesians were filled with the Holy Spirit.

Ephesians 5:18 is a statement where Paul **commanded** the Ephesians to be filled with the Holy Spirit. He said, “*And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit.*” We could assume that this passage is parallel with Colossians 3:16 wherein Paul commanded the Colossians to **let the word of Christ dwell in them**. Colossians 3:16 is a **hortatory statement** where Paul says, “*Let the word of Christ dwell in you*” Ephesians 5:18 is an **imperative** command. As an imperative command, the meaning is that the Ephesians had a choice as to whether they would be filled with the Spirit. If we considered Colossians 3:16 a parallel thought with Ephesians 5:18, then we must con-

clude that the Ephesians had a choice of allowing the word of Christ to permeate their lives as opposed to the influence of wine. Instead of allowing wine to control their thinking, Paul encouraged them to allow the word of Christ to take control. Since Ephesians 5:18 is an imperative command, then the Ephesians had to make a choice as to whether they would submit their minds to the intoxicating influences of wine, or the inspired word of Christ which came to them through their prophets who were filled with the Spirit.

According to Thayer's Greek Lexicon, the Greek word for "be filled" in Ephesians 5:18, means "to make full, to fill, to fill up."²⁴ In Ephesians 5:18 it is used with the preposition *en* with a dative of the instrument (*en pneumati*). Thus, the Spirit is the instrument that does the filling. The Spirit is not that with which one is filled. One is filled with that which the Spirit uses as the instrument of His work. Since Colossians 3:16 would be a parallel passage, then the instrument is the word of Christ.

Other examples of this Greek phraseology (*en pneumati*) would be Romans 15:16 where Paul stated that we are sanctified **by the Spirit**. This does not refer to the indwelling of the Spirit. Reference is simply to sanctification which is accomplished **by the Spirit**. The Spirit is the cause, but the instrument is that by which one is sanctified. The same phrase is in 1 Corinthians 12:9 where it is affirmed that the Corinthians were given the miraculous gifts by the Spirit (*en pneumati*). Therefore, since the Chris-

tians in Ephesus already were indwelt with the Spirit, Paul could not be commanding them to be filled again with the Spirit. **He must be referring to something the Spirit did in their lives.** The content with which they were to be filled was not the Spirit. The metonymy of the phrase is emphasized. Since the Spirit causes the effect, He uses Himself for the effect. Therefore, being filled with the Spirit in the context of Ephesians 5 meant being filled with the word of Christ which came from the inspiring work of the Spirit.

Suppose for now that we assume that the filling of the Holy Spirit in Ephesians 5:18 refers to the prophets in Ephesus exercising their use of the miraculous gift to instruct the Ephesians in the word of Christ. Paul's command is directed both to them, as well as the entire church throughout the world. He is saying to all Christians in Ephesus and Colosse that they listen to the inspired instruction of their prophets who were working among them. Paul commands, "... **be filled with the Spirit.**" The imperative command in relation to exercising one's miraculous gift of the Spirit is also used on another occasion in the case of Timothy. Paul commanded Timothy to "... *stir up the gift of God which is in you ...*" (2 Tm 1:6). The prophets, therefore, were commanded to preach the word. The church was commanded to listen to the preaching of the word of Christ.

We would certainly not accept the idea that Paul is commanding in Ephesians 5:18 that the Ephesians be filled with the person of the Spirit. The Spirit is not subject to the will of man, nor does

the Bible teach that one is to pray for the indwelling of the Spirit. Nowhere in the Bible is one commanded to command the Spirit to indwell him. The filling of Ephesians 5:18, therefore, **must refer to something that the Spirit does** but the individual has a choice in making a decision to do. In the historical context of the miraculous gifts in the early church, Paul wants them to exercise their miraculous gifts of the Spirit which were subject to their free moral choice. In conjunction to this, the Ephesians were subject to the command of Ephesians 5:18 in that they must give heed to the Spirit-inspired message that was spoken by the inspired preachers (prophets) in their midst.

The Ephesian church was endowed with the miraculous gifts of the Holy Spirit. They evidently had, as Timothy, neglected the use of the gifts in ministering to the church. There were evidently some in the church who were discouraging the preaching and teaching of the prophets. Paul is thus commanding them to receive the word of Christ by submitting to the inspired preaching of the prophets. A similar imperative command is made to the Thessalonian church. *“Do not quench the Spirit”* (1 Th 5:19). These churches, as Timothy, were not exercising the gifts of the Spirit for the benefit of the church. Some in the churches were refusing to listen to the Spirit-inspired word that was preached by the preachers. And since the Spirit was subject to the one who possessed the particular gift (1 Co 14:32), the possessor through discouragement or idleness, could fail to

carry out the purpose for which the gift of prophecy was originally given. Paul was telling the Thessalonian church not to discourage their inspired preachers. To discourage the inspired preachers was to quench the work of the Spirit through the medium of those whom He inspired to preach.

The Ephesian 5 context is a good conclusion to this study. In the context Paul is contrasting the riotous living of some who were being *“drunk with wine”* (vs 18) with the Spirit-directed life. In contrast to a riotous life style, he commands them to *“be followers of God as dear children”* (vs 1). In other words, *“be filled with the Spirit”* (vs 18). *“See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools but wise”* (vs 15). In order for one to walk circumspectly, he must allow the Spirit to direct his life. The Spirit directs through the preaching of the word of Christ. Our lives today are directed by the Spirit through the preaching and teaching of the written word of God. Therefore, one is filled with the Spirit when he allows his life to be directed by the Spirit-inspired word of Christ. He is filled with the will of the Spirit because he has allowed his life to be permeated by the word of God.

In the historical context of the Ephesians, Colossians and Thessalonians, the Christians must listen to and obey God’s directions for Christian living that were coming to them through the inspired preaching of the prophets. This direction came directly to them from God through the inspiration of their prophets. The churches’ responsibility was to lis-

ten to this Spirit-inspired direction. Therefore, in contrast to being filled with a spirit of disobedient behavior, they were to be filled with the Spirit-inspired word of God. The Spirit's work through the prophets is not to be quenched (1 Th 5:19). They are not to despise prophecies (1 Th 5:20). They are to give heed to the word which was able to build them up (At 20:32).

The imperative of the phrase, "*be filled with the Spirit*", is **present passive**. Therefore, they are commanded to allow the inspired message to work upon them. The passive emphasizes the fact that the action is to work upon the subject. The Ephesians must not reject the preaching of the prophets, but submit to their instruction. They must allow the word of God to work on their hearts in order that their lives be directed by the word of God. This same concept is in the command of Paul to the Corinthians in 1 Corinthians 16:15,16. "*I urge you, brethren—you*

know the household of Stephanas ... that they have devoted themselves to the ministry of the saints—that you also submit to such, and to everyone who works and labors with us." The Corinthians were to submit to the ministry of the household of Stephanas. It was the work of the prophet to preach and teach the word of God. It was the responsibility of the church to submit to the teaching. For this reason Paul charged Timothy and preachers "*before God and the Lord Jesus Christ Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching*" (2 Tm 4:1,2). Those who choose not to submit to the preaching and teaching of the word of God, are refusing to be filled with the Spirit. By rejecting the preaching of the word of Christ, one rejects being filled with the Spirit. One cannot be filled with the Spirit if he or she rejects the word of the Spirit.

Chapter 6

Clarifying The Baptism With The Holy Spirit

There are a host of misunderstandings circulated in the religious world today concerning the baptism with the Holy Spirit. These misunderstandings have confused many people and twisted a host of scriptures. There are those who teach that almost every time the word "baptism" is used in the New Testament, it is a reference to a baptism of the Holy Spirit. John A. Schep stated that the baptism ...

... with the Spirit ... is a blessing given by Christ to those who by the Spirit have been incorporated into Christ's body, the Church. Our Lord baptized them with His Spirit, pouring the Spirit out upon them. He fills them with the Spirit, thus granting them power from on high for witness and Christian service.^{20:21}

Willard Cantelon added, "If the very purpose of God in providing the Baptism of

the Holy Spirit is to empower men to carry on His work, then this power is essential so long as the work of Christ goes on.”²¹: read, “Purpose”

These men and others have very successfully propagated modern-day Holy Spirit baptism in many religious circles. In the charismatic movement throughout the world that is unique with the later part of the last century and now, and has moved into the 21st century, the teaching and “practice” of “Holy Spirit baptism” is very common. It has become a practice that identifies one with a particular religious group, but specifically as “Pentecostal.”

The charismatic, or Pentecostal movement encourages us to again study Acts 2, 10 and 19 where two outpourings of the Holy Spirit happened in the first century. These three cases of the Holy Spirit’s coming upon people establishes the “dictionary” as to how we should define this event. It is essential to review these cases of baptism with the Holy Spirit on the basis of what is proclaimed as happening today in the religious world. Are people today actually being baptized in the Spirit as the apostles and Cornelius? Or, is the experience of those who claim to be baptized in the Holy Spirit the result of an emotional state of psychological disorientation? Again it must be emphasized that the Bible, not our feelings, must be the final authority in forming any understanding of what happened in the first century in reference to baptism with the Holy Spirit.

A. Definition of the baptism with the Holy Spirit:

The Greek word *baptizo* means to “dip,” “plunge” or “immerse.” Literally speaking, one is baptized by immersion into something. In relation to the Holy Spirit, **one is immersed into the will of the Spirit.** J. W. Roberts correctly explained,

A baptism in the Holy Spirit would signify an immersion of the individual who receives it into the Holy Spirit, either literally or figuratively. It is not easy to understand just what that would mean unless it meant that the person would come under the complete direction of the Holy Spirit. Thus when the apostles were baptized in the Holy Spirit their wills were submerged in the will of the Spirit.^{22:36}

In a metaphorical manner the recipients of the baptism were immersed into the direction of the Spirit. As a result, they were either blessed with a miraculous reception of God’s will, a miraculous speaking in languages, or both. It seems that the speaking in languages was the signal to the recipients and those in their presence who received the baptism, that those who were immersed with the Holy Spirit were endowed with truth from the Holy Spirit. At least we know that the speaking in languages resulted from the baptism. The apostles spoke in languages on the day of Pentecost, and subsequently received and spoke the gospel (At 2:1-4). In the case of Cornelius, he and his household spoke in languages, but we are not told if they received the mental revelation of truth, though we could assume that they did (At 10:44-46).

In the baptism with the Spirit, the word “baptism” (immersion) is used in a metaphorical sense. In its normal use, the word “baptism” as we use it refers to a physical or literal immersion. However, baptism with the Spirit is spiritual, miraculous and greater. We have no earthly parallel with such an experience. Therefore, Jesus and the Holy Spirit used the only human term with which we are familiar in order to explain this divine action upon men. H. Leo Boles wrote:

We should understand that **literally** there is no such thing as a “pouring forth” of the Holy Spirit, or a “drinking” of the Spirit, or a “baptism” in the Holy Spirit; these are all figures designed by the resemblance they suggest, to present to the mind in various aspects and from various points of view the most lively and correct ideas of a fact.^{6:151}

We do not know exactly what transpired when the Holy Spirit came upon an individual in a baptismal manner. We do know the results. In the cases of the apostles and the household of Cornelius, all miraculously spoke in languages that they had never before studied. However, in neither case did the recipients lose control of their senses. No one lost control of his emotions and commenced rolling uncontrollably on the ground. No one became emotionally disoriented. When the apostles spoke after they were baptized with the Holy Spirit, they were coherent. Peter spoke logically and rationally before thousands of people in the languages of the people. When the

household of Cornelius received the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, the Jews who were present heard them praising God in languages they could understand (At 10:46). The household of Cornelius, therefore, spoke rationally and not in some senseless gibberish that could not be understood. The result of the baptism with the Holy Spirit in the New Testament did not bring about emotional disorientation in the lives of those who were baptized. They spoke in languages, but what was spoken could be understood by all who beheld them speak.

B. Unique characteristics of the baptism with the Holy Spirit:

The unique characteristics that surrounded the baptisms with the Holy Spirit lead us to conclude that it occurred only two times in history. The following points review these characteristics that surround these two unique historical events. After reviewing these two unique events, we must conclude that the Spirit has not come upon anyone today as it did upon the apostles and household of Cornelius in the first century.

1. *There are only two cases of baptism with the Holy Spirit in the Bible.* Regardless of the claims that every baptism in the New Testament is a Holy Spirit baptism, there are actually only two cases. There is the case of the apostles that is recorded in Acts 2 and the case of Cornelius and his household that is recorded in Acts 10. Few will disagree with the Acts 2 event, though some would affirm that all 120 in the upper room at the

time were baptized with the Spirit. Some might question the event of Acts 10 as actually being a baptism with the Spirit. Because the word “baptism” is not used in the explanation of the event, some feel that this was not actually a baptism with the Holy Spirit. However, as stated earlier, it would be difficult to say that such was something other than a baptism with the Spirit because of what actually happened. Peter had said that the “*Holy Spirit fell upon them, as upon us at the beginning*” (At 11:15). In Acts 15:8 he also stated in relation to the event, “*So God, who knows the heart acknowledged them, by giving them the Holy Spirit just as He did to us.*” Therefore, the manner by which the Spirit came upon the apostles and Cornelius was the same. At least it was poured out upon Cornelius and his household.

The apostles and household of Cornelius are the only two cases in the New Testament concerning the baptismal manner by which the Spirit came upon people. If the baptism or outpouring of the Spirit was a common occurrence in the first century, we would surely have more recorded cases than this. The first argument against the baptism of the Holy Spirit today is the fact that it is not emphasized in the New Testament as a common event in the lives of the early Christians. If it was emphasized, then we would have more cases that explain exactly what happened when one was baptized with the Spirit.

2. *Jesus was the administrator of the baptism with the Holy Spirit.* We must remember that it was Jesus who

baptized with the Holy Spirit (Jn 1:33). The Spirit was the element of the baptism. This fact is contrary to some today who affirm that the Spirit comes upon any He so chooses. There is no statement in the Bible that states that the Holy Spirit baptized anyone into Himself. It is Jesus who takes the initiative to have someone baptized with the Spirit, not the Spirit.

3. *The baptism with the Holy Spirit was a promise, not a command.* It was a promise to the apostles (At 1:3-8; Lk 24:49). **It was not a command to be obeyed.** It was a promise to be received. However, one had to be of a receptive mind in order to accept it as a promise. This is certainly the meaning of John 20:22 when Jesus commanded the apostles to “*receive the Holy Spirit.*” On the other hand, a command is free-morally obeyed. The apostles were commanded to “*receive*” the Holy Spirit. They were promised to be “*baptized with the Spirit.*” They **were not** commanded to be baptized with the Spirit. H. Leo Boles correctly stated, “So the baptism of the Holy Spirit was definitely a promise, and not a command; no one was ever commanded to be baptized in the Holy Spirit. Baptism in water was a command, but baptism in the Holy Spirit was a promise.”¹⁵¹

4. *Speaking in languages followed the baptism with the Holy Spirit.* In both cases of the baptism with the Holy Spirit in the New Testament, the recipients of the baptism spoke in languages (tongues). The speaking in languages was undoubtedly a signal that something had inwardly

happened. The speaking in languages was not the baptism. The speaking in languages was an outward sign that the Holy Spirit had acted in an unusual manner upon those who spoke in languages. In the immersion with the Holy Spirit, the speaking in tongues was an indication that people had been blessed with the miraculous gift of speaking in tongues separate or apart from the laying on of the apostles' hands.

Languages was one of the many miraculous gifts that were bestowed upon the early Christians. The Holy Spirit used this gift to signal His coming upon the apostles and the household of Cornelius. The speaking in languages was the gift. The baptism was the event.

The fact that Cornelius was enabled to speak with tongues was not a demonstration, because the mere existence of tongues was not a sign of Spirit baptism, but of a gift, such as prevailed among members of the churches during the time of spiritual endowments. There are numerous examples of the use of tongues for special purposes which had no connection at all with the Holy Spirit baptism.^{23:197}

5. *The baptism with the Holy Spirit was unexpected.* Before the event of Acts 2, the apostles knew that something was going to happen. Jesus had promised them, “*You shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you ...*” (At 1:8). He had also promised them, “*... you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit ...*” (At 1:5). Regardless of the

statements of these promises, **the apostles did not know what to expect. They did not know what the baptism in the Holy Spirit was.** Because they did not understand what Jesus was saying, they could not have been praying for the baptism with the Holy Spirit as some claim we must do today.

The case of Cornelius is more explanatory in defining this point. Neither Peter, nor the Jews with him, had any idea of what was about to take place when they arrived at the house of Cornelius. When Peter first arrived at the house of Cornelius, he did not have time to explain anything to Cornelius concerning obedience to the gospel or baptism with the Holy Spirit. He later explained what actually happened when he began to speak. “*And as I began to speak, the Holy Spirit fell upon them ...*” (At 11:15). Peter could not have explained that they should pray for the baptism with the Holy Spirit. It simply happened as he began to speak. It happened without their expecting it. The fact that neither Peter nor the Jewish brethren who were with him expected the Holy Spirit to come upon the household of Cornelius is emphasized in the fact that they were all astonished to see that the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out on Cornelius and his household (At 10:45). If the outpouring of the Holy Spirit had been a common thing among Christians unto the time of this event, then certainly these beholders would not have been amazed at what happened. One might argue that their amazement was because the Holy Spirit had come upon the household of Gen-

tiles. But we must keep in mind that this event took place about ten years after the establishment of the church. We would certainly assume that by this time the miraculous gifts of the Spirit had already been given to Gentiles by the laying on of the apostles' hands. This was true on the day of Pentecost when there were possibly proselytes baptized of those who were in Jerusalem on this day (At 2:11). (A proselyte was a Gentile who was a convert to Judaism.) The amazement of the Jewish brethren when the household of Cornelius was baptized with the Spirit, was more than their witnessing that the Spirit had come upon the Gentiles. It was also in the fact that the Spirit had not come upon anyone since Pentecost in such a manner, as well as the fact that He came upon the Gentiles.

Therefore, we would assume that if the baptism with the Holy Spirit were a common occurrence in the first century church, it would not have been such a surprise to Peter and the accompanying Jews in the case of Cornelius. In order to explain the event to Jewish Christians when he returned to Jerusalem, **Peter had to refer back to the only other time in history when such had happened.** This time, as Peter explained, was "*at the beginning*" (At 11:15). This was the beginning of the church in Acts 2. **Why would Peter refer to the Acts 2 event if the baptism of Cornelius' household were a common event in the lives of the early disciples?** The fact is that it was not common. The Acts 10 event was an unexpected occurrence that the disciples had experienced only one time

before. When the Spirit came upon the household of Cornelius, it was a surprise to everyone.

C. Bible teaching of one baptism:

There is only one valid baptism today. This is an immersion in water for the remission of sins. It is affirmed by some that there is a baptism with the Holy Spirit as well as a baptism in water. However, the New Testament affirms immersion in water for the forgiveness of sins as the only baptism that is commanded of believers to submit today.

1. There are six baptisms in the New Testament. The Greek word *baptizo* is used in the New Testament to refer to six different occasions where people were "baptized." Understanding these baptisms helps us to discover the correct baptism for today.

a. The baptism of Israel in the cloud and sea. Paul wrote concerning Israel, "*... all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea*" (1 Co 10:2). The Israelites were immersed in the cloud of God's protection and guidance after they passed through the Red Sea in their flight from Egyptian captivity (Ex 13:21; 14). What actually occurred was that the entire nation of Israel passed through the cloud. All were thus immersed in the cloud.

b. The baptism of John the Immerser. Mark recorded, "*John came baptizing in the wilderness and preaching a baptism of repentance for the re-*

mission of sins” (Mk 1:4; Lk 3:2,3). The baptism of John was an immersion in water for the remission of sins (Mk 1:4,8). It was “unto” repentance. It was God’s call to Israel through John that Israel turn to God in order to accept the coming Messiah (At 19:4; Mk 1:4,7).

c. The baptism of fire. John stated, “*I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance, but He who is coming after me is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire*” (Mt 3:11). The baptism of fire probably refers to the immersion in the fiery destruction of national Israel which awaited those who rejected Jesus as the Messiah. This happened in the disciples’ generation in the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70. This will happen to all the disobedient at the end of time (Mt 25:41; 2 Th 1:7-9; 2 Pt 3:9ff).

d. The baptism with the Holy Spirit. John said that Jesus would baptize with the Holy Spirit (Mt 3:11). Before His ascension He specified exactly who would be baptized with the Spirit. He promised the apostles, “*For John truly baptized with water, but you [the apostles] shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now*” (At 1:5). The baptism with the Holy Spirit refers to immersion into the will of the Holy Spirit. Such was a promise to the apostles and was to be received by them.

e. The apostles’ baptism of suffering. Jesus said to James and John, and to the rest of the apostles, “*You will indeed drink the cup that I drink, and with the baptism I am baptized with you will*

be baptized” (Mk 10:38,39). Jesus stated that the apostles would be immersed (baptized) in the responsibilities and sufferings of leadership because of their commitment to follow Him.

f. The baptism in water for remission of sins. Peter said to the multitudes, “*Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins ...*” (At 2:38; see 22:16). The only baptism that God intended to last throughout time is the immersion in water for the forgiveness of sins. This one baptism is the principal baptism that is mentioned in the New Testament. This baptism is commanded. It is the one to which believers must submit in obedience to the gospel.

2. After A.D. 62 only one baptism was to be obeyed. Paul wrote to the Ephesian church in A.D. 61,62. In this letter he stated that there was only **one baptism** (Ep 4:5). Of those baptisms that were listed above, to which one does Paul refer in the context of Ephesians 4? Since the baptism with the Holy Spirit was not for the remission of sins and salvation, we would conclude that Ephesians 4:5 is not talking about Holy Spirit baptism. Since baptism in water for the remission of sins is in obedience to the gospel, then we must conclude that Paul is discussing water baptism in Ephesians 4:5.

The Ephesians had been baptized with the one baptism. Paul baptized them in water in the name of Jesus for remission of their sins (See At 19:5). This was not Holy Spirit baptism. It was baptism for remission of sins (At 2:38; 8:36-38;

Rm 6:3-6). This is the only valid baptism today.

D. Separating water baptism from baptism with the Holy Spirit:

There is a persistent effort on the part of some to continually read baptism with the Holy Spirit into passages that clearly discuss immersion in water for remission of sins. Even passages in the imperative mood (command) in reference to baptism in water as Acts 2:38 and Acts 22:16 are twisted to refer to baptism with the Spirit. By making such unjust interpretations, it is taught that baptism with the Spirit is a command to be obeyed. However, this interpretation is based on a failure to recognize the difference between the command of water baptism and the promise of baptism with the Holy Spirit. The following twelve points are set forth in order to distinguish between water baptism for the remission of sins and baptism with the Holy Spirit. In each case of baptism in the New Testament, these simple points can be applied in order to separate the two baptisms in the context in which the word “baptism” (immersion) is used.

1. Water is the element in water baptism. If **water** is mentioned in the text as the element into which one is immersed, then reference is to water baptism (See Mt 3:16; Jn 3:23; At 8:35-38). If the **Holy Spirit** is mentioned as the element, then it is baptism with the Holy Spirit (See Mt 3:11; At 1:5; 11:16,17).

2. Water baptism is in the name of

Jesus. If the baptism that is mentioned in any context is in the **name of Jesus**, then it is water baptism, for baptism in the Holy Spirit was never mentioned to be in the name of Jesus (See Mt 28:19; At 2:38; 10:48; 19:5).

3. Water baptism is administered by man. If the baptism is mentioned to be **administered by a man**, then reference is to water baptism (See Mt 3:11; At 8:35-39; Mt 28:19,20). In the baptism with the Holy Spirit Jesus was the administrator (Mt 3:11).

4. Water baptism is a command. If the baptism in the context is a **promise**, then reference is to baptism with the Holy Spirit (See Lk 24:48,49; At 1:5). Water baptism was not a promise but a command to be obeyed. On the other hand, the baptism with the Spirit was a promise, not a command.

5. Water baptism is for remission of sins. If the baptism **brought remission of sins, and thus salvation**, then it was water baptism. The New Testament mentions only this baptism to bring the blessings concerning our salvation (At 2:38; 22:16; 1 Pt 3:21).

6. Water baptism is not poured out upon someone. If the element were **poured out upon or fell upon**, then it is baptism with the Holy Spirit (See J1 2:28; At 2:1-4; 10:44,45; 11:15-17). In water baptism one is immersed into the water, the water is not poured upon one.

7. Water baptism brought salvation, not speaking in tongues. If the recipients who were baptized **received power or spoke in tongues**, then it was baptism with the Holy Spirit (See At 1:8; 2:4;

10:44-46). No one ever spoke in tongues as a result of being immersed in water for the remission of sins.

8. *Water baptism was for repentant believers.* If the action of baptism were for a penitent believer, then it was water baptism, for all who believed on the Lord and repented were commanded to be baptized in water for remission of sins (Mk 16:16; see Mk 1:4; At 19:4).

9. *Water baptism is valid until Jesus comes.* If the baptism is mentioned as lasting throughout all ages of the world until Jesus comes again, then it is water baptism (See Mt 28:19,20).

10. *Water baptism is into Christ.* If the baptism is mentioned in the context to be “into Christ”, then it is water baptism, for one is baptized into Christ (See Gl 3:26,27; Rm 6:3,4).

11. *Water baptism was a washing.* If the baptism were a washing of the one baptized, then it was water baptism, for in water baptism one contacted the blood of Jesus which washed away sins (At 22:16; see Ep 5:26; Ti 3:5).

12. *Water baptism was in obedience to the gospel.* If the baptism were a burial and resurrection, then it was water baptism, for water baptism is an obedience to the gospel of the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus for the remission of sins (See Rm 6:3-6).

Any baptism that is mentioned in the New Testament that is in the context of the preceding definitions, is a reference to the one baptism of Ephesians 4:5. It is a reference to the baptism which is for remission of sins. This is the baptism

that one must go through in order to obey the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus. This is the baptism without which one cannot be saved unless he obeys (See 2 Th 1:7-9).

E. The purpose of baptism with the Holy Spirit:

There is no need for a baptism with the Holy Spirit today. The reason for this is that the purposes for which baptism with the Holy Spirit was instituted, were accomplished in the first century. The following purposes have been accomplished in the only two cases of Holy Spirit baptism that are mentioned in the New Testament:

1. *The purpose of the baptism with the Holy Spirit was to empower and inspire the apostles.* Jesus promised the apostles that the Holy Spirit would teach them **all things** and **bring to their remembrance all that He had taught them** (Jn 14:26). The Holy Spirit would **guide them into all the truth** (Jn 16:13). At the end of His ministry, Jesus told these same apostles to wait in Jerusalem until they were “*endued with power from on high*” (Lk 24:49; At 1:8). This promise was fulfilled in Acts 2:1-4. This was when the apostles began receiving all truth and began preaching all truth. They continued to verbally preach that truth to all the world (See At 20:20,26,27). They did such as the Spirit inspired them **to speak** by His guidance, for Jesus had promised them, “*The Holy Spirit will teach you in that very hour what you*

ought to say” (Lk 12:12), “for it is not you who speak but the Spirit of your Father that speaks in you” (Mt 10:20; see Lk 21:15). All truth has now been delivered to the saints (Jd 3). All that is necessary for Godly living is in our hands today through the inspired Scriptures (2 Tm 3:16,17). Therefore, the purpose of the baptism with the Holy Spirit for empowering and revealing truth to the apostles has been accomplished. There is no more need for truth to be revealed to the church through the empowering of the Holy Spirit.

2. The purpose of the baptism with the Holy Spirit was to inspire the New Testament prophets. The continuing results of the baptism with the Holy Spirit on the apostles resulted in their laying hands on faithful men who thus spoke and wrote by inspiration. In other words, **the purpose of the baptism with the Spirit was to inspire and empower the apostles to not only speak by inspiration, but also to lay hands on others that they also might speak by inspiration and record divine truth.** The New Testament prophets spoke by inspiration. Some as Mark, Jude and Luke, who were not Christ-sent apostles, recorded that truth in inspired writings. Though they were not baptized with the Holy Spirit, they spoke and wrote by inspiration of the Spirit because they had had hands laid on them by the Christ-sent apostles. Therefore, the truth or the faith, “was once for all delivered to the saints” by both the apostles and prophets of the New Testament (Jd 3).

The church has been granted “all

things that pertain to life and godliness” through the recorded truth of the apostles and prophets (2 Pt 1:3). We have the “perfect law of liberty” (Js 1:25), “that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work” (2 Tm 3:17). The church was firmly grounded and established in the first century by the revelation of all truth and by the inspired recording of that truth (See Ep 4:11-16). Therefore, we do not need the baptism with the Holy Spirit today because the Holy Spirit accomplished His miraculous purposes in the first century.

3. The purpose of the baptism with the Holy Spirit was to signify the beginning of the church. Before the events of Acts 2, the church was always referred to with the **future tense**. Jesus said, “Upon this rock I will build my church” (Mt 16:18). However, after Acts 2 the church was always mentioned as in existence. Thus the Scriptures point directly to Acts 2 as **the beginning** of the church. This is exactly what Peter said in Acts 11 in reference to the baptism with the Holy Spirit. In referring to the baptism with the Spirit of the household of Cornelius, he said, “And as I began to speak, the Holy Spirit fell upon them, as upon us [the apostles] at the beginning” (At 11:15). Peter’s statement infers first that nothing as this baptism had happened since **the beginning**. But just as important, he refers back to **the beginning** and the fact that the baptism in the Holy Spirit signified the beginning of the church. **It was the beginning of the church because it was the first time men and women responded to the first an-**

nouncement of the gospel. Therefore, it was the purpose of the baptism with the Spirit to signal the fulfillment of Joel 2:28-32 and mark the beginning of this present Christian age. This purpose has been completed. Therefore, there is no more a need to signify the beginning of the church by the baptism with the Holy Spirit.

4. *The purpose of the “baptism” with the Holy Spirit on the household of Cornelius was to signify that the Gentiles must be reached with the gospel.* In Acts 10 and 11 Luke records Peter’s visions and approach to the Gentile household of Cornelius. The result of his visit was the outpouring of the Spirit on Cornelius and his household. Though the word “baptism” is not used in what actually happened in this case, Peter stated that the event was like what happened to all the apostles in the beginning of the church in Acts 2 (At 11:15). The reason for this outpouring on this Gentile house was to signify that God wanted the gospel preached to the Gentiles. He also wanted the apostles to lay hands on the Gentiles. When Peter reported what had happened to Cornelius to the Jewish brethren from Jerusalem, they rightly concluded, “*Then God has also granted to the Gentiles repentance to life*” (At 11:18). Their conclusion was right. Luke recorded this conclusion in order to identify why the Spirit was miraculously poured out upon Cornelius. Therefore, the outpouring on the Gentiles has taken place. God does not have to signal again that the Gentiles must be reached with the gospel.

5. *The purpose of the baptism with the Holy Spirit was to bear witness to Jesus.* Jesus said to the apostles that “*when the Helper comes [the Holy Spirit] ... He will testify of Me*” (Jn 15:26). In John 15:27 Jesus said to the apostles, “*You also will bear witness, because you have been with Me from the beginning.*” Not only did the apostles bear witness to Jesus by their personal lives, but also by the Holy Spirit’s miraculously working through them (At 5:12). They became the medium through which the Holy Spirit miraculously worked and confirmed their word as originating from God. They were baptized in the Spirit for the purpose of beginning this medium and this witness. Through the work of the Spirit, the apostles were the miraculous witnesses to the sonship of Jesus (At 4:33). This witness has been recorded for us today. John wrote,

*That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, concerning the **Word of life**. The life was manifested, and we have seen, and bear witness, and declare to you that eternal life which was with the Father and was manifested to us—that which we have seen and heard we declare to you, that you also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ (1 Jn 1:1-3).*

6. *The purpose of the baptism with the Holy Spirit was to bear witness to the truth.* The message of the apostles

was not preached with “*persuasive words of human wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power*” (1 Co 2:4). God bore “*witness both by signs and wonders, with various powers and gifts of the Holy Spirit*” (Hb 2:4), “*confirming the word through the accompanying signs*” (Mk 16:20). Therefore, the apostles’ word was confirmed by the signs and wonders they worked by the power of God (See At 2:43). It was the purpose of the Holy Spirit to do such. This word has been confirmed. It has been written. The miraculous work of the Spirit, therefore, has been accomplished.

From the preceding points it is clear that God has accomplished all purposes for which the Holy Spirit miraculously came upon man in a baptismal manner. Once He accomplished His purpose, there was no more need that anyone be baptized with the Holy Spirit. Therefore, if someone claims to be baptized with the Holy Spirit today, then he is saying that God did not accomplish His purposes for which baptism by the Spirit was intended.

F. Interpreting 1 Corinthians 12:13:

This passage has always been used by charismatic groups to affirm the continued existence of the baptism with the Spirit. It is taught by these groups that after one is converted, he or she should seek the baptism with the Spirit in order to receive miraculous gifts.

In 1 Corinthians 12:13 Paul wrote, “*For by [en] one Spirit we were all bap-*

tized into one body” It is important to first understand the context of this statement. **Paul is defending the unity of the church that is based on the oneness of the Spirit and His work through the miraculous gifts** (See vs 12,27). Through the inspired apostles and prophets, the Spirit produced one body, one church. The Corinthians were baptized into this one body that was produced through the unifying influence of the Spirit-inspired word of the apostles and prophets.

The above meaning is brought out by the **instrumental** use of the Greek preposition *en*. This same use of *en* is in Luke 22:49. “*Lord, shall we strike with [en] the sword.*” The instrumental use is also in 1 Corinthians 12:3 and 9. With this understanding, 1 Corinthians 12:13 would correctly be translated, “***By means of the Spirit we were all baptized into one body.***” **We would interpret the passage to mean that we were baptized in water into one body, which concept and practice was revealed to us through the Spirit-inspired word.** In other words, the whole concept of the one body and baptism has been revealed to us through the inspired word of the Spirit. Therefore, by means of the Spirit we were all baptized into one body.

Other translations render *en* in a manner whereby it signifies the element into which one is baptized (See the *American Standard Version*). This locative meaning is in Matthew 3:11 where John stated, “*I indeed baptize you with [en] water unto repentance*” Charismatic groups have argued that 1 Corinthians 12:13 is a

baptism in the Spirit, the Spirit being the element into which one is baptized. It is agreed that the locative case is the more common meaning of *en*. It would be our first inclination to translate the passage with the locative meaning if such were demanded by the context. However, even with the locative translation we would not derive a meaning from the text which assumes anything close to Holy Spirit baptism in the context of 1 Corinthians 12 as it is in Acts 2 and 10. Baptism with the Spirit was not “in” the Holy Spirit, but “with” the Holy Spirit.

For the following reasons, we must affirm that baptism with the Holy Spirit is not in the context of 1 Corinthians 12:13:

1. The purposes for baptism with the Holy Spirit were not relevant to the Corinthians. When Paul went to Corinth, “*Crispus ... believed in the Lord with all his house; and many of the Corinthians having believed and were baptized*” (At 18:8). Paul came to them with a simple message of “*Christ crucified*” (1 Co 1:23). “*For I determined not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified*” (1 Co 2:2). He preached the simple gospel (1 Co 15:1-4). He did not preach baptism with the Holy Spirit. The Spirit had already been poured out on the apostles. The purpose of this baptism had been accomplished. The Corinthians were receiving the benefits **through the mystery of the gospel which Paul preached**. They were baptized in obedience to the gospel, not with the Holy Spirit.

2. The Spirit produced the one body into which individuals are baptized. In Christ one is saved (2 Tm 2:10). Through revelation by the Spirit it was made known to man that one must be in Christ. One must be in the body of Christ (the church) in order to be eternally saved. In this sense, therefore, the church exists because of the inspiring work of the Holy Spirit. In the context of 1 Corinthians 12:13 Paul is discussing this one body. He thus reminds the Corinthians that it was through the work of this one Spirit that we have come into a saving relationship with God. In the context, therefore, Paul is discussing baptism for salvation. This is water baptism for remission of sins, not Holy Spirit baptism.

3. Not all the Corinthians spoke in tongues. In Acts 2 and 10, those who were baptized in the Holy Spirit **spoke in languages**. As stated before, the speaking in tongues was not the baptism, it was only the signal that such had occurred. However, not all of the Corinthians spoke in tongues (See 1 Co 12:30; 14:5). But all of the Corinthians were baptized “in one Spirit.” We would conclude, therefore, that water baptism is here under discussion, not Holy Spirit baptism.

Those who are of a charismatic theology are in a confused dilemma with this passage. 1 Corinthians 12:13 is affirming that **all** the Corinthians and other Christians had been baptized with the baptism mentioned in this passage. However, in Pentecostal churches today there are hundreds and thousands who have not

been baptized with the Spirit. If reference in 1 Corinthians 12:13 is to Holy Spirit baptism of all the Corinthians, we would certainly question any church today in which all members had not been so baptized with the Spirit. If water baptism is under consideration in 1 Corinthians 12:13 – and it is – then no problem exists. All of the Corinthian Christians had obeyed the gospel by immer-

sion in water for the forgiveness of their sins. The statement of 1 Corinthians 12:13 applies to them because all of them had been baptized for remission of sins. 1 Corinthians 12:13 makes sense only if the baptism about which Paul speaks is water baptism. If it is not water baptism, then we can never understand 1 Corinthians 12:13.