

**THE OUTPOURING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT
IN THE NEW TESTAMENT:
DEFINING THE PEOPLE OF GOD**

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STEPHEN J. BEDARD

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AUTHOR: Stephen J. Bedard

SUPERVISOR: Dr. Michael Knowles

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External Reader

Dean

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to trace out the theme of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit throughout the Old Testament promises and the New Testament fulfillment. It is argued that the possession of the prophetic Spirit is one of the important identity markers of the early Christian church.

The first chapter deals with the role of the Spirit in Second Temple Judaism. Jewish texts preceding and subsequent to the New Testament are used to piece together the Jewish understanding of the Spirit in the Second Temple period. This chapter deals primarily with the theory of the cessation of the Spirit in Second Temple Judaism. It is the argument of this chapter that the Second Temple view was that the Spirit continued to be active but that the Spirit's prophetic role was transformed after the last biblical prophet.

The second chapter deals with the outpouring of the Spirit in the prophecies of Isaiah and Ezekiel. More important than Isaiah and Ezekiel's original intent is how these prophecies were understood in Second Temple Judaism. It is argued that the Jewish exile was understood as continuing in a spiritual sense beyond the return to Palestine. As a result, Isaiah and Ezekiel's prophecies which were originally linked to their own historical situations were given an expanded theological context. Isaiah and Ezekiel's prophecies are arranged according to the following themes: 1) the Spirit and the Messiah, 2) the Spirit and eschatology, 3) the prophetic Spirit, 4) the pouring out of the Spirit upon the people, 5) the Spirit and obedience, 6) the Spirit of redemption, and 7) the Spirit of justice and reconciliation.

The third chapter is an exegesis of the best known prophecy of the outpouring of the Spirit: Joel 2:28-32. Joel's prophecy is studied in its original historical context as well as how it was interpreted in Second Temple Judaism. The prophecy of Joel presents an eschatological outpouring of the Spirit upon "all flesh." Joel develops the definition of "all flesh" by specifying that all gender, age and social barriers are removed. Joel continues his prophecy by speaking of the judgement of the nations on the Day of the Lord.

The fourth chapter is a study of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit in the synoptic Gospels, the Gospel of John and the Pauline epistles. It is demonstrated that the synoptic Gospels see the coming of the Spirit primarily in terms of Jesus' possession of the Spirit, although there is a promise that Jesus would baptize people with the Holy Spirit. John's understanding of the pouring out of the Spirit is that the Spirit would be given after Jesus' death and that the Spirit would function in the role of the "Paraclete." Paul saw the possession of the Spirit as being vital for the church's unity.

The final chapter deals with the outpouring of the Spirit in Luke-Acts. While the Gospel of Luke focuses primarily on Jesus' possession of the Spirit, there are hints of the future inclusive possession of the Spirit. The fulfillment of Joel's prophecy that "all flesh" would receive the Spirit is fulfilled at Pentecost. The church struggles with the inclusivity of the Gospel, and it is only after similar Spirit outpourings that various fringe groups are accepted into fellowship.

The conclusion of this study is that the Spirit was an important identity marker for the early church. Possession of the Spirit broke down many societal distinctions and created unity among believers. Although possession of the Spirit was not the only identity marker, it was an important theme for the early church.

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INTRODUCTION

Self-identity is as important for groups as it is for individuals. This is especially true for religious groups. Questions of who is “in” and who is “out” are found in every faith. Each religion has attempted to define “the people of God” based on whatever doctrines it understands to be most important. The ancient Jews defined the people of God as those to whom belonged the land, the Law and the Temple. Gnostics defined the people of God as those who had received the secret knowledge of the relationship of the material world to the spiritual world. Muslims define the people of God as “the people of the Book”, those to whom divine revelation has come, especially the revelation that was mediated through Muhammad. How then did the early Christian church define itself? Among the many different ways by which the early followers of Jesus refer to themselves are the descriptive terms, “those of the Way” (Acts 9:2), “Christians” (Acts 11:26), and the “Body of Christ” (1 Corinthians 12:27). Another important identifier is “the people of the Spirit.” In tracing the genesis and use of this particular term, the following study will review promises of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit in the Old Testament and their fulfillment in the New Testament in order to demonstrate the importance of the church’s experience with the Spirit in developing Christian identity.

The background for the early church’s experience with the Spirit is found in the Jewish understanding of the Spirit and the role the Spirit played in Second Temple Judaism. It will be shown that while there is little evidence for a doctrine of complete cessation of the

Spirit in Judaism, there was an understanding that the Spirit's role, especially in terms of prophetic inspiration, had been transformed following the era of the last biblical prophet. Issues dealing with the role of the Spirit in Second Temple Judaism and the alleged cessation of the Spirit will be discussed in chapter one.

There was no fully-developed theory of cessation within Judaism; on the contrary, there was some expectation that the Spirit would be poured out on all of God's people. These expectations were based on prophecies found in Isaiah, Ezekiel and Joel. While these prophecies were originally tied to the historical context in which they were given, the prophecies were reused and reinterpreted by Jewish exegetes in ways that prepared the New Testament writers to interpret their own experience with the Spirit in light of the same promises. The major themes in Isaiah and Ezekiel concerning the outpouring of the Spirit will be discussed in chapter two. While the prophecies of Isaiah and Ezekiel provide important background material, it will be argued that the early church understood its experience with the Spirit above all in terms of Joel's prophecy. Since Joel 2:28-32 is one of the most important texts regarding the Spirit's outpouring, chapter three will focus on Joel's prophecy.

While Matthew, Mark and John speak of the return of the Spirit outside the imagery found in Joel, Luke-Acts was strongly influenced by Joel's prophecy. While it is unknown how much Joel's prophecy influenced Paul's pneumatology, it can be shown that some of Joel's themes appear in Paul's letters. Both Paul and Luke indicate that the common experience of the Spirit is essential to Christian identity. Paul describes this principle in theological terms; and Luke demonstrates its importance within his collection of narratives. Yet within their respective literary and theological contexts, each author is proposing

something similar, that the coming of the Messiah has inaugurated a new age in which the people of God can be identified by their experience of the Spirit. Chapter four will deal with outpouring of the Spirit in Matthew, Mark, John and Paul, while chapter five will discuss the role of the Spirit specifically within Luke-Acts. Although it is only one of several identity markers in the life of the early church, this study will argue that the church's experience with the Spirit was of utmost importance for their sense of Christian identity.

CHAPTER ONE
THE PROPHETIC ACTIVITY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT
IN SECOND TEMPLE JUDAISM

Introduction

How was the role of the Spirit envisioned in Second Temple Judaism? A variety of viewpoints on this question can be detailed. Some New Testament scholars have used the alleged absence of an active Spirit in Judaism as a foil to compare to a Spirit-filled Christianity. A typical approach has been that of Joachim Jeremias. Jeremias saw Jesus as taking on the role of a prophet¹ and correctly stressed the close relationship between prophecy and the Holy Spirit.² Yet these beliefs were not left to stand on their own. The importance of Jesus as a Spirit-filled prophet is seen only within the religious context of Second Temple Judaism. According to Jeremias:

That Jesus was conscious of being a prophet and bearer of the Spirit and was regarded as such does not, however, mean that he simply took his place as a link in the chain of the many Old Testament messengers of God. For this prophetic sequence had been broken off; it was the conviction of the synagogue that the Spirit had been quenched.³

¹Joachim Jeremias, *New Testament Theology* (London: SCM Press, 1971), 76.

²*Ibid.*, 78.

³*Ibid.*, 80.

Jesus' uniqueness is seen in the context of Judaism understood as a religion without the Spirit, a religion where God was silent.⁴ This goes beyond an understanding of Jesus' uniqueness and into a judgement of the value of Judaism compared to Christianity. Judaism is seen as a religion of Law, whereas Christianity is seen as a religion of the Spirit.

Others have seen difficulties with the concept of a Spiritless Judaism. John Levison comments on the cessation theory by saying, "the so-called dogma of the withdrawn Spirit is built upon uncertain and ambiguous ancient texts which do not even refer to the ceasing of prophecy."⁵ Levison warns that, "when an early Jewish viewpoint, such as the alleged case of the withdrawal of the prophetic Spirit and its eschatological return, provides what appears to be an exceptionally suitable foil for New Testament points of view, New Testament scholars ought to exercise particular suspicion about the possibility of the manipulation of the data."⁶ Scholars must take heed of this warning.

The understanding of the activity of the Spirit in Judaism must be judged on its own terms and not as a contrast for the Spirit-filled Jesus to appear. There are three possible views of the activity of the Spirit withing Judaism: complete cessation of the Spirit's activity among God's people, a continuation of prophetic activity similar to biblical prophecy and a continuation of the Spirit's activity in a different form. What do the Jewish texts suggest about the activity of the Spirit and the possibility of a cessation after Malachi? The evidence

⁴*Ibid.*, 82.

⁵John R. Levison. "Did the Spirit Withdraw from Israel?", *New Testament Studies* 43 (January 1997): 37.

⁶*Ibid.*, 57.

for the Spirit's cessation is derived mainly from apocalyptic literature, Josephus and some rabbinic literature. Examining this evidence as well as looking at the role of the Spirit in Wisdom literature and at Qumran will demonstrate that the role of the Spirit was understood to have continued but to have changed significantly within Judaism after the time of Malachi.

The Holy Spirit's Characteristics in Second Temple Judaism

Any discussion of the role of the Holy Spirit in Judaism must begin by an examination of the Jewish definition of the Holy Spirit. Judaism had an understanding of the Spirit long before the Christian doctrine of the Trinity was conceived. The Spirit of God has been defined as, "an entity which stands outside man, and which comes to him from God in special situations and special circumstances."⁷ According to Abraham Cohen, the Holy Spirit was a concept to indicate "the nearness of God and His direct influence on man." According to F.

W. Horn:

The construction *rûah haqqōdeš*, lit. "Spirit of holiness," implies the divine origin of the Spirit. Yet this does not mean that the Holy Spirit was regarded as a hypostasis distinct from the divine presence (*šekinā*). The Holy Spirit is a mode of God's self-revelation.⁸

Thus the Holy Spirit was not characterized as a separate personality, but as divine power by which God interacted with his people.

⁷Eduard Schweitzer "πνευμα", *TDNT* Vol. 6 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1968), 381.

⁸F. W. Horn, "Holy Spirit", *Anchor Bible Dictionary* Vol. 3 (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 264.

There are a variety of activities of the Holy Spirit, the most common of which was prophecy. Prophecy is thought of specifically as “the ability to interpret the will of God.”⁹ W. D. Davies sees a “very close connection, which is found in rabbinic thought, some would even call it an identification, between prophecy and the Holy Spirit, a connection which made it difficult if not impossible to conceive of the active presence of the Holy Spirit without some form of prophecy.”¹⁰ Benjamin Sommer agrees with Davies, understanding the Holy Spirit as a synonym for prophecy.¹¹ For this reason, an investigation into the role of the Holy Spirit in Judaism often becomes an examination of the role of prophecy. While the Spirit is closely connected with prophecy in Second Temple Judaism, it will be shown that there were other views of the Spirit’s activity as well.

The End of the Biblical Prophets

Those who claim that the Spirit was absent from Israel, claim that prophecy came to an end, either with the destruction of the Temple or with the last of the minor prophets, Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi.¹² Some believe a change in prophetic activity occurred even before Malachi:

At the outset of the Second Temple period prophecy had not yet ceased, but inspiration in that era was not seen as fully equal to inspiration in the past.

⁹*Ibid.*

¹⁰W. D. Davies, *Paul and Rabbinic Judaism* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1980), 209.

¹¹Benjamin D. Sommer, “Did Prophecy Cease? Evaluating a Reevaluation” *Journal of Biblical Literature* 115 (1996): 33.

¹²Craig S. Keener, *Spirit in the Gospels and Acts* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1997), 15-16.

Early postexilic prophets displayed a consciousness of their secondary status, of being slightly less close to YHWH than the great prophets of yore.¹³

John Breck sees a change in postexilic prophecy in that “collective interpretation of tradition tends to supplant the revelatory activity of the individual seer.”¹⁴ The postexilic reinterpretation of earlier prophecies prepared the way for the apocalyptic tradition. Even those who see prophecy as continuing in some form, admit that there was a significant change at this time:

That Malachi marks the end of an era is an historic fact which is beyond doubt. ... After Malachi there did not appear even one man who was recognized and accepted by Jewry as a revealer of God’s word - as a “prophet.” ... This is a significant change in religious belief and attitudes. Malachi is the watershed between the two ages, and the difference between them is great.¹⁵

It is clear that something important did happen in the prophetic tradition after Malachi. This is seen by the fact that no prophetic writings after Malachi were added to the canon. Even the later Daniel is placed within an exilic historical setting and is kept separate from the prophets in the Jewish canon.

That there was a decline in prophecy, or at least a transformation, cannot be denied. However, the reasons for this decline are greatly debated. Many see historical and sociological reasons for the decline in prophecy. D. S. Russell gives four possible reasons for the decline of prophecy: 1) the increasing influence of the Law and the transition from

¹³Sommer, “Did Prophecy Cease?”, 41-42.

¹⁴John Breck, *Spirit of Truth* (Crestwood: St Vladimir’s, 1991), 27.

¹⁵Yehezkel Kaufmann, *History of the Religion of Israel* Vol. 4 (New York: Ktav, 1977).

prophetic inspiration to scribal inspiration, 2) the close relationship between prophecy and the Temple being disrupted by the destruction of the First Temple, 3) the influence of foreign culture and foreign prophets, and 4) prophets posing a political threat to the security of the Jewish state.¹⁶

Others have understood the decline in prophecy from a theological perspective. Since prophets had ceased to appear, God must have removed the Spirit which had given prophetic inspiration. Why would God withhold the Holy Spirit? The exile and the destruction of the Temple had been interpreted as God's punishment for Israel's sins. The absence of prophets was understood in the same way. According to Yehezkel Kaufmann, "The end of prophecy is not rooted in any 'abstract theory'; it is the result of a deep-seated mood, the consequence of the feeling of the wrath of God."¹⁷ A later rabbinic writing, Tosefta Sota 13:2-4, is used to show that the Holy Spirit was withheld even from worthy rabbis such as Hillel and Samuel the Small because of the sinfulness of their generation.¹⁸ As Davies summarizes, "A sinful nation is no longer a suitable environment for the Holy Spirit."¹⁹

The Holy Spirit's Activity in Second Temple Judaism

Although it is clear that prophecy was not the same after Malachi, there is evidence of an understanding of an active Spirit in Judaism. A number of movements rose up to take

¹⁶D. S. Russell, *Method and Message of Jewish Apocalyptic* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1964), 74-77.

¹⁷Kaufmann, *History of the Religion of Israel*, 461.

¹⁸Davies, *Paul and Rabbinic Judaism*, 207.

¹⁹*Ibid.*, 206.

the place of the prophets. According to Israel Efros, the two movements that sprang from the prophets were wisdom and the apocalyptic writings.²⁰ Breck describes the situation after the decline of the prophets, “Although the activity and corresponding doctrines of Spirit and Word never wholly disappeared from the historical scene, they were largely taken over by the ancient Wisdom stream of Israelite tradition.”²¹

The connection between Wisdom and the Spirit is seen most clearly in the first century B.C.E. Wisdom of Solomon. Although Wisdom of Solomon speaks of the human spirit, it also speaks of the Spirit of God. In 12:1, it says “For your immortal Spirit is in all things.” The most significant passage is 1:5-7:

For the Holy Spirit of discipline flees deceit and withdraws from senseless counsels; and when injustice occurs it is rebuked. For wisdom is a kindly Spirit, yet she acquits not the blasphemer of his guilty lips; because God is the witness of his inmost self and the sure observer of his heart and the listener to his tongue. For the Spirit of the Lord fills the world, is all-embracing and knows what man says.

Wisdom, according to George Montague is:

here described as a “Holy Spirit,” and this suggests that there is more than simply learning or practice involved. The very fact that it is called “holy” suggests that its origins are transcendent, godly - although the author will only work up to this affirmation clearly in vs. 7.²²

In 7:27, Wisdom is said to produce “friends of God and prophets.” Even more clearly, 9:17 says, “Or who ever knew your counsel, except you had given Wisdom and sent your Holy

²⁰Israel Efros, “Prophecy, Wisdom and Apocalypse”, *Mordecai M. Kaplan: Jubilee Volume* (New York: Jewish Theological Seminary, 1953), 216.

²¹Breck, *Spirit of Truth*, 92.

²²George T. Montague, *Holy Spirit: Growth of a Biblical Tradition* (New York: Paulist Press, 1976), 104.

Spirit from on high?” Yet while *sophia* is virtually identified with *pneuma*, the identification is not complete.²³ The Spirit is intimately connected to Wisdom, though it is not identical to it. Breck summarizes it in this way, “Wisdom, endowed with the Spirit, renews the prophetic vocation within Israel.”²⁴ Instead of speaking through a prophetic oracle, the Spirit speaks through Wisdom to encourage moral living and obedience to God. It seems clear that the author of the Wisdom of Solomon saw the Holy Spirit’s role in the giving of wisdom.

Another form of literature in which the Spirit played a role is the apocalyptic writings. Russell understands apocalyptic literature as a continuation or at least as a development of prophecy. Apocalyptic literature has the same message as prophecy but in a different language for a different situation.²⁵ John Collins sees Apocalypticism in continuity with prophecy, but with a shift in emphasis, specifically the role of eschatology.²⁶

The content of apocalyptic literature has relatively few references to the Spirit. Only nine out of thirty-nine references to the Spirit of God concern inspiration.²⁷ Yet, apocalyptic authors believed themselves to have been divinely inspired.²⁸ In George Montague’s opinion: “The Spirit is given to certain inspired wise men, generally the authors of the apocalypses.

²³Breck, *Spirit of Truth*, 88-89.

²⁴*Ibid.* 89.

²⁵Russell, *Method and Message of Jewish Apocalyptic*, 92.

²⁶John J. Collins, *Apocalypticism in the Dead Sea Scrolls* (London: Routledge, 1997), 5-

6.

²⁷Russell, *Method and Message of Jewish Apocalyptic*, 148.

²⁸*Ibid.* 82.

who are heirs of the prophets (cf. 1 Enoch 91:1; 4 Ezra 5:22; 14:22).²⁹ Some see the pseudepigraphic nature of apocalyptic literature as revealing a consciousness that direct revelation had ceased.³⁰ Since the Spirit could only speak through the biblical prophets, new writings could be produced only with their name. Kaufmann explains the reason for the apocalyptic pseudonymity in this way:

Their prophecy was not pseudonymous because the seers of the period believed that the holy spirit had departed or that their writings were not inspired. They believed that the holy spirit wrought in them; but they lived in an age when the nation no longer believed in the existence of the grace of prophecy, an age and environment which were nonprophetic. ... On this account, the seers were forced to think of their spiritual endowment in a special way and to clothe their prophetic utterances in a special form.³¹

The cultural and political context may have changed since the time of Malachi, but Israel was still in need of hearing from God. While prophets no longer seemed to appear, apocalyptic writers offered their own comfort using prophetic identities. This is important because Apocalypticism was not the product of a fringe group in Judaism but rather a significant part of accepted Jewish tradition.³² While apocalyptic writers believed their messages as being inspired, they understood that prophets had ceased appearing.

Our understanding of the role of the Holy Spirit in Judaism has been transformed by the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls. Even Jeremias saw Qumran as an exception to the

²⁹Montague, *Holy Spirit: Growth of a Biblical Tradition*, 90.

³⁰Sommer, "Did Prophecy Cease?", 43 note.

³¹Kaufmann, *History of the Religion of Israel*, 471.

³²Russell, *Method and Message of Jewish Apocalyptic*, 23.

absence of the Spirit in Judaism.³³ Spirit (רוח) is found thirty-five times in the non-biblical Hebrew scrolls found at Qumran referring to the Spirit of God.³⁴ The suffix *holy* (קדוש) in the scrolls, always refers to God.³⁵ Thus, the Spirit is seen as a force from God, external to humans and not a human disposition.³⁶ The Qumran sectarians were conscious of their weakness and their inability to please God. As a result, the sectarians felt the need to live a life completely in reliance on God's Spirit. Thus, one of the roles of the Spirit at Qumran was to enable the sectarians to live righteous lives despite their sinful nature.³⁷ The Thanksgiving Hymn, 1QH 4.31 says, "The way of man is not established except by the Spirit which God created for him to make perfect a way for the children of men."

The Spirit is also seen in the traditional manner by which a prophet speaks the will of God.³⁸ The Community Rule, 1QS 8.16 states, "This (path) is the study of the Law which He commanded by the hand of Moses, that they may do according to all that has been revealed from age to age, and as the Prophets have revealed by His Holy Spirit." Keener believes that, "it remains likely that the writings and teachings of certain figures within the Qumran community, including that of the first Teacher and his successors, were understood

³³Jeremias, *New Testament Theology*, 81.

³⁴Arthur Everett Sekki, *Meaning of Ruah at Qumran* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1989), 71.

³⁵*Ibid.* 75.

³⁶*Ibid.* 79.

³⁷*Ibid.* 80.

³⁸*Ibid.* 81.

to be prophetically inspired.”³⁹ This is evident in the *peshar* commentaries found at Qumran.

1QpHab 7.1-5 describes the Teacher of Righteousness’ role in interpreting prophecies that had already been spoken:

God told Habakkuk to write down that which would happen to the final generation, but He did not make known to him when time would come to an end. And as for that which He said, *That he who reads may read it speedily*: interpreted this concerns the Teacher of Righteousness, to whom God made known all the mysteries of the words of His servants the Prophets.

David Noel Freedman explains the significance of the Teacher’s role:

For the people of Qumran, the best thing would have been to have a true prophet in their midst to give them direct revelation from God, and daily instruction as to how to live and what to do in preparation for the great and terrible day of the Lord, which was imminent. Lacking such an authentic prophet, they had the next best thing, the presence of an inspired and authoritative interpreter of prophecies already delivered and enshrined in the canonical text of the Hebrew Bible.⁴⁰

The Qumran community believed in the presence of the Spirit for inspiration, however, the Spirit’s role was in revealing the true meaning of existing prophecies rather than revealing new ones. The Spirit’s activity in the Qumran literature is seen as one step removed from the activity of the biblical prophets.

Second Temple Evidence for the Cessation of the Prophetic Spirit

While there is evidence that prophecy was transformed within Judaism, some supporters of the cessation theory such as Benjamin Sommer suggest that there are Jewish

³⁹Keener, *Spirit in the Gospels and Acts*, 17.

⁴⁰David Noel Freedman, “Prophecy in the Dead Sea Scrolls”, *Dead Sea Scrolls and Christian Faith* (Harrisburg: Trinity, 1998), 49.

texts that teach that prophecy had ceased.⁴¹ Although much of the Jewish textual evidence for the cessation of the Spirit is found in rabbinic texts, there is some support among earlier texts. The earliest Jewish texts that seem to teach the cessation of prophecy are found in 1 Maccabees, 2 Baruch and Josephus.

Three texts in 1 Maccabees are used to support the cessation of prophecy:

And they thought it best to tear it down, so that it would not be a lasting shame to them that the Gentiles had defiled it. So they tore down the altar and stored the stones in a convenient place on the temple hill until a prophet should come to tell what to do with them. (4:46)

So there was great distress in Israel, such as had not been since the time that prophets ceased to appear among them. (9:27)

The Jews and their priests have resolved that Simon should be their leader and high priest forever, until a trustworthy prophet should arise... (14:41)

Russell interprets these passages as saying that, “prophecy is a thing of the past and the belief is expressed that the time will come when God will raise up a true prophet who will interpret his Law faithfully to the people.”⁴² According to Craig Keener, “9:27 speaks of the cessation of prophecy, and 4:45-46 and 14:41 speak of the coming of a prophet as a future expectation (although not necessarily an eschatological one).”⁴³ The coming prophet in 4:46 and 14:41 is not necessarily an eschatological prophet (as some interpret), or even a specific prophet. There was much that was discouraging in the events at that time, including the fact that there was no prophet to reveal the will of God on certain issues. However, there was hope that a

⁴¹Sommer, “Did Prophecy Cease?”, 33.

⁴²Russell, *Method and Message of Jewish Apocalyptic*, 77.

⁴³Keener, *Spirit in the Gospels and Acts*, 14.

prophet would eventually appear to help Israel during these troubled times. The text from 9:27 does seem to speak of at least a temporary cessation of prophecy.

Another text which is used to support the cessation of prophecy is 2 Baruch 85:3, “But now, the righteous have been assembled, and the prophets are sleeping.” One of the problems with this text is its late date. A. F. J. Klijn dates this work from the first or second decade of the second century C.E.,⁴⁴ which is removed from the time when this cessation was to have begun. Yet it may speak of the attitude towards prophecy in the time just before the destruction of the Second Temple. This verse describes the condition of life at the end times. The context is seen more clearly in 85:12:

For behold, the Most High will cause all these things to come. There will not be an opportunity to repent anymore, nor a limit to the times, nor a duration of the periods, nor a change to rest, nor an opportunity to prayer, nor sending up petition, nor giving knowledge, nor giving love, nor opportunity of repentance, nor supplicating for offences, nor prayers of the fathers, nor intercessions of the *prophets*, nor help of the righteous.

Benjamin Sommer believes that the idea implied by 2 Baruch is that prophecy had ceased from Israel.⁴⁵ It does seem clear that the author of 2 Baruch saw prophecy as unavailable during the tribulations of the last days.

Another Jewish source used to support the cessation of prophecy is Josephus. In *Contra Apionem* 1.41, Josephus says that, “From Artaxerxes to our own time the complete history has been written, but has not been deemed worthy of equal credit with the earlier records, because of the inaccurate (failure of the exact) succession of the prophets.” This has

⁴⁴A. F. J. Klijn, “2 (Syriac Apocalypse of) Baruch”, *Old Testament Pseudepigraphia* Vol. 1 (London: Darton Longman & Todd, 1983), 617.

⁴⁵Sommer, “Did Prophecy Cease?”, 33.

been used to show that Josephus believed that prophecy ceased during the time of Artaxerxes. Russell explains this view, “Thus Josephus gives concrete form to the prevailing belief that prophetic inspiration, which had commenced with Moses, ceased in the fifth century BC in the time of Artaxerxes, which was also the time of Ezra the scribe.”⁴⁶

Levison disagrees with this view and explains Josephus’ purpose in this way:

The reference to an ‘inaccurate succession of the prophets’, therefore, is motivated by the need to explain why sources for the final period of Jewish history are inferior. Josephus neither implies that prophecy ceased nor gives the slightest hint that this is due to the withdrawal of the Spirit. On the contrary, inspired prophets continued to record history in the period after Artaxerxes but with less regularity than formerly.⁴⁷

In addition, Josephus seems to claim for himself and for John Hyrcanus, some level of prophetic gifting.⁴⁸ Yet Josephus also saw a difference between the prophets which he believed ended with Malachi and prophecy which he saw as continuing to his day.⁴⁹

For example, although Josephus claims that the Essenes tell the future, he does not use the term προφήτης to describe them, and he connects their predictions to their study of canonical (and perhaps sectarian) texts rather than to unmediated revelation. In short, the idea that true prophecy has ended was by no means incompatible with the recognition that attenuated forms of revelation or divination (which are often connected with scriptural exegesis) continue. Both the rabbis and Josephus give witness to viewpoints in which a form of divine communication with Israel could appear late in the postexilic period even though they regarded the prophets of yore as a distinct - and extinct - class.⁵⁰

⁴⁶Russell, *Method and Message of Jewish Apocalyptic*, 80.

⁴⁷Levison, “Did the Spirit Withdraw from Israel?”, 43.

⁴⁸Marie E. Isaacs, *Concept of the Spirit* (London: Heythrop, 1976), 48.

⁴⁹Keener, *Spirit in the Gospels and Acts*, 14-15.

⁵⁰Sommer, “Did Prophecy Cease?”, 40.

Sommer suggests that Josephus saw the prophecy contemporary with his time as being the result of the eschatological significance of the great revolt of C.E. 66-70.⁵¹ This would mean that prophecy was beginning again due to the imminence of the last days and not as evidence of prophecy continuing throughout the Second Temple period. The theory that Josephus saw the prophecy of his day as eschatological is not proven. What can be said is that Josephus did not see an unbroken line of prophets from the biblical prophets up to the Jewish war. Josephus did not understand divine inspiration as being limited to the biblical period, yet there was a qualitative difference between the two periods.⁵²

Rabbinic Evidence for the Cessation of the Prophetic Spirit

The clearest presentation of the doctrine of the cessation of prophecy is found in rabbinic Judaism.⁵³ In fact F.W. Horn claims that, “Not until the collapse of the Second Temple and the loss of this cultic center as the locus of God’s presence, ... did the notion of a prophetless-Spiritless era become a possibility.”⁵⁴ This presents a problem, since the rabbinic texts date much later than the time of Jesus. Does this rabbinic idea represent a response to the Christian concept of the Spirit and prophecy, a need to keep order after the destruction of the Second Temple, or does it reflect a pre-rabbinic tradition that prophecy had indeed ceased? There is some difficulty in using later rabbinic texts to understand Second Temple Judaism and the rabbinic material must be used with caution.

⁵¹*Ibid.* 36.

⁵²Isaacs, *Concept of the Spirit*, 49.

⁵³Keener, *Spirit in the Gospels and Acts*, 13.

⁵⁴Horn, “Holy Spirit”, 263.

The best known statement about the cessation of prophecy and the absence of the Holy Spirit is the rabbinic text found in both t. Sota 13.2-4 and b. Sanhedrin 11a:

When Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi, the last of the prophets, died, the Holy Spirit ceased in Israel. Nevertheless, a Bath Qol was heard by them: It once happened that the sages entered a house in Jericho and they heard a Bath Qol, saying, 'There is a man here who is worthy of the Holy Spirit, but there is no one in his generation righteous.' Thereupon, they set their eyes upon Hillel ... Again ... they heard a Bath Qol saying, 'There is a man here who is worthy of the Holy Spirit, but there is no one in his generation righteous.' Thereupon, they set their eyes upon Samuel the Small.

This is an often quoted rabbinic statement found in both Talmuds as well as outside the Talmuds.⁵⁵ There are some serious concerns about using the Tosefta to explain the understanding of the Holy Spirit in Judaism at the time of Jesus, since the final redaction of the Tosefta did not take place until the late third or fourth centuries.⁵⁶ Yet this late rabbinic writing is often used as evidence for the beliefs of first century Palestinian Judaism. The traditional understanding of this text is that Hillel and Samuel the Small were unable to receive the Holy Spirit because they lived in an unworthy generation. Davies agrees with this view when he says that, "for rabbinic Judaism no individual in isolation ... could receive the Spirit: it was necessary for him in order to do so to live in a particular milieu."⁵⁷ The rabbinic view seems to be that the Holy Spirit was unavailable even to the most righteous, if they lived in the wrong generation.

⁵⁵Sommer, "Did Prophecy Cease?", 33-34.

⁵⁶H. L. Strack and G. Stemberger, *Introduction to the Talmud and Midrash* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1991), 176.

⁵⁷Davies, *Paul and Rabbinic Judaism*, 207.

This rabbinic material must be used with caution. Although this rabbinic text is significant, it must be interpreted in the context of the earlier Jewish texts. The material from Qumran and apocalyptic literature suggests an understanding of an active Spirit within Second Temple Judaism. As a result, it is unlikely that the rabbinic material supporting a full cessation of the Spirit represents the actual understanding of the Spirit's role within Second Temple Judaism. However, the rabbinic material is important in that it discusses the change in the activity of the Spirit after the time of the biblical prophets. It is likely that the rabbis developed a theology concerning this change to support the authority of their oral traditions in the aftermath of the destruction of the Temple.⁵⁸

Conclusion

One of the possible views of the Spirit's activity in Second Temple Judaism is that the Spirit's activity ceased after Malachi. This cessation view suggests that the Holy Spirit was active during the time of the biblical prophets and will be active at some future eschatological event, but is dormant between the times. A full cessation theory regarding the Holy Spirit in Second Temple Judaism is difficult to prove, in light of the evidence from the Qumran, apocalyptic and Wisdom texts. The full cessation theory also fails based on incorrect identification of prophecy with the Spirit. Although there is a close connection between prophecy and the Holy Spirit, these concepts are not identical. Intertestamental literature demonstrates that there was an understanding of the Spirit's activity outside of biblical prophecy. There is also evidence in Josephus that some form of prophecy continued, although it was not of the same quality as biblical prophecy.

⁵⁸Russell, *Method and Message of Jewish Apocalyptic*, 74-77.

Yet, the view that the Spirit's activity continued in the same form as biblical prophecy is also difficult to prove. It is clear that a change in the role of the Spirit was seen in the postbiblical period. Evidence has been used from 1 Maccabees, 2 Baruch, Josephus and Tosefta Sota to support this hypothesis. These texts and the lack of other texts describing prophets beyond Malachi demonstrate that the prophetic activity of the Spirit was not the same as it was in the biblical era. Prophecy continued in some form but it was not seen as equal to biblical prophecy.

While prophecy no longer existed as it did in the biblical era, prophecy had evolved into new forms such as wisdom and apocalyptic literature. These new forms of literature retained an understanding of an active Holy Spirit. The community at Qumran is an example of a Jewish community that embraced and even relied on an active Holy Spirit. Based on the evidence from Qumran, Wisdom and apocalyptic literature, it can be demonstrated that the Holy Spirit was viewed as an important concept in Second Temple Judaism. While the activity of the Holy Spirit is seen as different, and possibly inferior, in the Second Temple era as compared to the biblical era, the importance of the Spirit for Judaism had not changed.

As a result, the contrast between Christianity as the Spirit-filled movement and Judaism as the Spirit-less movement is not valid. Yet there is a distinct transformation in prophecy and the role of the Spirit after Malachi. No longer was God speaking directly through known prophets to the people of Israel. Rather, inspiration was limited to Wisdom, pseudepigraphic prophecies and biblical interpretation. As important as these forms of literature were, there was an understanding that they were inferior to the oracles proclaimed

by the biblical prophets. It would not be until a later time that the God would again speak through prophets by his Holy Spirit.

CHAPTER TWO
THE OUTPOURING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT
AS PROPHESED IN ISAIAH AND EZEKIEL

Introduction

Although Joel 2:28-32 is the best known Old Testament prophecy regarding the outpouring of the Spirit, there are a number of other important prophecies found in Isaiah and Ezekiel. Some of the themes found in Isaiah and Ezekiel's promises of the Spirit's outpouring are similar to those found in Joel, while others are different. Isaiah and Ezekiel's understanding of the Spirit's outpouring provide important background information for Joel's prophecy as well as the New Testament interpretation of the pouring out of the Holy Spirit. Isaiah and Ezekiel's prophecies will be interpreted in the theological context of Second Temple Judaism.

While a developed doctrine of the absence of the Spirit is not found in the Hebrew Bible, there was an awareness of a spiritual distance between God and his people in the writings preceding and contemporary with the Babylonian exile. Jeremiah described the Babylonian exile as the punishment for Israel and Judah's unfaithfulness. According to Jeremiah, the LORD says, "As you have forsaken me and served foreign gods in your land, so

you shall serve strangers in a land that is not your own” (Jer. 5:19b).¹ Part of the sinfulness of Israel and Judah is blamed on the false prophets as described by Isaiah and Jeremiah:

These also reel with wine and stagger with strong drink; the priest and the prophet reel with strong drink, they are confused with wine, they stagger with strong drink; they err in vision, they stumble in giving judgement. (Isaiah 28:7)

They have spoken falsely of the LORD, and have said, “He will do nothing. No evil will come upon us, and we shall not see sword or famine.” The prophets are nothing but wind, for the word is not in them. Thus shall it be done to them! (Jeremiah 5:12-13)

Jeremiah is using a play on words here, describing the prophets as wind (רוח) when they are supposed to be inspired by the Spirit (רוח). Previously Isaiah had described the result of Judah’s unfaithfulness:

Therefore the anger of the LORD was kindled against his people, and he stretched out his hand against them and struck them; the mountains quaked, and their corpses were like refuse in the streets. For all this his anger has not turned away, and his hand is stretched out still. (Isaiah 5:25)

Although the Babylonian exile eventually ended and many of the exiles returned to Judah, the connection between sin and God’s punishment was engraved in their theology. As they saw it, sin had resulted in the withholding of God’s blessings and the experiencing of God’s curse.

Yet Judaism was not a hopeless religion. Judaism hoped for a time when the communion with God would be fully restored. The prophetic books reflected this theme of present suffering endured with the hope of future salvation. This hope took on different forms. Sometimes the restoration was said to concern a return to the promised land.

¹All biblical quotations are taken from the New Revised Standard Version unless otherwise noted.

Sometimes it would mean a return to the glory of the Davidic kingdom. At other times, it was described in terms of an outpouring of the Holy Spirit.

The presence of the Spirit and the activity of the prophets were seen as closely linked. Communication and communion with God were thought to represent the state of an obedient and faithful people. The form of this hope that was described in terms of the return of the Holy Spirit is found mainly in passages in Isaiah, Ezekiel and Joel.

Originally these prophecies of hope were spoken in the context of the troubles that Israel was having with the Assyrian and Babylonian empires, of which one of the most important events was the Jewish exile. Isaiah and Ezekiel seemed to be hoping for God's intervention and redemption within the near future. Although the Jews were allowed to return from exile at the end of the sixth century, there was a belief that in some way the exile continued beyond the return to the homeland. Michael Knibb has studied the references to the exile in Jewish apocalyptic literature and found that the post-exilic period was not seen as a time of forgiveness for Israel's sinful past. Rather, the post-exilic period was interpreted as a time characterized by sin.² Jeremiah's prophecy that Judah would only suffer exile for seventy years (Jeremiah 29:10) was expanded to seventy weeks of years (Daniel 9:24). Israel's dilemma went beyond political oppression by another nation. Israel's greatest problem was its own sinfulness. According to Knibb, the Jews understood the exile as

²Michael A. Knibb, "Exile in Intertestamental Literature" *Heythrop Journal* Vol. 17 No. 3 (July 1976): 255.

continuing beyond the decrees of Cyrus and Artaxerxes and that it would “be ended only by the intervention of God and the inauguration of the eschatological era.”³

This results in an interesting situation with regard to the biblical prophecies of Isaiah, Ezekiel and Joel. Isaiah and Ezekiel prophesied in the context of their own day. While Joel is much more difficult to place in its historical context, Isaiah prophesied in anticipation of Assyrian conquest and Ezekiel in response to Babylonian exile. The belief that the Spirit’s prophetic presence would one day be removed had not been developed. Isaiah, Ezekiel and Joel spoke of a time when the prophetic Spirit would appear more fully while they themselves were being inspired by the same Spirit. Isaiah, Ezekiel and Joel did not speak of a return of the Spirit after a time of cessation, but rather of a more intense and widespread outpouring of the Holy Spirit. Isaiah, Ezekiel and Joel seemed to have the same wish as Moses: “Would that all the LORD’s people were prophets, and that the LORD would put his Spirit on them!” (Numbers 11:29)

Yet after the time of Malachi, when the prophetic Spirit seemed to be absent, the prophecies of Isaiah, Ezekiel and Joel seemed to take on new meaning. It will be shown that the prophecies of Isaiah, Ezekiel and Joel concerning the Spirit were understood beyond the original context of Israel’s struggles with Assyria and Babylon. The exile continued, an exile marked by the absence of God’s presence among the people rather than simply a banishment from a homeland. The pattern of experiencing God’s wrath followed by redemption and the return of God’s presence described by Isaiah and Ezekiel was given an eschatological interpretation by later Jewish interpreters.

³*Ibid.*

The early church understood its experience with the Holy Spirit primarily in terms of Joel's prophecy as Luke describes in the account of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit in Acts 2. Yet, the anticipation created by Isaiah and Ezekiel's prophecies concerning the Spirit helped prepare the early Christians in understanding their own experience with the Spirit. The New Testament idea that the people of God are identified by their possession of the Spirit can find precedence in prophecies concerning the Spirit found in Isaiah and Ezekiel. Therefore, it is first necessary to look at the texts in Isaiah and Ezekiel that deal with the pouring out of the Spirit and how they were interpreted by Jewish and early Christian interpreters. It will be shown that the texts from Isaiah and Ezekiel reveal certain themes that are relevant for understanding the New Testament concept of the outpouring of the Spirit.

The Spirit in Relation to the Messiah

One of the themes running through Isaiah is that the coming of the Spirit is related to the appearance of a Messiah. This appears in a number of passages that speak of a person sent by God to lead the people. These passages may not have been originally understood as being messianic, but they were subsequently interpreted in a messianic manner.

Isaiah 11:1-5

A shoot shall come out from the stump of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots. The Spirit of the LORD shall rest on him, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD. His delight shall be in the fear of the LORD. He shall not judge by what his eyes see, or decide by what his ears hear; but with righteousness he shall judge the poor, and decide with equity for the meek of the earth; he shall strike the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips he shall kill the wicked. Righteousness shall be the belt around his waist, and faithfulness the belt around his loins.

The first passage dealing with the Holy Spirit which is interpreted as being messianic in Jewish literature is Isaiah 11:1-5. This passage speaks of a person who will appear to lead Israel. This leader is described as a shoot (רֹסֶה) from the stump of Jesse. Similar imagery is used with the term branch (צֶמַח) in Isaiah 4:2, Jeremiah 23:5, 33:15 and Zechariah 6:12. The first characteristic mentioned concerning this shoot is that the Spirit of the LORD (רוּחַ יְהוָה) is upon him. The connection between the Spirit and royal oracles is a theme found throughout Isaiah,⁴ apparently reflecting a hope for the return to charismatic kingship.⁵ This is an allusion to 1 Samuel 16:13 where at the anointing of David, “the Spirit of the LORD came mightily upon David.”⁶ The Spirit was understood as the means to give extraordinary ability such as the craftsmanship of Bezalel (Exodus 31:3) or the strength of Samson (Judges 14:6). According to John Oswalt, “to say that God’s Spirit was upon someone became almost a code phrase for saying that the person was acting out of a capacity which was more than merely human.”⁷ The promise of a Spirit-anointed king is set in contrast to the Spirit-less kings that the later Davidic dynasty produced.⁸

Who Isaiah understood this king to be is unknown. However, later generations came to understand this prophecy in terms of the Messiah. There is a common messianic

⁴John D. Watts, *Isaiah 1-33* (Waco: Word, 1985), 171.

⁵*Ibid.*

⁶Wonsouk Ma, “Spirit (*Ruah*) of God in Isaiah 1-39” *Asian Journal of Theology* 3:2 (1989): 584.

⁷John N. Oswalt, *Book of Isaiah Chapters 1-39* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1986), 279.

⁸*Ibid.*

interpretation of this passage found in the Dead Sea Scrolls, Apocalyptic literature, New Testament, Talmud and Midrashim.

Isaiah 11 is one of the passages interpreted in the Isaiah pesher found at Qumran. Isaiah 11:1-2 is interpreted in 4Q161 3.18-20 in this way: “[Interpreted, this concerns the Branch] of David who shall arise at the end [of days] ... God will uphold him with [the Spirit of might, and will give him] a throne of glory and a crown of [holiness] and many-coloured garments.” The author of this pesher identifies the “Branch of David” who was to appear at the end of days. The Branch of David was a leader who was to be equipped with the Spirit which would enable him to rule over and judge all nations. Maurya Horgan notes that:

The author interpreted these verses eschatologically in terms of the Qumran community. There is mention of the end of days, and there seem to be references to a battle with the Kittim, the eschatological foe of the Qumran community.⁹

The Qumran interpreters saw this prophecy as referring to the last days when a Davidic figure would appear, who by the power of the Spirit would replace the unjust rulers and set up a throne ruling over all nations.

There are a number of apocalyptic texts that interpret Isaiah 11:1-5 in a messianic context. Isaiah 11:2 is alluded to in the Testament of Levi 18:7 (Maccabean era)¹⁰ where the Spirit which will be on the Messiah is described as the “spirit of understanding and

⁹Maurya P. Horgan, *Pesharim* (Washington: Catholic Biblical Association, 1979), 73.

¹⁰H. C. Kee, “Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs” *Old Testament Pseudepigrapha* Vol. 1 (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1983), 778.

sanctification.”¹¹ The Psalms of Solomon (late first century C.E.) are important for understanding Isaiah 11. Isaiah 11:2 is mentioned in Psalms of Solomon 17:37 and Isaiah 11:4 is mentioned in 17:35. These passages describe the Messiah who will destroy the wicked and will be strong with the power of the Holy Spirit. Isaiah 11:4 is mentioned in the Martyrdom and Ascension of Isaiah 4:18 (late first century C.E.) which speaks of the destruction of the wicked when the Lord comes with his angels. Isaiah 11:4 is alluded to in 4 Ezra 13:10 (around 100 C.E.) where it is used to describe the destructive ability of the Messiah as he arises from the sea. While not all of these allusions deal specifically with the Holy Spirit, they do show that Isaiah 11:1-5, which is an important text regarding the coming of the Spirit, was interpreted as referring to the time of the Messiah.

The New Testament writers applied this prophecy to Jesus as they did most prophecies of the Hebrew Bible. In Revelation 5:5, the Root (ρίζα as in the LXX) of David is identified as being Jesus Christ, specifically in his authoritative role in heaven. Only the Root of David has the authority to open the scroll and its seven seals. While this passage does not speak of the Spirit, it does show that the Messiah was seen as connected to the prophecy in Isaiah 11:1-5. The coming of the Spirit upon Jesus at his baptism is described in Mark 1:10, Luke 3:22 and Matthew 3:16. Matthew adds that the Spirit was “upon him” (ἐπ’ αὐτόν) exactly as it appears in the LXX of Isaiah 11:2.

Messianic references are also found in the Talmud and Midrashim. Isaiah 11:2-3 are quoted in b. Sanhedrin 93b in a discussion about the Messiah. R. Alexandri (second

¹¹This passage must be used with caution. It is unknown how much of the Greek text of the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs are Christian interpolations.

generation of the Amoraim)¹² said that this passage teaches that God will load the Messiah with “good deeds and suffering as a mill is laden.” Isaiah 11:2 is quoted by R. Simeon b. Lakish (second generation of Amoraim)¹³ in Genesis Rabbah 2.4 in a discussion of the Spirit hovering over the waters at creation. This Spirit is identified as the Spirit of the Messiah as spoken of by Isaiah. Raba (fourth generation of Amoraim)¹⁴ focused on the Messiah’s role as a judge and taught that if the Messiah does not judge by the senses of sight and hearing, the Messiah must then judge by the sense of smell. Isaiah 11:1 is quoted in Lamentations Rabbah 1:51 by R. Abun (fourth generation of Amoraim)¹⁵ who connects the coming of the Messiah with the destruction of the Temple. Genesis Rabbah 97 quotes Isaiah 11:2 in listing the royal Messiah as the final one of six descendants of Judah who would have six virtues. Rabbinic texts interpreted Isaiah 11:1-5 as referring to the Messiah. Not every reference discusses the Spirit’s relationship with the Messiah. Yet, the rabbis did see this passage, which speaks of the coming Spirit, as referring to the time of the Messiah and in some cases the rabbis make the connection between the Messiah and the Spirit explicit. The Second Temple and rabbinic material does not elaborate on the relationship of the Spirit to the Messiah. However, Isaiah 11:2 describes the Spirit as being upon an individual described as

¹²Strack and Stemberger, 95. Because of the problems of dating the Rabbis, dates will be given in relative Tannaitic and Amoraic generations rather than biographical dates following Strack and Stemberger, 63. All of the rabbinic references must be used with caution due to their late dates.

¹³*Ibid.*, 95.

¹⁴*Ibid.*, 104.

¹⁵*Ibid.*, 103.

the “Branch.” It has been shown that this “Branch” who will possess the Spirit was understood as the Messiah by many Jewish interpreters.

Isaiah 42:1-5

Here is my servant, whom I uphold, my chosen, in whom my soul delights; I have put my Spirit upon him; he will bring forth justice to the nations. He will not cry or lift up his voice, or make it heard in the street; a bruised reed he will not break, and a dimly burning wick he will not quench; he will faithfully bring forth justice. He will not grow faint or be crushed until he has established justice in the earth; and the coastlands wait for his teaching. Thus says God, the LORD, who created the heavens and stretched them out, who spread out the earth and what comes from it, who gives breath to the people upon it and spirit to those who walk in it.

Another messianic reference in Isaiah is the reference to the Servant (עַבְדֵּךְ) in Isaiah 42:1. This is a controversial passage since it is not clear if Isaiah is speaking of an individual or a nation. Claus Westermann explains the difficulty of this passage:

On three matters we are left in the dark. Who is the servant here designated by God for a task? What is the nature of the task? And in what context is the designation made? Exegesis must never ignore the limits thus put upon it. The cryptic, veiled language used is deliberate. This is true of every one of the servant songs alike.¹⁶

There is much evidence that Isaiah was referring to Israel, yet there are also reasons to see this passage speaking of a God-appointed individual. Westermann notes certain characteristics of this servant: 1) the description of the Spirit suggests a David-like leader.¹⁷ 2) the servant will bring justice,¹⁸ and 3) there is a hint of a call of a prophet.¹⁹ It is possible

¹⁶Claus Westermann. *Isaiah 40-66* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1969), 93.

¹⁷*Ibid.*, 94.

¹⁸*Ibid.*, 95.

¹⁹*Ibid.*, 96.

that this passage has both Israel and an individual in mind. As Geoffrey Grogan comments, “It may not be possible completely to identify the servant here with the nation, but we can certainly say that in him the servant mission of Israel finds perfect expression.”²⁰

There are a number of references in Jewish and Christian literature that demonstrate that this passage was understood as speaking of the Messiah. Isaiah 42:1 is referred to in the Testament of Benjamin 11:1 (Maccabean era) where the “beloved of the Lord” is described as appearing in the later times to enlighten all nations with new knowledge.²¹ Isaiah 42:1 is alluded to in 2 Baruch 70:10 (early second century C.E.) where the servant is identified with the Messiah who will pour out God’s wrath. Isaiah 42:1 is alluded to in the Martyrdom and Ascension of Isaiah 8:8 (second century C.E.) where the “Chosen One” is seen as an eschatological figure. In all of these passages, the Servant described in Isaiah 42:1 is an eschatological figure or Messiah who will appear in the end times. Although the Spirit is not mentioned, it is significant that an important passage regarding the outpouring of the Spirit such as Isaiah 42:1-5 is linked to the Messiah by early Jewish writers.

The use of this Isaiah passage is seen clearly in Matthew’s Gospel. In Matthew 3:16, the Spirit is described as descending upon and alighting on Jesus. This is followed by a statement that God is “well pleased” with Jesus, reminiscent of the words of acceptance found in Isaiah 42:1. Leon Morris comments that, “right at the beginning of his ministry Jesus was

²⁰Geoffrey Grogan, “Isaiah” *Expositor’s Bible Commentary* Vol. 6 (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1986), 254.

²¹This passage must be used with caution. It is unknown how much of the Greek text of the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs are Christian interpolations.

identified with both the Messiah and the Suffering Servant.”²² The same statement of approval is repeated at Jesus’ transfiguration in Matthew 17:5. In Matthew 12:18-21, the words of Isaiah 42:1-4 are quoted. In Matthew 12:17, Matthew claims that Isaiah 42:1-4 was fulfilled in the healing ministry of Jesus.

There are two rabbinic references to Isaiah 42:1-5 that interpret it eschatologically. Resh Lakish (second generation of Amoraim) uses Isaiah 42:5 in Genesis Rabbah 74:1 and 96:5 to show that Israel will be the first to experience the resurrection at the time of the Messiah. Here, Resh Lakish makes the link between the Spirit’s involvement in the resurrection and the Messiah. Isaiah 42:5 is quoted in b. Kethuboth 111a by R. Eleazer (third generation of Amoraim)²³ suggesting that the resurrection belongs to all of the inhabitants of Israel. While not mentioning the Messiah, R. Eleazer does link this passage to the eschatological time of the resurrection.

Isaiah 61:1-3

The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the LORD has anointed me; he has sent me to bring good news to the oppressed, to bind the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and release to the prisoners; to proclaim the year of the LORD’s favor, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn; to provide for those who mourn in Zion - to give them a garland instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, the mantle of praise instead of a faint spirit. They will be called oaks of righteousness, the planting of the LORD, to display his glory.

²²Leon Morris, *Gospel According to Matthew* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1992), 68.

²³Strack and Stemberger, *Introduction to the Talmud and Midrash*, 98.

Isaiah 61:1-3 is another messianic reference. The Servant has the Spirit because he is anointed (משח). Anointing refers to a commission to perform a specific task.²⁴ The language used produces a recollection of the anointing of David:

The juxtaposition of “Spirit” and “anoint” is bound to recall in Israel the old narrative of the authorization of David with the same two features: “Then Samuel took the horn of oil, and *anointed* him in the presence of his brothers; and the *Spirit* of the LORD came mightily upon David from that day forward” (1 Sam. 16:13, see 2 Sam. 23:1-2). As David was a massive *newness* in Israel, so now this speaker is to effect a deep social newness.²⁵

Thus this Servant was given a similar spiritual authorization as David to fulfill his task.

Although the Qumran material does not use this passage to refer to the Messiah, in the Thanksgiving Hymns it is possibly used to describe the experience of the Teacher of Righteousness (1QH 18.14-15).²⁶ Isaiah 61:1 is given an eschatological meaning in 11QMelchizedek 2.4. In the tenth epoch of history, the promise of Isaiah 61:1 will be fulfilled by a general amnesty of the pious in Israel.²⁷ While this does not give much information regarding the Spirit, it does show that the Qumran sectarians understood Isaiah 61:1 eschatologically.

According to Luke 4:18-19, this passage was read by Jesus in a synagogue in Nazareth. The quotation in Luke ends before the phrase: “and the day of the vengeance of our God.” focusing on the positive aspect of God’s intervention, rather than the negative

²⁴John D. Watts. *Isaiah 34-66* (Waco: Word, 1987), 302.

²⁵Walter Brueggemann. *Isaiah 40-66* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1998), 213.

²⁶According to Gaster’s numbering.

²⁷Hartmut Stegemann. *Library of Qumran* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 119.

aspect. Jesus identifies himself as the one anointed by the Spirit to preach good news. This may be the lens by which Luke interprets the rest of Jesus' ministry.

Summary

Passages in Isaiah which speak of the coming of the Spirit have been found to be linked to discussions regarding the Messiah. Although the original passages are not obviously messianic, it has been shown that there is a line of interpretation from Qumran, apocalyptic literature, New Testament, Talmud and Midrashim that links passages that speak of the Spirit with the Messiah. It must be noted that many of the Jewish interpretations of these passages do not focus on the Spirit. What is shown is that passages that speak of the coming Spirit were interpreted as taking place at the time of the Messiah even when the Spirit is not specifically mentioned in the allusion. However, there are enough allusions that include both the Messiah and the Spirit to show that there was a link between the two in Second Temple and rabbinic Judaism. It seems clear that Jewish interpreters understood the appearance of the Spirit as being somehow linked with the appearance of the Messiah.

The Spirit in Relation to Eschatology

Although there are no messianic references in Ezekiel's prophecies of the coming Spirit, there are some eschatological references. The promise of removing the heart of stone was often interpreted by the rabbis as being the removal of the evil inclination which is in every person. Sometimes this removal is described in eschatological terms.

Ezekiel 36:26-27

A new heart I will give you, and a new Spirit I will put within you; and I will remove from your body the heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. I will put my Spirit within you, and make you follow my statutes and be careful to observe my ordinances.

Ezekiel 36:26 is quoted in Numbers Rabbah 15:16 by R. Samuel b. Nahmani (third generation of Amoraim)²⁸ in describing God's removal of the evil inclination in the world to come. Ezekiel 36:26-27 is used in Numbers Rabbah 9:49 in speaking of God's future cleansing of Israel's sins. Ezekiel 36:26-27 is interpreted as the eschatological cleansing of sin in these rabbinic texts.

Ezekiel 37:14

I will put my Spirit within you, and you shall live, and I will place you on your own soil; then you shall know that I, the LORD, have spoken and will act, says the LORD.

In other texts, the rabbis linked Ezekiel's prophecies to the resurrection. According to R. Phinehas b. Jair (fourth generation of Tannaites)²⁹ in m. Sotah 9:15, "the Holy Spirit leads to the resurrection." R. Simeon b. Lakish (second generation of Amoraim) in Genesis Rabbah 96 uses Ezekiel 37:14 to illustrate how the inhabitants of Israel will experience the resurrection and how the righteous buried outside of Israel will be transported underground by God to Israel. R. Simon (third generation of Amoraim)³⁰ offers the same interpretation in Genesis Rabbah 96:5. Ezekiel 37:14 is used in Genesis Rabbah 14.8 to show that in the future, people will be given the gift of immortality. Exodus Rabbah 58:4 interprets Ezekiel 37:14 as teaching that the Spirit gives wisdom in this world but will give life in the world to come.

²⁸*Ibid.* 97.

²⁹*Ibid.* 86.

³⁰*Ibid.* 99.

Summary

While most of the rabbinic allusions to the Ezekiel passages discuss the evil inclination and resurrection more than the coming of the Spirit, these rabbinic texts are important in that they show that passages in Ezekiel that do speak of the outpouring of the Spirit were interpreted eschatologically. Some of the rabbinic passages dealing with the resurrection explicitly speak of the Spirit's role in the last days.

Spirit of Prophecy

As described in chapter one, Judaism did not know of a complete cessation of the Holy Spirit's activity. It was the Spirit of prophecy that was not experienced from the time of Malachi. While Isaiah and Ezekiel did not specifically speak of the prophetic Spirit, it can be seen from Jewish interpretations that the Spirit was understood to be the Spirit of prophecy.

1QH 18.14-15³¹ uses Isaiah 61:1 in describing the divine origin of the Teacher of Righteousness' speech. This may suggest that the Qumran community understood the Teacher as having the Spirit of prophecy. Targum Jonathan to Isaiah 61:1 specifies that it is the Spirit of prophecy that is on the Servant.

The Spirit's activity is described in Isaiah 11:2 as bringing wisdom, understanding, counsel, might, knowledge and the fear of the LORD. Some rabbis understood this as being the Spirit of prophecy. Isaiah 11:2 is quoted in Numbers Rabbah 10:5 to show that Baruch, son of Neriah attained the privilege of divine inspiration based on the common use of the word, 'rest.' This reasoning is repeated in Numbers Rabbah 13:11 and Ruth Rabbah 7:2.

³¹According to Gaster's numbering.

Isaiah 11:2 is used in Numbers Rabbah 14:10 to show that God sent prophets to the nations and to Israel, offering them the Torah. Isaiah 61:1 is used in Leviticus Rabbah 10:2 to show that the gift of prophecy comes from the mouth of God. Unfortunately, this anonymous midrashic material is likely to be fairly late.

Spirit in Ezekiel

I will give them one heart, and put a new Spirit within them; I will remove the heart of stone from their flesh and give them a heart of flesh. (Ezekiel 11:19)

Cast away from you all the transgressions that you have committed against me, and get yourselves a new heart and a new Spirit! Why will you die, O house of Israel? (Ezekiel 18:31)

In Ezekiel 11:9 and 18:31, the meaning of “spirit” is not immediately clear. The Lord promises to give the returning exiles one heart (לֵב) and one spirit (רוּחַ). The word רוּחַ can mean either God’s Spirit or the human spirit. The context does not clarify the meaning of רוּחַ in the first two prophecies. It may be used as a parallel for “heart” and refer to the attitude or disposition of the exiles. However, further development of this promise in Ezekiel 36:26-27 gives evidence of רוּחַ referring to the Holy Spirit.

A new heart I will give you, and a new Spirit I will put within you; and I will remove from your body the heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. I will put my Spirit within you, and make you follow my statutes and be careful to observe my ordinances. (Ezekiel 36:26-27)

The promise of giving a new Spirit is repeated, this time specifying that it is God’s Spirit.

Summary

Both Isaiah and Ezekiel expected the pouring out of the Spirit. Despite some ambiguous wording in some of Ezekiel’s prophecies, the Spirit that both prophets expected to appear was God’s Spirit. Later rabbinic interpretation of some of the passages from Isaiah

show that some Jewish interpreters saw this Spirit as being the prophetic Spirit. Despite the late date of the rabbinic material, it is likely that the Spirit was understood as linked to prophecy because of the close connection between the two concepts within Judaism.

Spirit Poured Out on the People

The coming of the Spirit is not described as a form of spiritual enlightenment attained by a special class of society. Throughout Isaiah and Ezekiel, the Spirit is said to be given to the people of God. According to Isaiah 32:15, it was to be the people who would have the Spirit and not just the king. The area of ministry of the Holy Spirit had been widened.³² This helps in identifying who Isaiah understood the Spirit as belonging to in the later passages.

*Isaiah 42:1-5*³³

The difficulty of identifying the Servant in Isaiah 42:1 has already been mentioned. There is evidence that the Servant was understood as the Messiah (2 Baruch 70:10). But there is also evidence that the Servant was understood as Israel. In Isaiah 41:8, Israel is spoken of as God's servant. Is there evidence for the Servant being interpreted as Israel within Second Temple Judaism? The Septuagint translation of Isaiah 44:1 specifies that Jacob is the servant and Israel is God's chosen. Theodor Gaster sees an allusion in 1QS 8.6 which speaks of the community council as true witnesses chosen by the will of God.³⁴ Hartmut Stegemann suggests that the theme of the collective body being described was

³²Grogan, "Isaiah", 207.

³³See page 32 for text.

³⁴Theodor H. Gaster, ed. *Dead Sea Scriptures* (Garden City: Doubleday, 1976), 575.

picked up from the Servant Songs and used in the War Scroll as seen in 4QM^a 11 1.11-18.³⁵ In this passage, the congregation is described as an individual. The sectarians saw prophecies that seem to speak of individuals as referring to the community. Therefore, the interpreters of Qumran would see the Servant who possesses the Spirit described by Isaiah as being the community. While some Pseudepigraphic references to the Servant interpret it as the Messiah, in the late first century C.E. Psalms of Solomon 12:6 and 17:21, the Servant of the Lord is identified with Israel.

Isaiah 44:1-5

But now hear, O Jacob my servant, Israel whom I have chosen! Thus says the LORD who made you, who formed you in the womb and will help you: Do not fear, O Jacob my servant, Jeshurun whom I have chosen. For I will pour water on a thirsty land, and streams on the dry ground; I will pour my Spirit upon your descendants, and my blessing on your offspring. They shall spring up like a green tamarisk, like willows by flowing streams. This one will say, "I am the LORD's," another will be called by the name of Jacob, yet another will write on the hand, "The LORD's," and adopt the name of Israel.

In Isaiah 44:1, the Servant is identified with Israel. The double title of "Servant" and "Chosen" is used as in Isaiah 42:1. This time the promise is not to place the Spirit on the Servant but to pour out the Spirit on the descendants of Israel. There is not much information on how this passage was interpreted in Second Temple Judaism. Theodor Gaster has seen an allusion to Isaiah 44:3 in the Qumran text of the Words of the Luminaries.³⁶ 4Q504 5.15 says "For you have poured your Holy Spirit upon us." This passage speaks of the blessing that God gave Israel as a witness to the nations in which the Jews were exiled. In the midst

³⁵Stegemann, *Library of Qumran*, 207.

³⁶Gaster, *Dead Sea Scriptures*, 575.

of suffering anguish, God calls and purifies a people. The Qumran sect interpreted themselves as the true Israel³⁷ and therefore the recipients of the divine promise and blessing.

The identification of the Servant with Israel is significant for understanding the relationship between the Spirit and the people of God. Isaiah describes the Servant as being closely linked to the Spirit. It is by the Spirit's power that the Servant is able to fulfill the will of God. If the Servant is identified as Israel in Second Temple Judaism, then it demonstrates that possession of the Spirit is an important factor in identifying the people of God.

Often the Spirit is described as being "poured out" upon the people. Isaiah proclaims that the crucial time for Israel is when "a spirit from on high is poured out (עֲרַה) on us" (Isaiah 32:15). In Isaiah 44:3 God promises to "pour" (צִק) the Spirit upon Israel's descendants. The same word is used in 4Q504 5.15 which says "For you have poured (צִק) your Holy Spirit upon us." The idea of "pouring" connotes abundance and power. Otto Kaiser describes the result of the Spirit's outpouring in Isaiah in this way:

The pouring out of the Spirit, an imparting of divine power which no opposing force can resist, is therefore a characteristic of the age of salvation. It brings about a miraculous increase in the vital force of Israel and bestows upon the people of God either obedience, without which there can be no salvation, or else a direct relationship to God such as the prophets possess.³⁸

Ezekiel also describes the Spirit as being "poured out" (שִׁפ) in Ezekiel 39:29, "And I will never again hide my face from them, when I pour out my Spirit upon the house of Israel, says

³⁷CD 4.2 states that the "priests are the converts of Israel." The "priests" may refer to the sectarians in general and not priests in the biblical sense. Geza Vermes, *Complete Dead Sea Scrolls in English* (New York: Penguin, 1997), 69.

³⁸Otto Kaiser, *Isaiah 13-39* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1974), 334.

the Lord God.” Ezekiel uses the same word that is used in Joel 2:28. Ezekiel 39:29 is listed in Lamentations Rabbah 2:8 as one of the four pourings of good recorded in Scripture. Two of the other pourings described in this section are Joel 2:28 and Joel 2:29. This interpretation is repeated in Lamentations Rabbah 4:14 where it is attributed to R. Judah ha-Nasi, suggesting that these verses were linked fairly early in the rabbinic period (second century C.E.). Other descriptions of the relationship of the Spirit to the people include “resting on” (Isaiah 11:1), “put upon” (Isaiah 42:1), “upon” (Isaiah 61:1), “put within” (Ezekiel 11:19, 36:26-27, 37:14) and “gotten” (Ezekiel 18:31). The language of receiving the Spirit suggests that more than a casual experience with the Holy Spirit is expected.

Summary

Although Isaiah primarily speaks of the Spirit being upon a royal figure, which was later interpreted as the Messiah, there is a secondary theme of the Spirit being upon the people. This is evident in the ambiguity of the title *Servant* and its possible interpretation as representing Israel. It can also be seen in texts from Isaiah that specify a general outpouring of the Spirit. Ezekiel follows Isaiah’s secondary theme of the Spirit being poured out on the people rather than the Messiah. Isaiah and Ezekiel seem to point to a time when Israel would possess the Holy Spirit. Later Jewish interpreters continued to stress the Spirit as belonging to the people of God. The Spirit was to come abundantly, often being described as an “outpouring.” It was in this widespread possession of the Spirit that the Jews saw hope in the midst of difficult circumstances as prophesied by Isaiah and Ezekiel. This general outpouring of the Spirit is further developed by Joel. Together, Isaiah, Ezekiel and Joel show

that there was an expectation within Second Temple Judaism that the Spirit would be poured out on the people.

Spirit and Obedience

*Isaiah 11:1-5*³⁹

An important concept for both Isaiah and Ezekiel with regard to the Spirit is obedience to God. One of the descriptions of the Spirit of the LORD in Isaiah 11:2 is the Spirit of the fear of the LORD. For emphasis, the concept of fear of the LORD is repeated in Isaiah 11:3 as the delight of the promised king. The theme of obedience within Isaiah 11:1-5 is found also in a rabbinic interpretation. Isaiah 11:2 is quoted by R. Simeon b. Lakish in Genesis Rabbah 2:4 in a discussion of the Spirit hovering over the waters at creation. This Spirit is identified as the Spirit of the Messiah as spoken of by Isaiah. The context of this discussion is an interpretation of Genesis 1:2 as representing the Spirit being withheld from a sinful people. Simeon states that the Spirit will only come with repentance, suggesting that a lack of obedience is accompanied by a lack of the Spirit. This rabbinic text demonstrates the view that there is an important relationship between the Spirit of God and the obedience of the people.

*Isaiah 42:1-5*⁴⁰

In Isaiah 42:1-5, the Servant of God is described as bringing justice (מִשְׁפָּט). There are a variety of opinions as to what is meant by justice. However, Westermann suggests that

³⁹See page 27 for text.

⁴⁰See page 32 for text.

it may refer to judgement against the gentile gods' claim to divinity.⁴¹ This is possible as seen in the subsequent section condemning idolatry and promising that the nations would worship the God of Israel (Isaiah 42:8-12). Isaiah 42:1 may be calling people to obedience in their worship of the true God. The importance of obedience is highlighted by the fact that Israel is described as God's Servant, a title that requires obedience.

*Ezekiel 11:19*⁴²

The series of prophecies in Ezekiel promising a new heart and Spirit stress the relationship between the Spirit and obedience. This promise continues throughout Ezekiel and appears to be a reworking of Jeremiah 32:39a where the Lord says, "I will give them one heart and one way." The concept of "heart" obedience is important in Jeremiah. In Jeremiah 31:33, Jeremiah prophesies about a new covenant where the law will be in people's hearts. It is possible that Ezekiel became familiar with Jeremiah's work during his exile in Egypt.⁴³ The idea of one heart suggests "singleness of mind and constancy of conduct"⁴⁴ and it is meant to contrast the idea of being two-hearted as described in Psalm 12:2. The result of this new heart and new Spirit is that the people will follow the Lord's statutes and ordinances. According to Leslie Allen, "What was needed was a transformation wrought by God, replacing unresponsiveness with a new compliance to the will of God."⁴⁵ Those that follow

⁴¹Westermann, *Isaiah 40-66*, 95.

⁴²See page 39 for text.

⁴³William H. Brownlee, *Ezekiel 1-19* (Waco: Word, 1986), 164.

⁴⁴Moshe Greenberg, *Ezekiel 1-20* (Garden City: Doubleday, 1983), 190.

⁴⁵Leslie C. Allen, *Ezekiel 1-19* (Dallas: Word, 1994), 165.

God's law as the result of this new heart and Spirit will be known as God's people (Ezekiel 11:20).

*Ezekiel 18:31*⁴⁶

The concept of the new heart and Spirit is developed in each prophecy. Ezekiel 18:31 repeats the need for a new heart and Spirit found in Ezekiel 11:19. Previously the new heart and Spirit were promised to give hope to returning exiles. In this passage, the heart and Spirit are not so much gifts but objects that the people are commanded to get for themselves. The heart is now described as "new" (חדש) rather than "one" (אחד). The new heart and Spirit are described as accompanying repentance. They mark the people who will be righteous in God's sight.

*Ezekiel 36:26-27*⁴⁷

This theme was further developed in Ezekiel 36:26-27. In this passage, Ezekiel identifies the Spirit as God's Spirit, "I will put my Spirit within you." It was understood as God's Spirit in rabbinic times as is seen by Targum Jonathan's use of *Holy* Spirit in this passage. Ezekiel describes the result of this new Spirit as obedience to God's laws. Obedience is not seen as a human action but a response to a divine action. Ezekiel goes beyond other prophecies of a new covenant (e.g. Jeremiah) and allows God to participate in humanity's new obedience.⁴⁸

⁴⁶See page 39 for text.

⁴⁷See page 36 for text.

⁴⁸Walther Zimmerli, *Ezekiel 2* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1983), 249.

Ezekiel 36:26 is mentioned in b. Sukkah 52a by R. Awira or R. Joshua b. Levy (first generation of Amoraim)⁴⁹, where “Stone” is listed as one of the seven names of the evil inclination. Ezekiel 36:26-27 is mentioned in b. Sukkah 52b by R. Johanan (second generation of Amoraim)⁵⁰ and R. Papa (fifth generation of Amoraim)⁵¹ in discussing God’s responsibility for the sins of the people. R. Levi (third generation of Amoraim)⁵² taught in Song of Songs Rabbah 6:11.1 that both the Torah and the evil inclination are described as stones. According to R. Levi, one stone is meant to guard against the other stone. Ezekiel 36:26-27 is quoted in b. Berakoth 32a by R. Hama⁵³ in arguing that God is responsible for the evil impulse in humans. Ezekiel 36:26 is quoted in Rabbah Exodus 15:6 in describing God’s annual pardon of Israel’s iniquities and renewal of their hearts in response to penitence. This idea is repeated in Numbers Rabbah 17:6. Song of Songs Rabbah 1:2.4 and Ecclesiastes Rabbah 9:15.8. Ezekiel 36:26 is used in Deuteronomy Rabbah 6:14 with the usual reference to the eventual removal of the evil inclination. However, this passage links the removal of the evil impulse with the return of the Divine Presence as described in Joel 2:28. In Ecclesiastes Rabbah 1:16.1. Ezekiel 36:26 is used in a list of attributes of the heart, describing the heart as a stone.

⁴⁹Strack and Stemberger, *Introduction to the Talmud and Midrash*, 92.

⁵⁰*Ibid*, 94.

⁵¹*Ibid*, 106-107.

⁵²Strack and Stemberger, *Introduction to the Talmud and Midrash*, 97.

⁵³This attribution can refer to a number of rabbis from the first generation of Amoraim to the fifth generation of Amoraim, no more specific identification is possible.

The majority of rabbinic texts interpreted the Ezekiel prophecies as referring to the evil inclination. The rabbis saw the Ezekiel passages as referring to a time when obedience would be possible through divine intervention. Although most rabbis do not make the connection between obedience in Ezekiel and the coming Spirit, Deuteronomy Rabbah 6:14 specifically links the possibility of obedience with the outpouring of the Spirit described in Joel. It is unknown if earlier rabbinic interpreters understood the Spirit as being the means by which the evil impulse was removed. All that is clear is that many rabbis understood passages in Ezekiel that speak of God giving a new Spirit as being about the struggle for obedience.

Summary

Since both the prophets and the later Jewish interpreters saw the exile and the rest of Israel's troubles as being the result of disobedience, it is expected that the appearance of the Spirit would be understood as reversing this situation. In particular, the passages from Ezekiel were understood as the ultimate end of the evil impulse which would finally make full obedience to God possible. While not all of the passages speak specifically of the Spirit, the rabbis did interpret Ezekiel's prophecies concerning the Spirit as referring to obedience. At least one rabbinic reference (Deuteronomy Rabbah 6:14) to Ezekiel 36:26 makes the connection between the Spirit and obedience. The people of God are expected to be obedient. Obedience can occur only with the Spirit's assistance. In addition, Genesis Rabbah 2:4 interprets Isaiah 11:2 as teaching that the Spirit can only appear with repentance. The theme of obedience appears both in Isaiah and Ezekiel's prophecies concerning the pouring

out of the Spirit. The theme of the Spirit and obedience also appears at Qumran.⁵⁴ The Spirit which brings obedience is important in identifying the people of God.

Spirit of Redemption

*Isaiah 11:1-5*⁵⁵

The prophecy in Isaiah 11:1-5 appears in the midst of a series of salvation oracles that follow the description of Isaiah's call and precede the oracles condemning the nations that have oppressed Israel and Judah. In chapter 11, Isaiah gives more detail about the promised leader. This leader is described as a shoot from the stump of Jesse. The use of "stump" (עץ) clearly brings the image of the hopelessness of the situation by describing the Davidic dynasty as "a terminated plant from which nothing can grow."⁵⁶ The situation is so bleak that the contemporary state of the dynasty cannot even be described with David's name but must use the father's name. In the midst of this despair appears a shoot (צמח). The promise of the Spirit-anointed king seems to be a promise of redemption of the troubled Davidic dynasty.

Isaiah 32:15

Until a Spirit from on high is poured out on us, and the wilderness becomes a fruitful field, and the fruitful field is deemed a forest.

Isaiah 32:15 appears in a section of Isaiah that deals with divine intervention as the only salvation of Israel. The Lord is Israel's ultimate deliverance and trusting in the nations will not profit. But deliverance will come only after a time of calamity. Isaiah 32:14

⁵⁴Sekki, *Meaning of Ruah at Qumran*, 80.

⁵⁵See page 27 for text.

⁵⁶Walter Brueggemann, *Isaiah 1-39* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1998), 99.

describes the state of Israel before God's intervention: "For the palace will be forsaken, the populous city deserted; the hill and the watchtower will become dens forever, the joy of wild asses, a pasture for flocks." Yet there will be a change. Isaiah 32:18 says that "My people will abide in a peaceful habitation, in secure dwellings, and in quiet resting places." What caused the change? The answer is found in Isaiah 32:15, where Isaiah describes the Spirit as coming upon the people.

That the pouring out of the Spirit is the key to the change of Israel's situations is seen in the use of the preposition, עַד ("until"). Calamity would reign until the Spirit had been poured out. The result of the Spirit's outpouring is described in terms of agricultural renewal. This result can be extended to personal renewal as is seen in the description of righteousness and justice coming forth from the Spirit's appearance. According to Oswalt, "If God's people were ever to share his character, an outcome devoutly to be hoped for, then it would have to come about through an infusion of God's Spirit into human beings."⁵⁷

The rabbis interpreted this passage in terms of redemption. It appears in Lamentations Rabbah 1:23 in a section where Isaiah's prophecies of healing are contrasted with Jeremiah's prophecies of condemnation. Isaiah 32:15 is contrasted with Lamentations 1:12: "Let it not come unto you, all ye that pass by." The rabbis saw Isaiah's prophecy as bringing redemption in the midst of suffering and therefore hope to Israel.

⁵⁷Oswalt, *Book of Isaiah Chapters 1-39*, 587.

*Isaiah 61:1-3*⁵⁸

The theme of redemption is found also in Isaiah 61:1-3. The task of the Servant in Isaiah 61:1-3 was to preach the good news (ἄγγελλον/εὐαγγελίσασθαι) to those in need. The recipients of the Servant's proclamation are the oppressed, the broken-hearted, the captives, the prisoners and those who mourn. According to Brueggemann, all the actions of the Servant are "powerful ministries to the weak, the powerless, and the marginalized to restore them to full function in a community of well-being and joy."⁵⁹

*Ezekiel 36:26-27*⁶⁰

Many of the passages concerning the Spirit in Ezekiel are found in the context of prophecies concerning the return of the Jews to the promised land. Ezekiel 36:26-27 is part of an oracle that speaks of the restoration of Israel. Israel had been punished for its unfaithfulness, but God will regather his people. The regathering of God's people will not be because of Israel's righteousness but in order to glorify God's name in the sight of the nations.

*Ezekiel 37:14*⁶¹

Ezekiel 37:14 comes at the conclusion of the vision of the dry bones in which Ezekiel witnesses breath (רוח) being put into lifeless bones. This verse belongs to the explanation of the vision where the bones are identified with Israel. This passage speaks of the return of

⁵⁸See page 34 for text.

⁵⁹*Ibid.*

⁶⁰See page 36 for text.

⁶¹See page 37 for text.

the Jews to the promised land and precedes a passage speaking of the union of Israel and Judah. As in Ezekiel 36:27, the Spirit that will be given to the people is identified as God's Spirit. The Spirit that is promised will bring life. Just as the bones came together with new life, Israel will rise with spiritual life. The prophetic Spirit will bring with it hope for the people of God.⁶² Israel's hope is closely connected with the promised land. When the Spirit comes, Israel will be in their proper place: the land of Israel. All of this will be a witness to what God has spoken. God will have proved himself in word and deed. Originally, it seems that Ezekiel was speaking of the return of the Jews from exile. However, rabbinic writings interpret this passage eschatologically. The rabbis saw this passage as referring to the preferred treatment of those who dwell in Israel at the time of the resurrection, similar to their interpretation of Isaiah 42:5. The Spirit was seen by the rabbis as the means by which the resurrection took place. The Spirit is interpreted as the bringer of life.

Summary

Prophecies of the return of the Spirit in Isaiah and Ezekiel are closely connected to the theme of redemption. This makes sense since these prophecies were meant to bring hope to people in despair. This redemption is described or interpreted in a number of ways: renewal of the Davidic dynasty, safe habitation, agricultural renewal, return to righteousness and justice, restoration of Israel and even the eschatological resurrection. What is clear is that the Spirit would take what was sick and bring health, what was dead and bring life. The people of God are those who have experienced redemption through the Spirit's work, whether through a Spirit-anointed king or a general outpouring.

⁶²Leslie C. Allen, *Ezekiel 20-48* (Dallas: Word, 1990), 187.

Spirit of Justice and Reconciliation

*Isaiah 11:1-5*⁶³

Another theme of the Spirit's outpouring in Isaiah is the appearance of justice and reconciliation for the people of God. Isaiah 11:1-5 speaks of the promise of a Spirit-anointed king. Yet Israel's hope was not based on the Spirit's effect on the king but the effect of a Spirit-anointed king on society. Isaiah continues by describing what the community led by this king would be like: "The wolf shall live with the lamb, the leopard shall lie down with the kid, the calf and the lion and the fatling together, and a little child shall lead them" (Isaiah 11:6). There have always been leaders. But when the leader with the Spirit comes, all the old distinctions fall away. Those that were enemies will become friends. Those that lived in fear, will live in love. This can happen only through a righteous king. According to Brueggemann, "The poetry here taps into a deep and primal conviction, known throughout the ancient Near East generally and in Israel, that the royal government is *The Equalizer*, to intervene on behalf of the poor and the vulnerable (widows and orphans) who are unable to supply their own social leverage."⁶⁴ Isaiah makes it clear that the difference between this type of government and the wicked rulers that Israel and Judah had been experiencing is the presence of a king like David, a king with the Spirit of the LORD upon him.

⁶³See page 27 for text.

⁶⁴Brueggemann, *Isaiah 1-39*, 100.

*Isaiah 42:1-5*⁶⁵

The role of this Spirit-filled servant in Isaiah 42:1-5 is to bring justice. What is the meaning of justice in this context? It may mean the end of unfair rule and the coming of social justice. Brueggemann defines “justice” in this way: “The characteristic notion of justice, rooted in Mosaic tradition and explicated in prophetic utterance, is the reordering of social life and social power so that the weak (widows and orphans) may live a life of dignity, security and well-being.”⁶⁶ Targum Jonathan to Isaiah specifies that the bruised reed and the dimly burning wick are the “poor and the needy.” Social justice is an important theme in Isaiah as is seen in the condemnation of Israel’s worship based on their abuse of the helpless (Isaiah 1:12-17). While justice may refer to judgement against idolatry as previously discussed, the concept of social justice is prominent. It is likely that both are meant. For Isaiah, the concepts of social justice and the worship of the true God are inseparable.

*Isaiah 61:1-3*⁶⁷

Isaiah 61:1-3 describes the recipients of the Servant’s good news as being the oppressed, the brokenhearted, captives, prisoners and those who mourn. The message of the one anointed by the Spirit is that those who suffered on the fringes of society would receive salvation from God. This passage continues the relationship seen elsewhere in Isaiah between the presence of the Spirit and the presence of justice.

⁶⁵See page 32 for text.

⁶⁶Brueggemann, *Isaiah 40-66*, 42.

⁶⁷See page 34 for text.

The significance of Isaiah 42:1-5 and 61:1-3 is that Isaiah seems to be speaking of the same group of people as Joel does in Joel 2:28-29. The wording is different but the implication is the same. Isaiah speaks of those who have been refused justice: the bruised reed, the dimly burning wick, the oppressed, the brokenhearted, the captives and the prisoners. Joel speaks of the coming of God's blessing to every member of society: male and female, old and young, slave and free. Isaiah and Joel are referring to the same theme: with the return of the Spirit, the marginalized of society will fully participate in God's blessing. However, there is a difference in how this will be accomplished. For Joel, it is the coming of the Spirit upon all people that will change society. For Isaiah, it is the coming of a Spirit-anointed king that will bring justice. This is Isaiah's primary theme regarding the coming of the Spirit. While the differences between Joel and Isaiah are significant, it is important to note that both Joel and Isaiah see the outpouring of the Spirit as being vital for the integration of the marginalized of society.

The Spirit and the Gentiles

There is some evidence that there was a connection between the Spirit and the conversion of the gentiles. An example is Isaiah 42:4. Whereas the MT for Isaiah 42:4 says simply that "the coastlands await his (the Servant's) teaching", the LXX specifies that "in his name shall the gentiles trust." According to Westermann:

The gentiles are already waiting and looking for the divine justice which the Servant is to bring forth. ... The sense is therefore that among the Gentiles the Servant's gospel finds an expectancy to that which greeted Deutero-Isaiah's message to Israel, e.g. in the exile.⁶⁸

⁶⁸Westermann, *Isaiah 40-66*, 96-97.

Whether the Servant is Israel or the Messiah, the presence of the Spirit was expected to have an effect on the gentiles. While it is justice of the Spirit-anointed king that gives hope to the gentiles, it the Spirit which is upon the king which enables the king to rule with justice. This Spirit-anointed king is contrasted to the Spiritless kings which have not brought justice. In the era of the Spiritless kings, the gentiles have no hope. It is the presence of the Spirit in Israel's leadership which brings the justice that will benefit the gentiles.

The result of the coming Spirit in Isaiah 44:1-5 is that there will be a people who will belong to the Lord and will adopt the name of Israel. There is some controversy over the identity of these people who will adopt the name of Israel. D. W. Van Winkle rejects the idea that this refers to the conversion of gentiles. Van Winkle suggests that this refers to the spiritual return of Hebrews who had adopted pagan culture and religion.⁶⁹ Yet others see a reference to a gentile conversion. Westermann believes that this refers to the conversion of foreigners to the religion of Israel. Westermann sees this as significant because:

This represents the breakthrough to a new understanding of the chosen people as the community which confesses Yahweh. ... Now, for this new view of God's people, the terms in which the prophet makes foreigners who join the community of Israel declare their membership of it are of special importance: 'who says ... who calls himself ... who writes on his hand.' These verbs all denote avowal of the God of Israel on the basis of a personal decision.⁷⁰

Paul Hanson sees the presence of the Spirit as representing a new creation:

Second Isaiah dared to imagine a new world by drawing on the power of the story of creation. God was not limited to historical acts such as the exodus, in which a specific group of slaves were free from bondage. God the Redeemer was at the same time God the Creator. What Second Isaiah dared

⁶⁹D. W. Van Winkle, "Proselytes in Isaiah XL-LV?" *Vetus Testamentum* XLVII: 357.

⁷⁰Westermann, *Isaiah 40-66*, 137.

to imagine was not only a second exodus, in which exiled Israel would return to its homeland, but a second creation, in which a languishing and divided humanity would be revived by receiving the spirit that originally brought life out of dust.⁷¹

The language of Isaiah seems to suggest that the presence of the Spirit would bring together a new people who would now be known as Israel and would worship Yahweh. There is rabbinic evidence that some interpreted this passage as referring to proselytes. Numbers Rabbah 8:2 interprets Isaiah 44:5 as describing the four classes of devotees who will stand before God: those wholly devoted to God, righteous proselytes, the penitent and God-fearers.

Summary

The Spirit's coming is not simply for the elite of Israel. In fact, one of the Spirit's key roles is to bring together segments of society that would not normally interact. Those that were marginalized would be brought into a place of influence. There is even some evidence that suggest the possibility of the inclusion of the gentiles. This evidence includes the wording of Isaiah 44:1-5, the interpretation of Isaiah 44:5 in Numbers Rabbah 8:2 as speaking of proselytes, and the LXX translation of "coastlands" as "gentiles" in Isaiah 42:4. While it is unlikely that Jewish interpreters saw hope for the gentiles outside of conversion to Judaism (unlike the New Testament), there were expectations that the gentiles would be included among God's people. The people of God would no longer be dependent on society's standards but on the possession of the Holy Spirit. Here we see some of the themes that reappear in Joel and in the New Testament. Barriers that normally separate the people of God can no longer exist with the pouring out of the Spirit. The Spirit's activity, whether through

⁷¹Paul D. Hanson, *Isaiah 40-66* (Louisville: John Knox, 1995), 83-84.

a Spirit-anointed king or an outpouring on the people, gathers the different groups that make up the people of God. Joel continues this theme, focusing on the Spirit's coming upon the people rather than a king. As we look ahead, we will see that Joel speaks of the breaking down of social barriers, which as interpreted by Luke, fulfills the expectation of the inclusion of the gentiles in the people of God.

Conclusion

Isaiah and Ezekiel both prophesied about the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. These prophecies were taken up and reused by Jewish interpreters. By examining the original prophecies and how they were understood, certain themes arise that were expected to appear with the Spirit's outpouring. The Spirit was linked to the appearance of the Messiah. There was also an understanding of the role of the Spirit in the resurrection. Both interpretations demonstrate the eschatological nature of the appearance of the Spirit. Some Jewish interpreters saw the prophecies of Isaiah as speaking of the pouring out of the prophetic Spirit. The Spirit was understood as being poured out abundantly upon all people. The Spirit's appearance was expected to have a significant impact on society. Isaiah understood the role of the Spirit primarily in terms of a Spirit-anointed king, although there are some references to the Spirit being given to the people. The Spirit would benefit the people but this takes place chiefly through the Spirit's influence on the king. The Spirit would bring obedience to a people who had long been plagued with disobedience. Even the evil impulse that is within every human would not be able to resist the Spirit. The Spirit would enable the people of God to finally be obedient. The Spirit would also bring redemption. The Spirit would take all that was corrupt and bring healing. This would be epitomized in the Spirit's

role in the resurrection. Finally, the Spirit would bring justice and reconciliation. The Spirit would reconcile segments of society that had been divided. There was even hope that the gentiles would participate in the Spirit's blessing. The people of God are closely linked to the Spirit by both Isaiah and Ezekiel. Relationships to God and to other people are strongly influenced by the Spirit's presence. It is only the Spirit's presence that allows Israel to be the people God wants them to be. This theme is continued in Joel as we will observe in the next chapter.

CHAPTER THREE

THE OUTPOURING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT AS PROPHESED IN JOEL

Introduction

In Christian circles, the best known prophecy of the return of the Spirit is Joel 2:28-32.¹

Then afterward I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, and your young men shall see visions. Even on the male and female slaves, in those days, I will pour out my Spirit. I will show portents in the heavens and on the earth, blood and fire and columns of smoke. The sun shall be turned to darkness, and the moon to blood, before the great and terrible day of the LORD comes. Then everyone who calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved; for in Mount Zion and in Jerusalem there shall be those who escape, as the LORD said, and among the survivors shall be those whom the LORD calls.

To a large extent, this knowledge of Joel's prophecy is due to Luke's quotation of this passage in Peter's sermon in Acts 2:17-21. While the use of this prophecy in the New Testament is the purpose of this study, an examination of Joel's prophecy outside of the New Testament is crucial. This will be done through exegesis of Joel 2:28-32 and an investigation of how this passage was interpreted in Jewish literature.

Context

The first part of Joel deals with a destructive plague of locusts (Joel 1:1-20). There is some uncertainty as to whether these are literal locusts, allegorical locusts or literal locusts in the first part and allegorical locusts in the second part. For the purpose of understanding

¹The verse numbers based on the LXX and found in most translations will be used.

the prophecy of Joel 2:28-32, all that is important is that Joel is describing a community that is experiencing devastation or at least the fear of devastation. This destruction is seen as foreshadowing the Day of the Lord (Joel 2:1-11). The Day of the Lord is a complex theme running through a variety of the minor prophets. The main characteristic of the Day of the Lord seems to be God's judgement on injustice. In the face of God's judgement, there is a call to repentance (Joel 2:12-17). If God's people would turn back to him, God would have mercy on them in this time of trial. Joel promises that God would respond to their calls for mercy (Joel 2:18-27). God would provide material blessings, undoing the damage of the locusts. But there would be more than material blessings. In these last days, God would pour out his Spirit and bless his people in new ways. This prophecy takes place in the context of a people who are afraid and who are being encouraged to turn back to God by exhortations of avoiding evil and receiving the blessings of God.

Outline

- I. God's Inclusive Gift of the Spirit (2:28-29)
 - a. The Prophetic Spirit on All Flesh: Breaking Down Gender and Age Barriers (2:28)
 - b. The Prophetic Spirit on All Flesh: Breaking Down Economic and Social Barriers (2:29)

- II. Natural Signs of the Day of the Lord (2:30-31)
 - a. Signs in the Heavens and the Earth (2:30)
 - b. Signs in the Sun and the Moon (2:31)

- III. Salvation of the Called who Call (2:32)

Exegesis

I. God's Inclusive Gift of the Spirit (2:28-29)

a. The Prophetic Spirit on All Flesh: Breaking Down Gender and Age Barriers (2:28)

“Then afterward I will pour out my spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, and your young men shall see visions.”

The phrase אַחֲרַיִּכֶן (“after this”) originally did not necessarily refer to the “end times” but likely explained when this oracle fit into the rest of the prophecy.² Douglas Stuart shows that this refers to the call to repentance in 2:12-17: “Once this true restoration of covenant relationship has been achieved and the people have fully turned back to Yahweh, he can bless them with a renewal of his favor, manifested particularly by his own Spirit being given to them in abundance.”³ Hans Walter Wolff suggests that this presupposes that the preceding assurance oracles had already been fulfilled.⁴

However, as this passage was interpreted in Jewish literature, it came to take on eschatological meaning. In the Testament of Judah 24 (Maccabean era)⁵, there is a collage of messianic expectations from the Old Testament.⁶ In the Testament of Judah 24:2-3 the language of Joel 2:28 is used to describe the activity of pouring out the Spirit by a messianic

²David Allen Hubbard, *Joel & Amos* (Downers Grove: Inter-Varsity Press, 1989), 68.

³Douglas Stuart, *Hosea-Jonah* (Waco: Word, 1987), 260.

⁴Hans Walter Wolff, *Joel and Amos* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1977), 65.

⁵Kee, “Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs”, 778.

⁶This passage must be used with caution. It is unknown how much of the Greek text of the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs are Christian interpolations.

figure later described as the “Shoot of God.” The activity of this Messiah is described in this way:

And the heavens will be opened upon him to pour out the spirit as a blessing of the Holy Father. And you he will pour out the spirit of grace on you. And you shall be sons in truth, and you shall walk in his first and final decrees.

Although the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs are known to have Christian interpolations, there is no evidence of Christian additions in this passage. This passage seems to be a collage of Old Testament passages referring to the Spirit. H. C. Kee comments on this passage by saying: “The outpouring of the Spirit is linked with the advent of the ideal king (Isa 11:2), to the coming of the messenger bringing good news to the oppressed (Isa 61:11), and to the eschatological effusion of all humanity (Joel 3:1 in Heb.)”⁷ The author of the Testament of Judah seemed to see the outpouring of the Spirit described by Joel as being in the messianic age. Sibylline Oracles 3:796-804, dated 163-45 B.C.E.,⁸ also interprets this passage of Joel as referring to the last days. Numbers Rabbah 15:25 describes this time as the “World to Come” and Ecclesiastes Rabbah 2:8.1 describes this time as the “messianic future.”⁹ Some of this eschatological interpretation may be linked to the celestial signs described in Joel 2:31.

God is described as taking the action of “pouring” (פָּסַח). The word “pour” is used to describe God’s generosity. God will not give out small portions of his Spirit but will pour it out as one empties a container of water. Wolff sees a connotation of “an unreserved

⁷*Ibid.* 801 note.

⁸J. J. Collins, “Sibylline Oracles” *Old Testament Pseudepigrapha* Vol. 1 (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1983), 355.

⁹Rabbinic attribution for these passages is not known.

unburdening of confidences, an open sharing of one's thinking and willing, one's feeling and insight."¹⁰ There is a similar statement made in Ezekiel 39:29 which says: "and I will never again hide my face from them, when I pour out my spirit upon the house of Israel, says the Lord God."¹¹ This connection between Ezekiel 39:29 and Joel 2:28 can be seen by the fact that Ezekiel 39:29 is listed along with Joel 2:28 and Joel 2:29 in Lamentations Rabbah 2:8 and 4:14 as one of the four pourings of good recorded in Scripture. Both passages use the word **שפך** to describe the pouring.

That which will be poured out is God's **רוח** ("Spirit"). In the previous oracle (Joel 2:18-27), God promised to bless his people with material blessings. Soil and pastures will be fruitful, rain will be given and food will be plentiful. Joel then goes on to describe the spiritual blessings that God will give. These blessings come from the reception of God's **רוח**. Targum Jonathan to Joel specifies that it is the *Holy* Spirit that is poured out. David Hubbard describes God's **רוח** as being "God's own power and vitality."¹² Allen defines God's **רוח** as "God in relation to mankind, communicating himself to his creatures."¹³ The Spirit can be seen as the second and fuller blessing which follows the material blessings.¹⁴ Hubbard sees the two stages but objects to the distinction between material and spiritual:

¹⁰Wolff, *Joel and Amos*. 66.

¹¹Leslie C. Allen. *Books of Joel, Obadiah, Jonah, and Micah* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1976), 98.

¹²Hubbard, *Joel & Amos*. 68.

¹³Allen, *Books of Joel, Obadiah, Jonah, and Micah*, 98.

¹⁴*Ibid.* 97-98.

The difference between the two stages is not that the first is material and the second spiritual but that the first is restoration of old damage and the second is the inauguration of a new era in God's dealings with his people. The distinction between material and spiritual blessings makes little sense in a context where the material blessings are themselves signs of spiritual renewal and evidence that true repentance has taken place.¹⁵

As Hubbard points out, the second stage of God's blessing is a new era of communication between God and the people. The promise is that God's presence will be manifest in a special way. The rabbis understood this passage as referring to the return of the Divine presence. Joel 2:28 is linked to Ezekiel 36:26 in Deuteronomy Rabbah 6:14. In this passage, the rabbis teach that once the evil inclination is removed from the people, the Divine presence can return. The rabbis hoped that once the problem of sin was dealt with that God's presence would be made known. While this rabbinic passage is probably very late, the text of Joel does promise the return of God's presence after a time of repentance (Joel 2:18-19).

There is a possible allusion to Joel 2:28 in the Rule of the Community from Qumran. 1QS 4.21 speaks of God cleansing people from evil with the spirit of holiness. The Spirit of truth is described as being sprinkled or shed upon God's people. This statement takes place in the section on the two spirits (1QS 3.13-4.26). The author seems to take up the language of Joel to describe the end of the war between the two spirits when those chosen by God enter into the everlasting covenant. In the Words of the Luminaries (4Q504 5.15), the Spirit is described as being poured out upon the people although a different Hebrew word is used to describe the pouring. The Qumran community saw itself as having received the Spirit and

¹⁵Hubbard, *Joel & Amos*, 68.

the blessings that accompany it. Possession of the Spirit at the time of entering the covenant, marked the Qumran sectarians as God's people.

In Joel, God's Spirit is said to be poured out on כָּל-בָּשָׂר ("all flesh"). While this term can be used for all of humanity, in this case it refers to everybody in Israel as is shown by the negative statements made about the nations starting at Joel 3:1.¹⁶ Joel uses poetic parallelism to illustrate the inclusiveness of כָּל-בָּשָׂר. It will be the sons and daughters of Israel who will begin to prophesy. Wolff understands this primarily as a reference to a future generation.¹⁷ James Crenshaw sees "sons and daughters" (he translates as "boys and girls") in 2:28b as referring to a youthful generation.¹⁸

The sons and daughters will נִנְּאוּ ("prophesy"). Wolff sees this as not so much prophetic expression as the existence of prophets.¹⁹ For Wolff, it is the identity of God's people as prophets that is important and not the act of prophesying itself. Wolff's separation of prophets and prophesying seems artificial. The description of the types of activity seem to indicate that prophetic expression was important for Joel. The rabbis saw both the existence of prophets and prophetic expression to be important. R. Tanhuma (fifth generation

¹⁶Wolff, *Joel and Amos*, 67.

¹⁷*Ibid.*

¹⁸James L. Crenshaw, *Joel* (New York: Doubleday, 1995), 165.

¹⁹Wolff, *Joel and Amos*, 66.

of Amoraim)²⁰ quotes Joel 2:28 in Numbers Rabbah 15:25 to prove that “In this world only a few individuals have prophesied, but in the World to Come all Israel will be made prophets.”

Joel 2:28 is a fulfillment of Moses’ wish that all God’s people would prophesy, recorded in Numbers 11.29. There are textual differences between Joel 2:28 and Numbers 11:29. Joel has כָּל בָּשָׂר (“all flesh”) instead of Moses’ כָּל עַם (“all people”). Joel uses the verb וַיִּנְבְּאוּ (“and they will prophesy”) while Moses uses the noun נְבִיאִים (“prophets”). Still, both passages speak of a general giving of רוּחַ to the people that will result in widespread prophesying. The theme of both passages is the same. Both hope for a time when all people will possess the prophetic Spirit.

Joel continues by describing the חֲלֻמֹת (“dreams”) of the old men and חֲזִינֹת (“visions”) of the young men. Hubbard sees a difference between a dream and a vision in that a dreamer is usually asleep while a visionary is usually awake during revelation.²¹ Crenshaw believes that the three verbs for prophetic activity are used synonymously.²² There is no hint of a negative attitude towards revelatory dreams as there is in some other prophetic writings (e.g. Jeremiah 23:25).²³ The point is that “whether ecstatic prophecy, dreams, or visions, the same direct access to YHWH is assumed.”²⁴ There are two emphases found in these

²⁰Strack & Stemberger, *Introduction to the Talmud and Midrash*, 106.

²¹Hubbard, *Joel & Amos*, 70.

²²Crenshaw, *Joel*, 166.

²³*Ibid.*, 165.

²⁴*Ibid.*

promises: the fullness of the Spirit and the democratization of the Spirit.²⁵ The poetic expansion of the Spirit being poured out on all flesh emphasizes the coming inclusiveness of the Spirit.

b. The Prophetic Spirit on All Flesh: Breaking Down Economic and Social Barriers (2:29)

“Even on the male and female slaves, in those days, I will pour out my spirit”

Joel continues to elaborate on what “all flesh” means by describing the reception of God’s Spirit by male and female servants. Both male and female servants are mentioned to emphasize the lack of gender exclusiveness in God’s gift of his Spirit. But Joel goes beyond the gender issue and breaks down economic and social barriers as well. Those of the servant class would be included in the outpouring of the Spirit. Allen sees a possible ethnic inclusiveness: “*Even slaves*, who though they might be of foreign origin were counted as part of the religious community and took part in Israel’s festivals, were to be included.”²⁶ There is rabbinic support for this idea of possible ethnic inclusivity. In *Ecclesiastes Rabbah* 2:8.1²⁷ the phrase “male and female slaves” from Joel 2:29 is interpreted as referring to the gentile nations. In the messianic future, the gentiles will become servants of Israel. While servanthood seems to contradict the idea of equality, it is significant that there is rabbinic support for gentiles being included among those who would receive the Spirit. What is important is that in spiritual terms, natural social distinctions would not be relevant.²⁸ Wolff

²⁵Stuart, *Hosea-Jonah*, 260.

²⁶Allen, *Books of Joel, Obadiah, Jonah, and Micah*, 99.

²⁷Rabbinic attribution for this passage is not known.

²⁸Allen, *Books of Joel, Obadiah, Jonah, and Micah*, 99.

calls this a “social revolution.” Although the Torah provided for slaves, this outpouring of the Spirit would fully integrate them into the community.²⁹ In the words of Douglas Stuart, “no societal restrictions [are] able to limit the power of God to give himself to his people.”³⁰

The phrase **אֶשְׂפּוֹךְ אֶת־רוּחִי** (“I will pour out my Spirit”) found in Joel 2:28 and 2:29, creates an envelope structure which provides poetic symmetry as well as emphasizing God’s promise.³¹ The use of the pouring image at the beginning of Joel 2:28 and at the end of Joel 2:29, reinforces the idea that the outpouring of the Spirit is the crucial event for the people of God. The pouring out of the Spirit by God and the receiving of that Spirit by Israel are necessary for Israel to survive the great Day of the Lord which is coming.³²

II. Natural Signs of the Day of the Lord (2:30-31)

a. Signs in the Heavens and the Earth (2:30)

“I will show portents in the heavens and on the earth, blood and fire and columns of smoke.”

Joel moves from describing who shall receive the Spirit to describing what will happen to the nations at that time. God promises to set forth **מוֹפְתִים** (“signs/wonders”) in nature. These signs are meant as clear indicators that God is at work.³³ Crenshaw distinguishes between different types of signs found in the Hebrew Bible:

(1) *’ôt*, a sign that does not necessarily refer to something out of the ordinary:

²⁹Wolff, *Joel and Amos*, 67.

³⁰Stuart, *Hosea-Jonah*, 261.

³¹Hubbard, *Joel & Amos*, 70.

³²Wolff, *Joel and Amos*, 67.

³³Hubbard, *Joel & Amos*, 71.

- (2) *pele'*, a wonderful thing that can lack any signative content; and
(3) *môpet*, an extraordinary sign, i.e., a portent.³⁴

The signs in this prophecy are the third type and belong to the tradition of the plagues of the Exodus. According to Wolff:

Just as these terrors upon Egypt were signs which preceded the liberation of Israel, "blood, fire, and mushrooms of smoke," and eclipses of sun and moon shall be signs preceding the terrible Day of Yahweh which is now to come upon the world of nations and which will, at the same time, bring deliverance to Jerusalem.³⁵

The signs are to happen in the heavens and the earth. This is meant to illustrate the cosmic scope of the signs and to highlight their extraordinary nature. The blood, fire and smoke are used to conjure up images of warfare. "Savage attacks by vicious soldiers spill blood in the streets and within the dubious shelter of houses, as a conquering army sets fire to everything combustible."³⁶ The image is of death and destruction. This is the fate of those who oppose the Lord. These are the first signs in creation that announce the Day of the Lord.

This apocalyptic language is significant in that it divides the Lord's response to the nations from his response to his people. Before the descriptions of celestial signs, Joel uses the language of blessing for the people of God. However, the blessing of the people of God will be followed by judgement on the nations. Joel uses apocalyptic language to illustrate how the Lord will respond to the wickedness of the nations with final judgement. This theme continues in Joel 3:1-16.

³⁴Crenshaw, *Joel*, 167.

³⁵Wolff, *Joel & Amos*, 68.

³⁶Crenshaw, *Joel*, 167.

b. *Signs in the Sun and the Moon (2:31)*

“The sun shall be turned to darkness, and the moon to blood, before the great and terrible day of the LORD comes.”

The description of signs moves from images of warfare to portents appearing in the celestial bodies. The disfiguring of the sun and the moon was a traditional motif and was seen as an appropriate sign of the Lord’s judgement.³⁷ Crenshaw places this sign of the darkened sun in its biblical context:

[Joel] stands in a venerable prophetic tradition (Amos 8:9; Isa 13:10; 34:4; Ezek 32:7-8; Jer 4:23), one that extends as far back as the Exodus experience (Exod 10:21). This imagery of a darkened sun persists in New Testament eschatology (Rev 6:12; cf. Rev 20:11, which has earth and sky flee from the divine presence).³⁸

With this sign, the whole earth will know that judgement is near and the Day of the Lord is at hand.

Joel makes it clear that these signs must be seen as precursors to the יוֹם יְהוָה (“Day of the Lord”). The Day of the Lord is a key concept for Joel, as illustrated by its mention in each of the four major subsections of the book.³⁹ The Day of the Lord did not originate with Joel. It is a theme that runs throughout the prophetic books:

In the heritage of the prophetic teaching handed down to Joel, the Day of Yahweh had a double, even a triple function. Zeph. 1f. presents the Day as a threat to Judah and foreign neighbors alike. As Amos had declared before him, no nation would escape its disastrous judgement (Amos 5:18-20; 9:7, 8a). Yet Joel also knew of promises of salvation which would follow the

³⁷Allen, *Books of Joel, Obadiah, Jonah, and Micah*, 101.

³⁸Crenshaw, *Joel*, 168.

³⁹Stuart, *Hosea-Jonah*, 230.

judgement upon Israel. They were an ancient element of the Day before the prophets took over the theme (Amos 5:18).⁴⁰

According to Stuart, Joel saw two Days of the Lord. The first is that which is already underway in Joel's time and which is described in the first part of the book. The second is the eschatological Day which takes place in the imminent prophetic future.⁴¹ Allen believes that Joel knew and accepted Obadiah's teaching on the Day of the Lord:

For Obadiah the Day had already come upon God's people; for Joel it had come in the terrible experience of the locust plague, which put the very existence of the community in jeopardy. For both there remained to be fulfilled prophecies concerning the other nations. Judgement Day for them was still to come, while Israel awaited only eschatological bliss.⁴²

It is unlikely that Joel saw two Days of the Lord considering the eschatological context described in the other prophetic books. Rather, Joel saw the plagues and destruction of his day as being illustrative of the eschatological Day of the Lord. Joel saw the Day of the Lord as a time of judgement for the nations and a time of deliverance for Israel.

Some of the eschatological language of Joel's prophecy is taken up in the Sibylline Oracles. Sibylline Oracle 3:796-804 describes signs in the heavens that will signal the end of the world in language similar to Joel 2:30-31, including common symbols of blood and darkness. This is significant because this passage follows a section describing the eschatological kingdom which will be ruled by the prophets (Sibylline Oracle 3:781). The

⁴⁰Allen, *Books of Joel, Obadiah, Jonah, and Micah*, 100.

⁴¹Stuart, *Hosea-Jonah*, 231.

⁴²Allen, *Books of Joel, Obadiah, Jonah, and Micah*, 100.

Apocalypse of Elijah 3:6-7, written between the first and fourth centuries C.E.⁴³ describes some of the celestial signs such as the dark sun and the bloody moon from Joel 2:30-31. However this work describes these signs as accompanying the Anti-Christ figure known as the “Son of Lawlessness.” Although each of these texts interpret the last days in a different manner, each does agree that the celestial signs described by Joel will appear in the last days. Jewish interpreters saw Joel’s prophecy as being eschatological. Not only was Joel’s prophecy understood as eschatological, it was also understood as including the final judgement of the nations. As great as the blessing would be to the people of God, so would be the punishment of the wicked.

III. Salvation of the Called who Call (2:32)

“Then everyone who calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved: for in Mount Zion and in Jerusalem there shall be those who escape, as the LORD has said, and among the survivors shall be those whom the LORD calls.”

This oracle began by stressing the inclusivity of God’s salvation and the gift of the Spirit. Now Joel qualifies his statement concerning “all flesh” by saying that only those who call on the name of the Lord will experience deliverance. The calling that Israelites are required to perform is no simple task:

To “call on the name of Yahweh” means not merely to pray to him, but to worship him consistently and presumably exclusively; the expression can also indicate open acknowledgment of one’s faith in the midst of a hostile environment.⁴⁴

⁴³O. S. Wintermute, “Apocalypse of Elijah” *Old Testament Pseudepigrapha* Vol. 1 (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1983). 729-730.

⁴⁴Stuart, *Hosea-Jonah*, 261.

Targum Jonathan to Joel says that those who pray in the name of the Lord rather than call on the name of the Lord will be saved. All those male and female, young and old, rich and poor, who trust in the Lord will be saved on the Day of judgement.

There is remarkable similarity between this verse which reads, “for in Mount Zion and in Jerusalem there shall be those who escape” and Obadiah 17a which states, “But on Mount Zion there shall be those that escape.” Allen sees Joel as using a formal quotation from Obadiah, citing the fact that the passage from Obadiah also deals with the Day of the Lord.⁴⁵ Another possibility is that both Joel and Obadiah are drawing from an independent oracle preserved in the oral tradition.⁴⁶ The important point is that there was a pre-Joel tradition (Obadiah or independent oracle), which connected survivors from the Day of the Lord with Mount Zion. The mention of Jerusalem and Mount Zion are important as they are “the site of God’s presence, the center of his power, the seat of his covenant, the place where his glory has been seen in brightest form in the Old Testament revelation.”⁴⁷ It is also in Jerusalem that Luke records the fulfilment of Joel’s prophecy (Acts 2:14).

Joel concludes this oracle by giving the final piece of information concerning those who are calling on the name of the Lord. Not only are the survivors the ones who are calling on the Lord, they are also those אֲשֶׁר יְהוָה קֹרָא (“whom the Lord is calling”). The survivors both call and are called. Targum Jonathan to Joel concludes this section by saying that those who are delivered are “appointed” by the Lord rather than the more ambiguous

⁴⁵Allen, *Books of Joel, Obadiah, Jonah, and Micah*, 102.

⁴⁶Hubbard, *Joel & Amos*, 72.

⁴⁷*Ibid.*

“called” found in the MT and LXX. This is a fitting conclusion to this oracle since it began with prophetic communication that was only possible by God’s initiative. In the same way, the people are only able to call on the name of the Lord because they are already among the called.

Joel Compared to Isaiah and Ezekiel

How does Joel’s prophecy of the coming Spirit compare to the prophecies of Isaiah and Ezekiel? There is remarkable similarity of themes concerning the Spirit among all three prophets. It will be shown that there is a common strand of understanding concerning the circumstances of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit.

While Joel’s introduction to this prophecy does not demand an eschatological interpretation, it was often interpreted eschatologically by later Jewish interpreters. This is found in both apocalyptic literature such as the Testament of Judah and the Sibylline Oracles, and later Midrashim. In addition, the description of celestial signs and the “Day of the LORD” in Joel 2.30-31 suggest an eschatological setting for the return of the Spirit. Joel’s eschatological context differs from that of Isaiah and Ezekiel. Isaiah connects the coming of the Spirit specifically with the coming of a king which was later interpreted as the Messiah and often limits the possession of the Spirit to the Messiah. Ezekiel does not speak of the Messiah but was interpreted as speaking of an eschatological future that is usually connected with the resurrection. Joel neither speaks of the Messiah nor of the resurrection, but rather in terms of God’s judgement on the Day of the Lord. God’s blessing is to come to his people rather than the eschatological judgement which is to come to the nations.

Joel stresses the role of the Spirit as prophetic inspiration much more than Isaiah and Ezekiel. Those who receive the Spirit are described as prophesying, dreaming dreams and seeing visions. This triple description emphasizes the role of prophetic inspiration for Joel in the Spirit's appearance. While the role of prophetic inspiration for the Spirit is not as apparent in Isaiah and Ezekiel, there are interpretations in Jewish literature that demonstrate that the Spirit was understood in a prophetic role.

Joel does not speak of the Spirit coming upon a specific individual but rather on "all flesh." It was important for Joel to emphasize that the prophetic monopoly would be broken and the Spirit would be made available to all people. This agrees with Ezekiel's understanding of who would receive the Spirit. Isaiah, on the other hand, often speaks of the Spirit being upon a king or Messiah. Although Isaiah does speak of the Spirit being given to the people in some passages (Isaiah 32:15; 44:3), Isaiah's primary theme is about a Spirit-anointed king. Joel shares the description of the Spirit's appearing with Isaiah and Ezekiel as a "pouring." In fact the same word (שפך) is used in Joel 2:28-29 as in Ezekiel 39:29 to describe the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit was expected to be given to all of the people of God and it was expected to be given abundantly.

Joel agrees with Isaiah and Ezekiel concerning the importance of obedience. Those who belong to God are those who "call upon the name of the LORD" (Joel 2:32). This was understood not as a casual prayer but as a decision to pledge their allegiance with God. The rabbis even connected the theme of the removal of the evil impulse in Ezekiel with the return of the Divine Presence in Joel.

While the theme of redemption is not strong in Joel's prophecy, it does appear. According to Joel 2:32, the people of God will experience salvation and deliverance and they will be described as the "survivors." The place of redemption is seen more clearly in the rest of the book of Joel. Following this oracle, the Lord proclaims: "In those days and at that time, when I restore the fortunes of Judah and Jerusalem" (Joel 3:1). The coming of the Spirit is seen as an important event in God's overall plan of redemption. Joel shares this theme with Isaiah and Ezekiel.

The theme of justice and reconciliation are important in Joel's understanding of the Spirit's appearance. Joel could have simply described the Spirit as coming upon "all flesh." Yet Joel goes into detail to describe the recipients of the Spirit. The Spirit will come upon the sons and the daughters, the old men and young men, the male and female servants. All divisions of gender, age and economic status will be removed with the Spirit's coming. There is even a suggestion of ethnic inclusivity. The final requirement is only that people call on the name of the LORD. This is different from Isaiah who sees the Spirit-anointed king as the key to bringing justice to the marginalized of society (Isaiah 61:1). What Isaiah and Joel do have in common is that every segment of society will benefit from the Spirit's appearance, and those who are marginalized will receive their rights.

Conclusion

Joel's prophecy is the classic description of the pouring out of the Holy Spirit and it is the template by which the early church understood its own experience with the Spirit. Yet Joel's prophecy is not alone in the Old Testament understanding of the Spirit's appearance. Together with prophecies in Isaiah and Ezekiel, a number of themes appear that were

understood as belonging to the circumstances of the Spirit's outpouring. The Spirit's appearance was understood to be an eschatological event. The Spirit was expected to appear in its role of prophetic inspiration. The Spirit was expected to be poured out in abundance on all the people of God. The Spirit was to bring about obedience among God's people. The Spirit would also bring redemption, reconciliation and justice to individuals and to society.

Joel takes up the themes of Isaiah and Ezekiel but focuses on how the coming Spirit defines the people of God. Joel breaks down many of the social distinctions that existed in his society. Whether male or female, young or old, slave or free; all would participate in God's blessing. Despite all other differences, God's people are to be marked by their common possession of the prophetic Spirit. The hope was that the people of God would be identified not by their social standing but by their common possession of the Holy Spirit.

CHAPTER FOUR
THE OUTPOURING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT IN
THE SYNOPTIC GOSPELS, JOHN AND PAUL

Introduction

Although the most famous description of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit is the fulfillment of Joel 2:28-32 found in Peter's speech in Acts 2:17-21, there are other texts in the New Testament that speak of the return of the Holy Spirit. Some of the New Testament texts deal with the same themes found in Joel 2:28-32 while others speak of the pouring out of the Spirit in a different manner. While not all of the texts may have originally been written with Joel's prophecy in mind, they do illustrate how early Christian writers understood the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. In order to understand how the early church interpreted the giving of the Holy Spirit, texts that seem related to Joel 2:28-32 or discuss the pouring out of the Spirit will be examined from the synoptic Gospels, John, and the Pauline letters: Romans, 1 Corinthians, Galatians, Colossians and Titus. This material will be used as background for an investigation of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit in Luke-Acts.

Synoptic Gospels¹

Although the synoptic Gospels speak of the Holy Spirit, it is usually in terms of Jesus' possession of the Spirit. The Spirit is recorded as coming upon Jesus at his baptism (Mark

¹By synoptic Gospels, I refer to the material in common between Matthew, Mark and Luke. I deal with the unique Lukan material in the next chapter.

1:10). It was the Spirit who led Jesus into the wilderness to be tempted by Satan (Mark 1:12), and by the power of the Spirit that Jesus casts out demons (Mark 3:29-30). The Holy Spirit is shown to be an integral part of Jesus' ministry throughout the synoptic Gospels. Yet Jesus' Spirit-empowered ministry does not cast much light on the understanding of the outpouring of the Spirit in the New Testament, for in these texts it is the Messiah who possesses the Spirit and not the people of God.

The one possible exception is the statement by John the Baptist that the one coming after him would baptize with the Holy Spirit (Matthew 3:11, Mark 1:8, Luke 3:16). This passage is also found in John 1:33. The problem with interpreting this passage is that Luke is the only one who further discusses Spirit baptism, albeit in a separate book. As a result of the ambiguity of John the Baptist's statement, there are a wide variety of interpretations as to the meaning of the text. Robert Gundry believes that Mark was not interested in Jesus' giving of the Holy Spirit to the disciples.² Gundry explains Mark's understanding of the Spirit baptism in this way:

Jesus' baptizing people in the Holy Spirit represents the way Jesus will deal with the masses of repentant people whom John has baptized with water. Having himself received the Spirit, Jesus will teach them with authority, heal their sick, and most pertinently to the present prediction, cast unclean spirits out of their demon-possessed.³

Robert Guelich sees no hint of a gift of power for Jesus' followers but rather understands the baptism with the Holy Spirit as the ultimate forgiveness of sins.⁴ Leon Morris sees the

²Robert H. Gundry, *Mark* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993), 38.

³*Ibid.*

⁴Robert A. Guelich, *Mark 1-8:26* (Dallas: Word, 1989), 25.

promise of the baptism with the Holy Spirit as being the hope “that the coming Messiah will bring his followers into vital contact with the Holy Spirit and thus inject a new force into their lives.”⁵ Craig Keener believes that Jesus was understood as the Spirit-bringer. Jesus’ reception of the Spirit and his subsequent Spirit-empowered ministry are meant to serve as a paradigm for the believers who will be Spirit baptized by Jesus.⁶ Any of these theories could be correct since neither Mark nor Matthew describes what the Spirit baptism is or what it would look like.

The only thing that can be said for certain is that Jesus was linked with the coming of the Spirit in some way in each of the four Gospels. Each Gospel describes the Spirit descending from heaven upon Jesus at his baptism (Matthew 3:16, Mark 1:10, Luke 3:22). Each Gospel links the appearance of the Spirit with a prophecy that Jesus would be the one who would baptize with the Spirit (Matthew 3:11, Mark 1:8, Luke 3:16). This agrees with the interpretations of Isaiah that suggested that the Spirit would appear with the coming of the Messiah (Isaiah 11:1-5, 42:1-5, 61:1-3). Although the synoptic Gospels do not explicitly deal with the prophecy of Joel, they do teach something about the outpouring of the Spirit. Even though Matthew and Mark do not give details as to what the baptism of the Spirit looks like, they do show that the coming of the Spirit upon the Messiah was the crucial event in the reception of the Spirit by the people of God.

⁵Morris, *Gospel According to Matthew*. 62.

⁶Keener, *Spirit in the Gospels and Acts*. 70.

Gospel of John

While the synoptic Gospels do not speak much about the giving of the Spirit, there are a number of instances in John where Jesus speaks of the coming of the Spirit; indeed, near the end of John's Gospel, the Spirit is actually given to the disciples. This material is very important in understanding the giving of the Holy Spirit in the New Testament. Therefore, each passage in John relevant to the coming of the Spirit will be dealt with.

As with the synoptic Gospels, John describes the coming of the Spirit on Jesus at his baptism (John 1:32). However, the first passage that could be interpreted as referring to the Spirit being given to the people is John 3:34. In this passage John is testifying about Jesus. John makes the statement that "he gives the Spirit without measure." The problem with this statement is that John does not specifically name the subject or the object of this action. There is a wide variety of opinions as to the meaning of this verse. F. F. Bruce sees this as referring to God giving Jesus the Spirit as power to be the perfect witness.⁷ R. V. G. Tasker sees this verse as referring primarily to God giving the Spirit to Jesus but also implying that the Spirit is available to all others who are called to do God's work.⁸ B. F. Westcott commented that whether the subject is God or Jesus, the object is the people of God.⁹ Raymond Brown notes that John switches between God and Jesus as the giver of the Spirit throughout the Gospel and that the point of the verse is that the Spirit "comes from above or

⁷F. F. Bruce, *Gospel of John* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1983), 97.

⁸R. V. G. Tasker, *John* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1960), 74.

⁹B. F. Westcott, *Gospel According to St John* (London: John Murray, 1886), 62.

from the Father, but only through Jesus.”¹⁰ Although this verse does not describe the receiver of the Spirit, in the context of the rest of the Gospel which describes the Spirit as being given to the people and John the Baptist’s earlier testimony that Jesus would baptize people in the Holy Spirit (John 1:33), it is likely that this verse is speaking of a general outpouring of the Spirit upon the people of God. According to Brown, this is the “definitive eschatological outpouring of the Spirit.”¹¹ Even though the term “pouring” is not specifically used, the idea of giving without measure creates the same image as the word “pouring.”

John 7:38-39 speaks again of the reception of the Holy Spirit, this time specifying that believers would receive the Spirit. On the last day of the Festival of Booths, Jesus is said to proclaim, “Out of the believer’s heart shall flow rivers of living water” (John 7:38). In the next verse, John comments that this refers to the Spirit. This statement by Jesus is described as being “from the scriptures.” No Old Testament passage makes this statement, although similar imagery is used in Zechariah 14:8 and Ezekiel 47:9. The Festival of Booths concluded with a water-pouring ceremony. Some Jewish interpreters connected this ceremony with the promised outpouring of the Spirit (j. Sukkah 5.1, 55a; Ruth Rabbah 4:8).¹² That the disciples were looking forward to a promise of the return of the Spirit is seen in John’s comment that there was “no Spirit” (John 7:39). This is not to say that the Spirit did not exist but rather

¹⁰Raymond E. Brown. *Gospel According to John i-xii* (Garden City: Doubleday, 1966), 162.

¹¹Brown. *Gospel According to John i-xii*. 158.

¹²Bruce. *Gospel of John*. 182.

that the Spirit's presence was not a reality to humanity.¹³ The Spirit would not become reality until Jesus was glorified. It becomes clear throughout John's Gospel that Jesus is glorified in his death on the cross.¹⁴

There are also the four "paraclete" sayings concerning the Holy Spirit found in John:

And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate, to be with you forever. This is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, because he abides with you, and he will be in you. (John 14:16-17)

But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything, and remind you of all that I have said to you. (John 14:26)

When the Advocate comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who comes from the Father, he will testify on my behalf. (John 15:26)

Nevertheless I tell the truth: it is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the Advocate will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you. (John 16:7).

In these passages, Jesus speaks of the coming of the Holy Spirit in the role of the *παράκλητος*. "Paraclete" has been translated in a number of ways including helper, comforter, counselor and advocate. Bruce gives the following definition of *παράκλητος*:

The word *parakletos* is best understood as a verbal adjective with passive force, denoting one who is called alongside as a helper or defender, a friend at court. Jesus' mention of 'another' Paraclete implies that they already have one, and this can only be himself.¹⁵

¹³Brown, *Gospel According to John i-xii*, 324.

¹⁴Bruce, *Gospel of John*, 182.

¹⁵*Ibid.*, 301.

The Spirit is seen as intimately connected with Jesus, to the point of both being called by the same title. The idea that the Spirit is “another” comforter (John 14:16) is reinforced in Johannine theology by the reference to Jesus in 1 John 2:1 as being a paraclete.

The close connection between the Spirit and Jesus is also evident in the role attributed to the Spirit. The Spirit is described as the Spirit of truth (John 14:17). Possession of the Spirit is what separates the people of God from the world (John 14:17). The world can not receive the Spirit, but the Spirit will dwell within believers (John 14:17). The Spirit will teach (διδάξει) and remind (ὑπομνήσει) the believers concerning that of which Jesus spoke (John 14:26). The teaching and reminding are not two different roles but rather Jesus is using synonymous parallelism to describe the same activity.¹⁶ The promise is not for new revelation but for enabling the disciples to understand the full meaning of Jesus’ words.¹⁷ Tasker describes this aspect of the Spirit’s work in this way: “Under the inspiration and in the illumination of the other Advocate the words spoken to them by Jesus on earth will not only be recalled, but become radiant with hitherto unsuspected meaning.”¹⁸ The recollection of Jesus’ words was not intended as simply an academic exercise but was meant to “impress the commandments of Jesus on the minds of his disciples and thus prompt them to obedience.”¹⁹ The Spirit will testify or bear witness (μαρτυρήσει) on behalf of Jesus (John 15:26). This

¹⁶Raymond E. Brown, *Gospel According to John xiii-xxi* (Garden City: Doubleday, 1970), 651.

¹⁷*Ibid.* 650.

¹⁸Tasker, *John*, 168.

¹⁹Merrill C. Tenney, “Gospel of John” *Expositor’s Bible Commentary* Vol. 9 (Grand Rapids: Regency, 1981), 148.

will enable believers to testify to their faith in the midst of persecution from the world. Brown sees a resemblance to the double witness of Spirit and believer found in Acts 5:32.²⁰ The Spirit will also prove or convict the world regarding sin, righteousness and judgement (John 16:8-11). Jesus again tells the disciples that the Spirit can not assume this role until he leaves (John 16:7). The Spirit's work is seen as a continuation of Jesus' ministry and it can only begin once Jesus' earthly ministry has ceased.

In John 16:13, Jesus gives further teaching on the activity of the Spirit. The Spirit is repeatedly called the Spirit of truth and it is in the area of truth that the Spirit's ministry exists. The Spirit will guide (ὁδηγήσει) the believers into all truth. The Spirit will speak (λαλήσει) not according to the Spirit's own agenda but according to what the Spirit hears. The Spirit will declare (ἀναγγελεῖ) the things that are to come. There is some disagreement as to the meaning of this activity of the Spirit. Is this prophetic activity with regard to predicting the future? Tasker denies that this concerns prophecy about the future.²¹ However, some such as Bruce see the Spirit's declaration as being exercised through the gift of prophecy in the church.²² Brown sees this passage as primarily concerning the reinterpretation of what has already been revealed in Jesus Christ.²³ Although the Spirit

²⁰Brown, *Gospel According to John xiii-xxi*, 700.

²¹Tasker, *John*, 181.

²²Bruce, *Gospel of John*, 320.

²³Brown, *Gospel According to John xiii-xxi*, 708.

brings no new revelation, the Spirit does continue Jesus' prophetic ministry and that which the Spirit declares can be regarded as "prophetic declaration."²⁴

It is possible that John is presenting the role of the Spirit in a manner similar to the way in which that role was understood at Qumran. The sectarians at Qumran saw prophetic inspiration not as providing new revelation but rather as reinterpreting the words of the biblical prophets to bring new insight. John is describing a prophetic Spirit that will reveal and interpret that which Jesus has already said.

John's time-line for the coming of the Spirit is not left to the indefinite future. John has already declared that the Spirit will come once Jesus has been glorified (John 7:39). John 20:22 records the actual reception of the Holy Spirit by the disciples. After the resurrection, Jesus appears to ten of the disciples in Jerusalem, and commands them, "As the Father has sent me, so I send you." John connects this statement with Jesus' action of breathing on them, by which the disciples received the Holy Spirit. The action of breathing echoes the breathing into Adam at creation and the giving of breath to the dry bones in Ezekiel.²⁵ The context makes clear that the purpose of receiving the Spirit was to empower the disciples to fulfil the commission they had received from Jesus.²⁶ It is possible that the reception of the Spirit by the disciples as they prepare to begin their ministry is meant to echo the reception of the Spirit by Jesus at his baptism as he prepared to begin his ministry (John 1:32). As

²⁴*Ibid.* 716.

²⁵Bruce, *Gospel of John*. 392.

²⁶*Ibid.*

Brown comments, “it is the Spirit who consecrates them or makes them holy so that, consecrated as Jesus was consecrated, they can be sent as Jesus was sent.”²⁷

The reception of the Spirit described in John 20:22 is often contrasted with the pouring out of the Spirit described in Acts 2. There are certainly differences between the two accounts including, but not limited to, date and location. While it is dangerous to force a harmonization between the two accounts, it is useful to highlight the similarities. Brown highlights two of the most important:

What is interesting is that both authors place the giving of the Spirit after Jesus has ascended to His Father, even if they have different views of the ascension. For both of them the Spirit’s task is to take the place of Jesus, to carry on his work, and to constitute his presence in the world.²⁸

While Brown’s comment does not explain Jesus giving the Spirit to the disciples before his ascension (John 20:22), it does illustrate that there is some similarity between the giving of the Spirit in John and the giving of the Spirit in Acts. It is for this reason that John 20:22 is sometimes described as the “Johannine Pentecost.”

The numerous predictions of the coming Spirit in John are very useful for understanding the role of the Holy Spirit in the New Testament. John is aware of a sense in which the Spirit is not available to the people of God and that the Spirit will only appear with the glorification of Jesus which comes through his death and resurrection. The Spirit is often described as the Spirit of truth. The Spirit is prophetic, not in the sense that it provides new revelation, but by virtue of illuminating and reinterpreting the words of Jesus to the disciples.

²⁷Brown, *Gospel According to John* xiii-xxi, 1036.

²⁸*Ibid.*, 1039.

With the coming of the Spirit, Jesus was known as a prophet-Messiah. After Jesus' resurrection, his believers were able to share in Jesus' prophetic gifting. The Spirit is also seen as representing empowerment for obedience. It will be the Spirit that allows believers to testify about Jesus in the midst of persecution. The Spirit allows the disciples to fulfil the mission that Jesus calls them to. With the reception of the Spirit in John 20:22, the disciples are prepared to be the prophetic²⁹ and obedient people of God. John sees the Spirit's role as being vital to the identity of the people of God.

Pauline Epistles

While Paul's use of Joel 2:28-32 is not as explicit as Luke's, it can be shown, from Paul's understanding of the Holy Spirit and Christian life in general, that Paul saw the role of the Spirit in terms similar to Joel's prophecy. Even when Paul is not quoting Joel explicitly, there are allusions to the same themes found in Joel. While it is unknown how much Paul thought in terms of Joel 2:28-32, it is evident that the possession of the prophetic Spirit was an important Christian identity marker for Paul.

In Titus 3:6 Paul writes, "This Spirit he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior."³⁰ In this passage we see that Paul understood the Spirit to have been poured out on the people of God. According to Jerome Quinn, Paul's use of the word ἐξέχεεν (which literally means "shed") is taken from the LXX of Joel 2:28-29.³¹ Indeed, Luke himself also

²⁹*Ibid.*, 716.

³⁰I accept the Pauline authorship of Titus, following Gordon D. Fee, *God's Empowering Presence* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1994), 756. However, since the Pauline authorship is disputed, this passage can not be used as the primary foundation for Paul's understanding of the Spirit.

³¹Jerome D. Quinn, *Letter to Titus* (New York: Doubleday, 1990), 198.

used this word a number of times in Acts with reference to the pouring out of the Spirit. Paul adds the word πλουσίως (“richly”) in order to emphasize “the lavish nature of the outpouring of the Spirit.”³² Paul does seem to have understood the Spirit as arriving in language similar to that of Joel’s prophecy.

The consequences of the Spirit’s arrival are described in terms similar to Joel’s prophecy. Paul describes a number of manifestations of the Spirit, one of which is the return of the gift of prophecy to the church (1 Corinthians 12:10). According to Gordon Fee, the role of prophecy in the early church was understood in terms of Joel’s prophecy. Commenting on prophecy in Romans 12.6, Fee says:

Set up especially by the prophecy in Joel 2:28-29, [the early church] came to understand the Spirit as the evidence not only that the “last days” had dawned, but that the widespread gift of prophecy for old and young, male and female alike, testified to the “turning of the ages.”³³

That prophecy is an important theme in Paul’s letters is clear. However, Fee seems to read Acts into Paul’s understanding of the role of prophecy. As a result, more evidence is needed to show the influence of Joel’s prophecy on Paul. Despite this, Fee sees a strong connection between Joel 2:28-29 and Paul’s pneumatology. Fee states, “That [Paul] saw the phenomenon as evidence for the outpouring of the eschatological promise of Joel 2:28-29 need hardly be doubted, since whatever else, prophecy existed for the church as an eschatological community that lived between the times (1 Cor. 13:8-13).”³⁴

³²Fee, *God’s Empowering Presence*, 784.

³³*Ibid.* 611.

³⁴*Ibid.* 892.

In 1 Corinthians 12-14, Paul gives important teaching on the gifts of the Spirit and their use in the church. A number of comments are made concerning the importance of prophecy in the church. Paul teaches that prophecy builds up the church (1 Corinthians 14:4). Paul tells the church that as much as he would like all to speak in tongues, he would rather that all prophesied (1 Corinthians 14:5). The result of prophecy in the church will be the declaration of unbelievers that “God is really among you” (1 Corinthians 14:25). This section is concluded by Paul urging the Corinthian church, “be eager to prophesy” (1 Corinthians 14:39). All of these passages illustrate the importance of prophecy to the church in Paul’s thought. It seems that Paul did believe that the prophetic Spirit had been poured out on the church. However, the consequences of this outpouring went beyond the return of prophecy.

Did Paul have Joel’s prophecy specifically in mind when he wrote his epistles? It is interesting to note that the only time Paul explicitly quotes from Joel’s prophecy is the citation of Joel 2:32 (“Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved”) in Romans 10:13. Paul identified the LORD in Joel’s prophecy as being Jesus and the remnant of Judah as being the followers of Christ.³⁵ Paul seemed to have understood the prophecy of Joel as being fulfilled in his day in some way. What is important for our discussion is that Paul uses this passage from Joel as proof that, “there is no distinction between Jew and Greek” (Romans 10:12a). The equality between Jew and Greek is described by Paul in terms of Joel 2:32. Does this mean that Paul saw the equality of Jews and gentiles based on the earlier portion of Joel’s prophecy (Joel 2:28-29) or as the work of the Spirit at all? There is nothing in Romans 10:13 that demands such an interpretation. However, in Colossians, Galatians and

³⁵James D. G. Dunn. *Romans 9-16* (Dallas: Word, 1988), 617.

1 Corinthians, Paul makes similar statements about the equality of Jews and gentiles where the role of the Spirit is seen as important.

In a number of epistles, Paul makes reference to the unity of the church made possible by the Spirit despite the diversity of its members. In Colossians 3:5-17, Paul contrasts the Christian life with pre-conversion experience. Old habits must be put away, not as the result of a new law but because of a spiritual renewal. In the midst of this discussion, Paul states, “In that renewal there is no longer Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave and free; but Christ is all and in all” (Colossians 3:11). While Paul does not speak explicitly of the Spirit in this passage, there is some hint that Paul had the Spirit in mind. Fee sees Spirit language in the previous verse, “and having clothed yourselves with the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge according to the image of its creator” (Colossians 3:10). Fee sees the connection to the Holy Spirit in this way:

The verb ἀνακαινόςω (“being made new”). ... elsewhere in Paul has the closest kind of association with the Spirit. Not only so, but one of the linguistic parallels to this passage in Ephesians (3:16) actually speaks of being strengthened “in the inner person” by the power of the Holy Spirit. Thus in Titus 3:5 Christian experience is explicitly called a regeneration, a “making new” by the Holy Spirit. Likewise, the Spirit is very close at hand when Paul uses this language in 2 Cor 4:16 and Rom 12:2 (q.v.), even though as here he is not explicitly mentioned. ... Therefore, since this language in Paul belongs to the activity of the Spirit, it is altogether likely that lying behind this “renewing” activity is God the Holy Spirit.³⁶

Although Paul does not explicitly mention the Spirit, he does describe in this passage activity that he normally applies to the Spirit. It is likely that the renewal that removes the barriers

³⁶Fee, *God's Empowering Presence*, 647.

between “Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave and free” (Colossians 3:11), was understood by Paul to be the work of the Holy Spirit.

In 1 Corinthians 12:12-31, Paul illustrates how the variety of spiritual gifts operate in a unified church by how the different parts of a body operate together. At the beginning of this discussion, Paul makes this comment, “For in the one Spirit we were all baptized into one body - Jews or Greeks, slaves or free - and we were all made to drink of one Spirit” (1 Corinthians 12:13). This passage in 1 Corinthians identifies the believer’s experience with the Spirit as the basis of this unity. According to Fee, the common experience of the Spirit which distinguishes believers from unbelievers is “the heart of Pauline theology.”³⁷

In Galatians, Paul combats the work of the Judaizers, who were trying to convince the Galatians of the need to convert to Judaism, by demonstrating the superiority of faith over law. In this discussion, Paul says, “There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female: for all of you are one in Christ Jesus” (Galatians 3:28). Commenting on Galatians 3:28, Hans Dieter Betz says, “These social changes are claimed as part of the process of redemption and as the result of the ecstatic experiences which the Galatians as well as other Christians have had.”³⁸ Paul introduces his inclusive creed in Galatians by proclaiming believers as children of God (Galatians 3:26). Later in his letter, Paul teaches that the Spirit is the witness that believers are the children of God (Galatians 4:6).

³⁷Gordon D. Fee, *First Epistle to the Corinthians* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987), 603.

³⁸Hans Dieter Betz, *Galatians* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1979), 190.

It seems significant that in three of his epistles, Paul demonstrates the unity and equality of the church despite differing backgrounds. What is the basis of this unity? Ben Witherington sees all three passages (Colossians 3:11, 1 Corinthians 12:13, Galatians 2:28) as forms of a baptismal formula used to distinguish followers of Christ from other religious groups.³⁹ While these words were likely used at baptisms, it is unlikely that the unity of believers was based solely on a ritual act. For Paul, the inclusiveness of the Christian faith was closely connected to the presence of the Spirit in the believer's life. Unity was found in union with Christ, but union with Christ was seen clearly by Paul as a work of the Spirit. Without the Spirit, there could be no unity of the church.

What is the significance of the wording of these three passages (Colossians 3:11, 1 Corinthians 12:13, Galatians 2:28)? Numerous scholars have pointed out the similarity of the wording, especially in Galatians 3:28, to certain statements of gratitude for racial, gender and economic standing found in both Jewish and Greek sources.⁴⁰ According to Richard Longenecker, "it may be surmised that in conscious contrast to such Jewish and Greek chauvinistic statements, early Christians saw it as particularly appropriate to give praise in their baptismal confession that through Christ the old racial schisms and cultural divisions had been healed."⁴¹ Longenecker continues by saying that "these three couplets [in Galatians 3:28] cover in embryonic fashion all the essential relationships of humanity."⁴² Paul seems to

³⁹Ben Witherington III, *Grace in Galatia* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 270.

⁴⁰Richard N. Longenecker, *Galatians* (Dallas: Word, 1990), 157.

⁴¹*Ibid.*

⁴²*Ibid.*

have the same purpose in the passages from Colossians, Galatians and 1 Corinthians as Joel did when referring to age, gender and economic distinctions in Joel 2:28-29. None of these lists were meant to be comprehensive; rather they were illustrative of the universality of faith that results from the coming of the Holy Spirit. Since the one time that Paul explicitly quotes Joel's prophecy is found in a discussion on the equality of Jews and gentiles (Romans 10:13), it is possible that Paul had Joel in mind when he made similar statements in Colossians 3:11, 1 Corinthians 12:13 and Galatians 3:28. The similar pattern of listing the marginalized found in Paul and Joel also suggests that Paul may have understood the unity of the church in terms of Joel's prophecy. Certainly Paul did see the unity of the church based on the common experience with the Spirit.

The Spirit of God had been poured out upon the church, allowing the gift of prophecy to return. The common experience of the Spirit created a social revolution where the old distinctions had fallen away. Paul recasts Joel's description of the new community in terms that respond to the Jewish and Greek chauvinism of his day. For Paul, the people of God were not defined by racial, gender or economic issues but by the possession of the Holy Spirit which accompanies faith in Christ. While it can not be proven that Paul saw the church's identity specifically in terms of Joel 2:28-32, it is clear that the implications for the Spirit's outpouring on the church have the same result. Possession of the Spirit breaks down every distinction including all social barriers.

Conclusion

Acts 2 is the best known account in the New Testament of the pouring out of the Holy Spirit. Yet there are other New Testament passages that describe the coming of the Spirit and

some that possibly allude to Joel's prophecy. The most important texts are found in the synoptic Gospels, the Gospel of John and Paul's epistles.

The synoptic Gospels do not describe the Spirit being poured out upon the people. However, the synoptic Gospels are important for this discussion because they do describe the Holy Spirit coming upon Jesus at his baptism. This close connection between the Messiah and the Spirit agrees with the Jewish understanding of the Spirit, as previously discussed. In addition, the synoptic Gospels' account of Jesus' reception of the Spirit is linked to John the Baptist's prophecy that the Messiah would baptize with the Spirit. Although Matthew and Mark do not explicitly develop this theme, it is clear that the synoptic Gospels see the coming of the Messiah as the turning point in the relationship between the Spirit and the people of God.

The Gospel of John contains much information regarding the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. There are a number of predictions by both John the Baptist and Jesus that the Holy Spirit would come to the people of God. The Holy Spirit was understood as prophetic in that although it would not provide new revelation, it would illuminate the words of Jesus in a supernatural way. The Spirit was also seen as providing the power for obedience. With the Spirit's assistance, believers would be able to stand strong in the midst of persecution as well as be able to go into the world and continue Jesus' ministry. While the Johannine passages do not use the imagery of Joel's prophecy, they are important in understanding how the early Christians understood their experience of the Spirit.

Paul does not speak of the coming of the Holy Spirit as a future event but rather speaks of the believer's experience of the Spirit as if the prophecy of Joel had already been

fulfilled. Paul saw the Holy Spirit as being poured out and that the gift of prophecy was now active again. Paul believed that the common experience of the Spirit created a new society in which the old distinctions no longer mattered. Although it can not be proved that Paul thought of the Spirit specifically in terms of Joel 2:28-29, it can be stated that for Paul, it was a present reality that the Spirit had been poured out on “all flesh.”

In each of these traditions, there are themes that are common to those of Joel’s prophecy. While Matthew, Mark, John and Paul may not have thought of the Spirit’s outpouring explicitly in terms of Joel 2:28-32, the practical experience with the Spirit was similar. The end times had begun and the promised prophetic Spirit had returned. The people of God were not to be understood as being limited by any racial, gender or economic distinctions but rather by their common experience in the Spirit. As we will see in the following chapter, these themes reappear in Luke’s account of the church’s experience with the Spirit found in Luke-Acts.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE OUTPOURING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT IN LUKE-ACTS

Introduction

Any discussion on the pouring out of the Holy Spirit in the New Testament must look at the role of the Spirit in Luke-Acts. It is obvious that the Holy Spirit is an important theme throughout Luke-Acts. But what exactly is the role of the Holy Spirit? Often the coming of the Holy Spirit is interpreted through Acts 1:8 as the power for evangelistic witness.¹ The Holy Spirit empowering the Church to spread the Gospel certainly is an important theme in Luke. But perhaps there is more to Luke's understanding of the role of the Spirit than just evangelism.

According to Acts 2:16-21, Peter described the pouring out of the Spirit at Pentecost in terms of Joel 2:28-32. This chapter will demonstrate that Luke uses Joel to show the ongoing connection between the receiving of the Spirit and the removal of social and religious distinctions among members of the Church. This would suggest that Luke saw Joel's prophecy as more than an incidental Old Testament quote in Peter's sermon but rather as the lens by which the Spirit's role in the church could be seen. This theory will be tested by examining early uses of prophecy in the Gospel of Luke, the Pentecost event, as well as other occurrences of the baptism of the Holy Spirit, such as with the Samaritans, Cornelius and the

¹Richard N. Longenecker, "Acts of the Apostles", *Expositor's Bible Commentary*, Vol. 9 (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1981), 256.

twelve disciples at Ephesus. The term *baptism of the Holy Spirit*, is used in this chapter to refer to the initial reception of the Holy Spirit, even when the word *baptize* is not used. *Baptism* is not used for subsequent fillings.²

Early Appearances of Prophecy: Luke's Gospel

In Luke's account of the infancy narrative, two pairs of prophets are found that may signal Luke's understanding of the role of the Spirit. The first pair of prophets is Elizabeth and Zechariah. In Luke 1:39-45, Elizabeth receives a visit from Mary who is pregnant with Jesus. At their meeting, John the Baptist is described as leaping in Elizabeth's womb. Elizabeth is reported to be "filled with the Holy Spirit." While Elizabeth is not called a prophetess, the Jewish identification of the Spirit with prophecy strongly suggests prophetic activity. In addition, Elizabeth responds to her baby's action by explaining its spiritual significance, thus she functions as a prophetess.³ There is possibly a second prophet in this passage. The Spirit is responsible for John's fetal movement (Luke 1:41).⁴ Accordingly, John Nolland suggests that John the Baptist is filled with the Holy Spirit while still in the womb.⁵ This is the fulfillment of Gabriel's promise that John the Baptist would be filled with the Holy Spirit before birth (Luke 1:15). Although unable to speak, John may yet offer a prophetic

²I. Howard Marshall, *Acts of the Apostles*, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980), 69.

³Darrell L. Bock, *Luke 1:1-9:50* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1994), 135.

⁴Norval Geldenhuys, *Gospel of Luke* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1951), 82.

⁵John Nolland, *Luke 1-9:20* (Dallas: Word, 1989), 66.

testimony through fetal movement. The passage thus includes at least one and possibly two prophetic witnesses to Christ's birth.

In Luke 1:67-79, Elizabeth's husband Zechariah is also described as being filled with the Holy Spirit. This time Zechariah's action is specifically described as "prophesying" (Luke 1:67). Norval Geldenhuys observes the close resemblance of Zechariah's prophecy to the prophetic writings of the Old Testament.⁶ John Nolland identifies the eschatological nature of the prophecy in that Jesus' birth marks the beginning of the fulfillment of God's promises.⁷ While the immediate context of Zechariah's prophecy is the birth of John the Baptist, it is the birth of Jesus that gives the prophecy significance. Elizabeth and Zechariah are two elderly individuals whom Luke describes as engaging in prophetic activity in anticipation of the birth of the Messiah. Luke may have intended the unborn John the Baptist as a prophetic witness as well.

While Elizabeth and Zechariah prophesy in preparation for Jesus' birth, Simeon and Anna prophesy in response to Jesus' birth. In Luke 2:25-35, Luke records the meeting of Joseph, Mary and the baby Jesus with a righteous and devout man named Simeon. While Simeon's age is not mentioned, old age can be inferred from the statement that he is waiting for death (Luke 2:26).⁸ Unlike Elizabeth and Zechariah who were filled with the Spirit at a specific time in order to prophesy, the Spirit is said to be upon Simeon. This was probably not Simeon's first prophecy for "he was constantly under the influence of the prophetic

⁶Geldenhuys, *Gospel of Luke*. 92.

⁷Nolland, *Luke 1-9:20*. 85.

⁸Bock, *Luke 1:9:50*. 238.

working of the Holy Ghost.”⁹ However, Simeon’s prophetic activity seems to culminate with the prophecy he gives while holding the baby Jesus. It is important to note that Simeon’s prophecy suggests the inclusion of the gentiles in the coming salvation (Luke 2:32).

In Luke 2:36-38, Jesus’ family encounters another of the pious remnant of Israel in the person of Anna. Anna is described as a prophetess and her old age is specifically highlighted by Luke. Anna’s prophetic activity is seen as the inspired identification of the child.¹⁰ Anna and Simeon provide a prophetic witness to Jesus’ birth in a similar way to Elizabeth and Zechariah.

What is the significance of these two pairs of prophetic witnesses for Jesus? Walter Liefeld sees these prophecies as part of “Luke’s attention to the renewal of prophecy at the coming of the Messianic Age.”¹¹ Luke’s interest in the renewal of prophecy is evident from its role in Acts. However, more important than what is being done is who is doing it. Luke has two pairs of prophets, each pair consisting of a male and a female. Nolland notes that male-female pairing is an important theme throughout Luke. Other examples include the widow at Zarephath and Naaman (Luke 4:25-27), Simon the Pharisee and the sinful woman (Luke 7:36-50), and the man with the lost sheep and the woman with the lost coin (Luke 15:3-10).¹² It is possible that even in compiling the Gospel, Luke saw the Spirit in terms of

⁹Geldenhuis, *Gospel of Luke*, 118.

¹⁰Nolland, *Luke 1-9:20*, 122.

¹¹Walter L. Liefeld, “Luke” *Expositor’s Bible Commentary*. Vol. 8 (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1984), 850.

¹²Nolland, *Luke 1-9:20*, 122.

the prophecy from Joel quoted in Acts 2. Perhaps by pairing male and female prophets at the beginning of Jesus' earthly life, Luke is preparing the idea that the prophetic Spirit is available to all in the messianic age. If the reader is meant to understand the unborn John the Baptist as being prophetic, then Luke is touching on age as well as gender issues. Thus the prophetic activity of Elizabeth, Zechariah, Simeon and Anna is meant to anticipate the fulfillment of Joel's prophecy that takes place at Pentecost.

Luke's anticipation of what will happen at Pentecost appears also in Luke 11:13 and 12:12. In Luke 11, Jesus is speaking of God's goodness, specifically in the context of prayer. This is paralleled in Matthew 7. Matthew concludes his version with "How much more will your Father in heaven give good things to those who ask him" (Matthew 7:11). However, Luke replaces Matthew's "good things" with "Holy Spirit" (Luke 11:13). For Luke, the best gift that God could give his people is the Holy Spirit. In Luke 12:12, Jesus promises his followers that the Spirit will teach them what to say in the time of persecution. In both of these passages Luke is looking forward to the event that he records in Acts 2. While Luke's Gospel generally follows the other synoptic Gospels in using Isaiah's theme of a Spirit-anointed Messiah, there are hints of the Spirit being given to the people as described by Joel. This theme is developed more fully in Acts.

Pentecost: Acts 2:1-21

Perhaps the most important passage in the New Testament regarding the return of the Holy Spirit is found in the Pentecost event described in Acts 2:1-21. Three background motifs have been suggested for the Spirit's arrival at Pentecost. These are (1) a reversal of the curse of Babel, (2) a comparison to the giving of the Law at Sinai, and (3) the original

meaning of Pentecost as a first-fruits festival.¹³ The second suggestion is attractive since there is a nice symmetry between the giving of the Law at Mount Sinai and the giving of the Spirit at Pentecost. This would be a convenient background to Paul's contrast between the Law and the Spirit. The third alternative of Pentecost as a first-fruits festival is possible, especially if the conversions resulting from Peter's sermon are seen as a spiritual harvest.

The final option is that Luke had in mind a reversal of the curse of Babel. Genesis 11:1-9 describes how God scattered humanity because of their rebellious ways by causing them to speak languages which were not understood by each other. Acts 2:1-11 could possibly be seen as God gathering his people because of their obedience and allowing them to understand one another supernaturally. Some have seen this connection as being unlikely. Andrew Lincoln notes that there are no clear verbal links with Genesis 11.¹⁴ However, C. K. Barrett sees the comparison with the Tower of Babel as important, even though Luke seems to make no attempt to call the story to the reader's mind.¹⁵ F. F. Bruce once admitted that there is no direct evidence for this connection, but saw this as possibly being Luke's intention.¹⁶ Some years later, Bruce was nonetheless able to assert that "the event was

¹³Walt Russell, "Anointing with the Holy Spirit in Luke-Acts", *Trinity Journal* 7 (Spring 1986): 57-58.

¹⁴A. T. Lincoln, "Luke's Pentecost: Theology and History", *Expository Times* 96 (April 1985): 205.

¹⁵C. K. Barrett, *Acts of the Apostles* Vol. 1 (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1994), 112.

¹⁶F. F. Bruce, "Holy Spirit in the Acts of the Apostles", *Interpretation* 27 (April 1973): 171.

nothing less than a reversal of the curse of Babel.”¹⁷ While Luke does not explicitly mention the Tower of Babel, the images of unity and the Divine manipulation of language are there. In addition, the story of Babel is preceded by the table of nations in Genesis 10, while Luke includes a table of nations in his Pentecost narrative. Finally, the stress on unity in the quote from Joel makes a dramatic contrast to the scattering described at the Tower of Babel. It seems likely that Luke intended his readers to interpret the Pentecost narrative in light of the story of Babel.

It is possible that Luke sees Joel’s prophecy as the solution to the problem created at the Tower of Babel. At Babel, humanity rebelled against God and as a result humanity became divided. Now the time had come for humanity to call upon the name of the Lord and be brought back to unity. Although it is unlikely that Joel had Babel in mind, Luke may have seen Babel as the root of humanity’s problems. Genesis 11:1-9 records Babel as being the origin of the nations. Luke uses Joel’s prophecy to remove national and cultural distinctions. The rest of Acts records the gradual ingathering of the nations.

The Pentecost event begins with the believers being in one place. Most likely, the πάντες refers to the 120 believers described in Acts 1:15.¹⁸ The believers are said to be together (ὁμοῦ). This could possibly refer to their unity as opposed to just their physical

¹⁷F. F. Bruce, *Book of Acts* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988), 59.

¹⁸James D. G. Dunn, *Baptism in the Holy Spirit* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1970), 40.

proximity.¹⁹ That this was early on seen as referring to unity is perhaps shown in that C³ E Ψ_m have the more common Lukan ὁμοθυμαδόν (with one mind).²⁰

This crowd experienced three signs: a rushing wind, tongues of fire and speaking in other tongues. Of these signs, speaking in tongues is the most significant and it is the one that is continued in at least two of the other Spirit-baptism narratives. There is some confusion as to what is meant by ἑτέρας γλώσσας (“other tongues”). Glossolalia is mentioned in Acts 10:46; 19:6. 1 Corinthians 12-14 and the late addition of Mark 16:17. Some see the γλώσσας produced by the Spirit in this passage as different from the other examples of Spirit-inspired utterances in 10:46 and 19:6.²¹ The difference is that while the other examples seem to portray ecstatic speech, the Pentecost narrative clearly describes speaking in human languages.²² Each person at this gathering of Jews from many nations heard the believers speaking in his/her own language. I. Howard Marshall points out that although each one would have probably understood either Aramaic or Greek, it was important for them to hear the various vernacular languages being spoken.²³ F. J. Foakes-Jackson states that “the miracle was symbolic of the coming universality of the gospel.”²⁴ Hans Conzelmann sees

¹⁹Keener, *Spirit in the Gospels and Acts*, 193.

²⁰Barrett, *Acts of the Apostles*, 112.

²¹Lincoln, “Luke’s Pentecost”, 205.

²²Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *Acts of the Apostles* (New York: Doubleday, 1998), 239.

²³Marshall, *Acts of the Apostles*, 70.

²⁴F. J. Foakes-Jackson, *Acts of the Apostles* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1931), 11.

Luke as identifying tongues with prophecy.²⁵ This is likely since prophecy plays a major role in the quotation from Joel used on this occasion. Pauline distinctions between tongues and prophecy (1 Corinthians 14) should not be used to interpret Luke's pneumatology.

The significance of this event is not fully understood unless we examine the nature of the crowd witnessing this miracle. There is some difficulty in interpreting Luke's description of the crowd. Luke says that "there were devout Jews from every nation under heaven living (κατοικοῦντες) in Jerusalem." Longenecker interprets κατοικοῦντες as meaning that these Jews were living in Jerusalem and not just visiting. Longenecker states, "Contrary to many who have assumed that the Jews mentioned here were pilgrims to Jerusalem coming for the Pentecost festival, it is more probable that they were residents of Jerusalem who had returned from Diaspora lands at some earlier time to settle down in their homeland."²⁶ A. J. M. Wedderburn explains the case for these Jews being permanent residents of Jerusalem:

Apart from the linguistic observation that it is unparalleled to find κατοικεῖν used of the temporary residence in a place of travelers or pilgrims, it has also been noted that Luke would be unwilling to make the audience here only temporary residents of Jerusalem. For, were that the case, the church in Jerusalem, which is to be so dramatically increased in numbers by this day's events, would be decimated at the end of the festival by the departure of most, if not all, of its new converts.²⁷

²⁵Hans Conzelmann, *Acts of the Apostles* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1987), 20.

²⁶Longenecker, "Acts", 272.

²⁷A. J. M. Wedderburn, "Traditions and Redaction in Acts 2.1-13", *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 55 (September 1994): 40.

Despite this, scholars such as F. F. Bruce²⁸ and Joseph Fitzmyer²⁹ maintain that these Jews were pilgrims from the Diaspora, who were in Jerusalem only for the festival. It is impossible to know for certain what Luke meant by this phrase. But Barrett points out what is clear from this section: “from the beginning the Christian church was an inspired community and a universal community.”³⁰ What is important is the variety of nations that were connected to these Jews. The considerable space that Luke gives to the list of nations reveals the importance of this diversity for his purposes. Some see this list of nations as foreshadowing the future nature of the church:

But the coming of the Spirit is not only for Israel, Pentecost also foreshadows the universality of the church’s mission. This is surely the significance of the Jerusalem residents who appear on the scene turning out to be representatives from every nation under heaven and of the geographical listing which follows in 2.9-11.³¹

Luke seems to have a specific agenda by stressing the diversity of nations represented at Pentecost.

The glossolalia being spoken by the 120 believers caused a reaction by the international crowd who witnessed it. Peter stood up and began to explain that the believers were not filled with wine but were fulfilling prophecy. Joel’s prophecy is essential to Luke’s understanding of the role of the Holy Spirit. As Craig Evans points out, this influence goes beyond the actual quote:

²⁸Bruce, *Acts*, 53.

²⁹Fitzmyer, *Acts of the Apostles*, 236.

³⁰Barrett, *Acts of the Apostles*, 118.

³¹Lincoln, “Luke’s Pentecost”, 205.

Something that has gone unobserved, however, is the fact that the setting that Luke has created for Peter's sermon is laced throughout with language taken from Joel. In the verses immediately leading up to the sermon (i.e. vv. 1-16) there are numerous words and images also found in Joel. In fact, approximately 20 words in Luke's narrative and in Peter's opening remarks may be traced to Joel. Of even greater significance is the fact that many of these words provide essential details to the narrative itself.³²

Many scholars have noted that Peter (Luke) introduces the quote from Joel with the *pesher* introductory formula: "this is that." In calling it a *pesher*, Longenecker means that "It lays all emphasis on fulfillment without attempting to exegete the details of the biblical prophecy it 'interprets.'"³³ The question is, which part of the prophecy was fulfilled?

To understand this, it is useful to look at the original meaning of the excerpt from Joel. The term "all flesh" (כָּל-בָּשָׂר/πάσσαν σάρκα) can possibly mean all of humanity but in the context of Joel, it refers specifically to Israel. The "all flesh" includes the weak, powerless and hopeless who will find new life with God. The list of recipients of the Spirit includes an element of social revolution.³⁴ Hans Wolff explains the promise found within this prophecy:

All without exception are to be strengthened in the certainty of God's intercession for his people. Before the wealth of such an outpouring, all distinctions of sex and age recede completely, indeed even the contrasts of social position.³⁵

³²Craig A. Evans, "Prophetic Setting of the Pentecost Sermon", *Zeitschrift für die Neutestamentliche Wissenschaft* 74 (1983): 149.

³³Longenecker, "Acts", 275.

³⁴Wolff, *Joel and Amos*, 67.

³⁵*Ibid.*

The strong and wealthy already participated in the advantages of being members of Israel. This prophecy brings the weak and poor on to the same level spiritually. Joel 2:32 explains that physical membership in Israel is not a guarantee of deliverance. It is only those who “call on the name of the Lord,” who will be saved.³⁶

Luke’s quotation of Joel can be used as a way to explain the glossolalia from an Old Testament prophecy. While the fact that the Spirit of prophecy has come is important to Luke, it is not the only matter that is of concern. More important than the content of what has come, is the issue of who it has come to. The passage from Joel speaks of the pouring out of the Holy Spirit on all Israel, surpassing the social barriers that once existed. At the same time Luke stresses the universal nature of the early Church by the diversity of nations being represented. Joel sees those who are saved as “calling on the name of the Lord.” This is an important theme for Luke throughout Acts. There is a strong sense of universality when it comes to the Spirit in both Joel and Luke’s work in Acts. It seems clear that Luke’s understanding of the role of the Spirit is found in the context of the passage from Joel. The birth of the Church is seen as an act of the Spirit. Luke expects those who believe to receive the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:38). Luke sees an inseparable connection between the Holy Spirit and the people of God. This will be compared to other examples of Spirit-baptism in Acts.

Samaritans: Acts 8:4-25

The next passage in which a group of people receive the Holy Spirit is Acts 8:4-25. The background for this passage is the conflict between the Samaritans and the Jews which began with the separation of the Ten Tribes in the tenth century B.C.E. and culminated in the

³⁶*Ibid.* 69.

building of a rival temple during the time of Alexander the Great.³⁷ The actual relationship between the Samaritans and the Jews is a confusing one. Fitzmyer describes the Samaritans as “not Jews in the strict sense but remotely related to Judaism.”³⁸ Marshall stresses that any attempt to evangelize the Samaritans should not be seen as the first attempt to convert the gentiles.³⁹ While the Samaritans cannot be equated with the gentiles, there was a definite racial and religious barrier between the Samaritans and the Jews.

The cultural and religious animosity between the Jews and the Samaritans prevented evangelization until Philip arrived, although it was foreshadowed by Luke 17:16 where only the leper from Samaria returned to thank Jesus for his healing. Philip was one of the seven Hellenistic Jewish Christians chosen in Acts 6:5 for special service. Like Stephen, Philip included evangelism in his ministry. Longenecker sees Philip’s Hellenistic background as an asset in the evangelism of the Samaritans:

Doubtless a feeling of kinship was established between the formerly dispossessed Samaritans and the recently dispossessed Christian Hellenists because of Stephen’s opposition to the mentality of mainstream Judaism and its veneration of the Jerusalem Temple - an opposition that would have facilitated a favorable response to Philip and his message in Samaria.⁴⁰

Whatever the reason, Philip seemed to be successful. Many of the Samaritans believed Philip and were baptized (8:12).

³⁷Longenecker, “Acts”, 356-357.

³⁸Fitzmyer, *Acts of the Apostles*, 400.

³⁹Marshall, *Acts of the Apostles*, 153.

⁴⁰Longenecker, “Acts”, 355.

The Jerusalem church heard about the events in Samaria and sent Peter and John to investigate. Ernst Käsemann gives a possible reason for the Jerusalem church sending Peter and John:

Philip has begun upon the evangelization of Samaria on his own initiative and without express authorization, and has been highly successful. The result of his efforts has been the emergence of a church almost entirely independent of Jerusalem. ... Peter and John must therefore be portrayed as going to Samaria to visit the community which has come into existence there and to receive it into the fellowship of the apostolic church.⁴¹

Bruce points out the irony of John being involved, considering his earlier desire to call down fire on a Samaritan community in Luke 9:52-55.⁴²

When Peter and John came to the Samaritans, they found that the Samaritans had not received the Holy Spirit (Acts 8:16). This has caused much confusion among scholars. The New Testament concept of salvation normally implies the reception of the Holy Spirit.⁴³ If the Samaritans do not have the Spirit, it would seem they cannot be Christians. Yet Acts 8:12 says that they believed Philip and were even baptized. The question must be asked, Did the Samaritans become Christians before the arrival of Peter and John? James Dunn suggests that the Samaritans were not Christians. Dunn explains his reasoning:

When πιστεύειν governs a dative object (except perhaps κύριος or θεός) it signifies intellectual assent to a statement or proposition, rather than commitment to God (24.14; 26.27). This use of πιστεύειν, unique in Acts, can surely be no accident on Luke's part. He indicates thereby that the Samaritans' response was simply an assent of the mind to the acceptability of what Philip was saying and an acquiescence to the course of action he

⁴¹Ernst Käsemann, *Essays on New Testament Themes* (London: SCM, 1964), 145.

⁴²Bruce, *Acts*, 168.

⁴³Dunn, *Baptism in the Holy Spirit*, 55.

advocated, rather than that commitment distinctively described elsewhere which alone deserves the name 'Christian.'⁴⁴

Despite this, there are some who disagree with Dunn's conclusion. I. Howard Marshall⁴⁵ and Walt Russell⁴⁶ do not see a lack of faith on the part of the Samaritans. Those who believe that the Samaritans became Christians under the ministry of Philip see the reception of the Spirit under the Apostles being necessary in order to provide a sign that the Samaritans had been incorporated into the community of the Jerusalem Christians.⁴⁷ Longenecker believes that the Samaritans were converted under Philip because they would not otherwise have accepted Jerusalem missionaries due to their anti-Jewish sentiment. At the same time, the Samaritans needed to receive the Spirit through the Apostles to prevent anti-Hellenistic feelings being held against the Samaritans on the basis of their conversion under a Hellenistic evangelist.⁴⁸ Barrett also sees the reception of the Spirit through the Apostles as important to demonstrate the unity among Hellenistic and Hebrew evangelists.⁴⁹

The conversion of the Samaritans and their receiving of the Holy Spirit was an important step in the history of the Church. According to Barrett, "Luke notes an important milestone in the expansion of Christianity: he emphasizes afresh the unity of the church in its

⁴⁴*Ibid.* 65.

⁴⁵Marshall, *Acts of the Apostles*, 156.

⁴⁶Russell, "Anointing with the Holy Spirit in Luke-Acts", 61.

⁴⁷Marshall, *Acts of the Apostles*, 157.

⁴⁸Longenecker, "Acts", 359.

⁴⁹Barrett, *Acts of the Apostles*, 410.

ideal age.”⁵⁰ Longenecker states, “What [Luke] does tell us, however, is that in such a manner as this vignette shows, God was working in ways that promoted both the outreach of the gospel and the unity of the church.”⁵¹ Fitzmyer explains that this is part of Luke’s description of the incorporation of splinter groups into the mainstream church.⁵² All of this fits into Luke’s understanding of the role of the Spirit in the context of Joel’s prophecy. As the Samaritans call on the name of the Lord, they become part of the “all flesh,” notwithstanding any racial or religious prejudice that previously existed. This is a continuation of the Spirit’s work at Pentecost. Through a similar charismatic experience as took place at Pentecost, the Spirit witnesses to God’s inclusion of the Samaritans into the people of God.

Cornelius: Acts 10:1-48

Perhaps one of the best known parallels to the story of Pentecost is the story of Cornelius in Acts 10:1-48. Some have even called this the “Gentile Pentecost.”⁵³ Peter compares this event to the Apostles’ own receiving of the Spirit (Acts 11:15). Although a gentile had been converted under Philip’s ministry (Acts 8:26-39), the conversion of Cornelius was the event that opened up the gentile mission to the Church.

Cornelius is not described as an average gentile pagan. Luke describes Cornelius as devout and fearing God (εὐσεβῆς καὶ φοβούμενος τὸν θεόν). Many have interpreted

⁵⁰*Ibid.*, 396.

⁵¹Longenecker, “Acts”, 359.

⁵²Fitzmyer, *Acts of the Apostles*, 400-401.

⁵³Longenecker, “Acts”, 394.

Cornelius as belonging to a religious class called the “God-fearers.” Dunn sees this story as being about “removing the decisive difference between the pious God-fearer and the Christian Jew.”⁵⁴ However, it is not clear that there was such a class as the “God-fearers.” Fitzmyer sees “God-fearer” as a quasi-technical phrase to refer to “non-Jews sympathetic to Judaism, those who did not submit to circumcision or observe the Torah in its entirety, but who did agree with the ethical monotheism of the Jews and attended their synagogue services.”⁵⁵ Nevertheless, many would agree with Barrett when he says that the term “God-fearers” was not necessarily a technical term but could be simply descriptive of the pious.⁵⁶ It is likely that there were people who were attracted to Judaism but who had not become proselytes, even if they did not use a specific name to describe themselves or were not recognized as a special class. Cornelius seems to be one of these pious non-proselytes.

The level of prejudice between Jewish Christians and gentiles is evident in the amount of persuading God must do before Peter agrees to visit Cornelius (Acts 10:9-16). However, Peter does agree to go to Cornelius and begins to preach the Gospel. While Peter was still speaking, the Holy Spirit fell upon Cornelius and his household in a way very similar to Pentecost, including the experience of glossolalia. Peter’s comparison to the experience of the Apostles makes it clear that there is no second-class status for the gentiles.⁵⁷ God had

⁵⁴Dunn, *Baptism in the Holy Spirit*, 81.

⁵⁵Fitzmyer, *Acts of the Apostles*, 449-450.

⁵⁶Barrett, *Acts of the Apostles*, 500.

⁵⁷Marshall, *Acts of the Apostles*, 197.

attested to Cornelius's actions by a similar experience of glossolalia as occurred at Pentecost.⁵⁸

This was necessary because of the deep-rooted Jewish prejudice against gentiles. Even Peter required a supernatural sign in order to take this radical step in the understanding of how one becomes a Christian:

[Baptism] marked Peter's practical acquiescence in the divine *fait accompli*, for, had he not been faced with such a *fait accompli*, he might well have hesitated to welcome them into the beloved community otherwise than by the well-established procedure for admitting proselytes into the commonwealth of Israel.⁵⁹

The pouring out of the Spirit upon the gentiles was a sign the Jewish Christians could not ignore. God had accepted the God-fearing gentiles, and it was up to the Jewish Christians to accept them as well. According to Longenecker, "This was a response of momentous importance by the church at Jerusalem, and Luke meant his readers to appreciate it as being as significant in validating a later gentile mission as Cornelius' conversion itself."⁶⁰ In the words of Hans Conzelmann, "heaven itself points the way to the admission of the gentiles."⁶¹

All of this had its seed in the prophecy of Joel. Although Joel's prophecy did not originally include gentiles, the "all flesh" was defined as those who call upon the name of the Lord (Joel 2:32). In Joel's day that did not explicitly include gentiles. However, the time had now come when both Jews and gentiles would indeed call on the name of the Lord. With

⁵⁸Longenecker, "Acts", 394.

⁵⁹Bruce, *Interpretation*, 175-176.

⁶⁰Longenecker, "Acts", 397.

⁶¹Conzelmann, *Acts of the Apostles*, 84.

Cornelius and his household, gentiles began to call on the name of the Lord and they received the promised Spirit.

Ephesus: Acts 19:1-7

The passage about Paul's encounter with the twelve disciples at Ephesus is one of the more difficult passages in the New Testament, one which Käsemann calls "the despair of the exegete."⁶² Paul, coming to Ephesus, meets twelve people, called "disciples," who had received the baptism of John yet had not heard of the Holy Spirit. Longenecker sees Paul being troubled by this because of two assumptions:

- (1) they were truly Christians, since they professed to believe;
- (2) true belief and the reception of the Holy Spirit always went together, being unable to be separated either logically or chronologically.⁶³

It appeared to Paul that one of these assumptions must be wrong if these disciples had not even heard of the Holy Spirit.

Based on these problems, there have been many attempts to discover the identity of these disciples. Bruce believed that the twelve were not disciples of John the Baptist but of Jesus, although from an alternate tradition than that of the Jerusalem church.⁶⁴ Dunn sees these twelve as being neither Christians nor disciples of John the Baptist. Rather they were people who had some exposure to John and/or Jesus but were not able to receive full knowledge.⁶⁵ Marshall believes that they were not Christians and they were not disciples of

⁶²Käsemann, *Essays on New Testament Themes*, 136.

⁶³Longenecker, "Acts", 493.

⁶⁴Bruce, *Acts*, 363.

⁶⁵Dunn, *Baptism in the Holy Spirit*, 83-85.

John the Baptist, although they were influenced by John.⁶⁶ Longenecker and Fitzmyer see the twelve as Christian followers of John. Longenecker sees them as being in some sense Christian disciples, although believing that John was the height of God's revelation.⁶⁷ Fitzmyer believes that μαθητὰς ("disciples") must mean Christian disciples unless it is otherwise specified. Fitzmyer calls them "Johannine Christians."⁶⁸ It seems likely that these twelve disciples had a connection to John the Baptist and at least some limited knowledge of Jesus.

There is a problem with the disciples' comment that they had not heard that there was a Holy Spirit. Even if they were followers of John, the Holy Spirit was still part of John's proclamation (Luke 3:16). Bruce explains it as follows: "they did not know that Jesus, in whom they had believed, was the one who would administer this baptism with the Holy Spirit, or that this baptism had now been inaugurated."⁶⁹ Marshall believes that the teachings of John had been garbled by this point.⁷⁰

Whatever their misunderstanding was, after Paul caused them to be baptized in the name of Jesus and laid hands on them, the Holy Spirit came upon them with glossolalia as a sign. This event was just as significant as it was for the Samaritans and Cornelius because the church once more had to overcome prejudice. Again, another splinter group, this time the

⁶⁶Marshall, *Acts of the Apostles*, 305-306.

⁶⁷Longenecker, "Acts", 493.

⁶⁸Fitzmyer, *Acts of the Apostles*, 642-643.

⁶⁹Bruce, *Acts*, 363.

⁷⁰Marshall, *Acts of the Apostles*, 306.

disciples of John the Baptist, experienced the Spirit in a way similar to the Pentecost event with the Jewish Christians. As with the Samaritans and the Gentiles, there was some hesitancy in admitting followers of John into the Christian community. According to Käsemann:

The existence of a community owing allegiance to the Baptist could not be admitted without endangering gravely the Church's view of his function. For such a community would be bound to put John in the place which Jesus occupied in Christendom, making him Messiah and *Kyrios* and thus the rival of Jesus; it would run counter, in the most concrete and thoroughgoing fashion, to the Church's tradition of the forerunner of Jesus.⁷¹

Despite this reluctance, God testified to their worthiness by pouring out his Spirit just as he did for the gentiles, the Samaritans and the Jews at Pentecost. According to Fitzmyer, "The Lucan intention is clear: to depict the incorporation of such fringe Christians into the mainstream church, which is under the guidance of the Holy Spirit."⁷² This was the continuation of the fulfillment of Joel's prophecy that began at Pentecost. Despite any religious prejudice that the church may have against the followers of John the Baptist, in the present eschatological age it is only the possession of the Spirit that defines the people of God. The experience with the Spirit of the followers of John the Baptist testifies to their acceptance into the people of God.

Conclusion

The prophecy of Joel about the Spirit being poured out on all flesh in the last days is vital to Luke's understanding of the role of the Holy Spirit. In Luke's Gospel, the Spirit is

⁷¹Käsemann, *Essays on New Testament Themes*, 142.

⁷²Fitzmyer, *Acts of the Apostles*, 642.

described primarily in relation to Jesus. However, even in Luke there is a hint that Spirit will be available to all of the people of God. In Joel's prophecy, the marginalized are specifically included as receiving the Spirit. In the infancy narrative, Luke pairs male and female prophets anticipating the equality in the Spirit that comes in the messianic age. Luke seems to be making the point that with the birth of the Messiah, gender distinctions and possibly age distinctions would lose their significance. In the same way, Luke describes the baptism with the Holy Spirit continuing from the initial outpouring upon the Diaspora Jews to various marginalized groups. The breaking down of age, gender and economic distinctions in Joel is recast as breaking down racial and religious distinctions in the context of the early church in Acts. In each case, these groups are accepted by the Jerusalem Church only because of the witness of the Spirit's intervention. Luke agrees with Paul in that unity is based on the common experience with the Spirit. Just as in the prophecy of Joel where only those who call upon the name of the Lord are saved, for Luke anyone who calls on the name of the Lord receives the Holy Spirit, no matter what group they belong to. As each group receives the Spirit baptism, the universality of the Church of Christ is increasingly revealed. Thus the prophecy of Joel is fulfilled, although perhaps in a way not foreseen by Joel, whereby distinctions of race and theological differences fall away in the presence of the prophetic Spirit. For Luke it is the possession of the Holy Spirit that defines the people of God.

CONCLUSION

The pouring out of the Holy Spirit in the New Testament must be examined in terms of the Jewish understanding of the role of the Holy Spirit. While the cessation theory of the Holy Spirit is based mostly on later rabbinical texts and is not strongly supported from Second Temple texts, there was an understanding in Second Temple Judaism that the activity of the Holy Spirit had changed since the time of the last biblical prophets. The Holy Spirit has been seen by some as a synonym for prophecy in early Jewish theology. Although this may be an exaggeration, the Spirit and prophecy were closely linked. While the Spirit still played a role in Jewish literature, the understanding of prophecy had changed. After the last prophet, Malachi, no other individual was accepted within the Second Temple period as a prophet in the classical sense. Some forms of prophecy continued, but in a manner understood as being inferior to biblical prophecy. Apocalyptic literature continued some of the role of biblical prophecy but always under the name of a person from the biblical era. The Qumran sectarians understood the Teacher of Righteousness as divinely inspired, but even his work was seen only as an inspired interpretation of the biblical prophets. Josephus was able to accept the presence of the prophetic gift within certain special individuals, yet denied the continuation of the line of prophets.

However, there was some hope within Second Temple Judaism that the prophetic Spirit would again be poured out upon God's people. This hope was based largely on prophecies found in Isaiah, Ezekiel and Joel. Isaiah and Ezekiel in particular prophesied in

the historical context of political oppression from Assyria and Babylonia. There was no hint of a cessation of the Spirit, since these prophets understood themselves as being inspired by the Spirit. Rather they spoke of a time of renewal that would come with Israel's restoration.

Later Jewish interpreters, however, saw the Jewish exile as lasting beyond the literal seventy years in Babylon and the nation's return to Palestine. As a result of this reinterpretation and perceived lengthening of the exile, such prophecies of hope often took on new meaning. Some of the themes that can be found in the prophecies of Isaiah and Ezekiel include an eschatological time line, with the pouring out of the Spirit being specifically linked to the appearance of the Messiah. While the Spirit served various functions within Second Temple theology, the return of a prophetic role was central to these expectations. The Spirit would no longer belong to a spiritual elite; but would instead be poured out abundantly on all people. This outpouring would result in obedience, redemption and reconciliation. There was emphasis, particularly in Isaiah, on the power given to the marginalized in order for them to be active members of the spiritual community. In some texts the marginalized even included gentiles.

The best known Old Testament prophecy of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit is found in Joel, which includes many of the same themes already present in the prophecies of Isaiah and Ezekiel. Joel's distinctive contribution, however, is his focus on inclusivity: that the Holy Spirit would be poured out on "all flesh" (Joel 2:28). What Joel means by "all flesh" is illustrated by the breaking down of gender, age and economic distinctions. The people of God are identified as those who possess the prophetic Spirit, for in the presence of the Holy Spirit all other distinctions fall away.

In keeping with prophetic expectation, one of the ways that the early church understood their identity was in terms of possession of the Holy Spirit. This theme can be found in a number of traditions. The synoptic Gospels describe the appearance of the Messiah as being the critical event for the relationship of the people of God with the Spirit. The Gospel of John contains a number of predictions of the coming Spirit and a description of the Spirit being received by the disciples. John demonstrates the close connection between possession of the Spirit and the people of God, for it is only by the Spirit that followers of Christ can understand Jesus' teachings and have the power to be obedient. The possibility that Paul also saw the coming of the Spirit in terms of the Joel's prophecy is suggested by his restating of Joel's inclusion of "all flesh" in contemporary terms. For Paul saw the common experience of the Spirit as breaking down every racial, gender and economic distinction.

The fulfillment of Joel's prophecy is especially evident in Luke-Acts. Luke's account anticipates the availability to all of the prophetic Spirit with the appearance of two pairs of male-female prophets at Jesus' birth. The fulness of the Spirit's presence, however, does not come until Pentecost. In the presence of an international crowd the Spirit is poured out, breaking the curse of Babel through glossolalia. Although all followers of Christ become equal at this point through their common experience of the Spirit, it takes some time for the church to implement this theological principle. Luke describes a number of incidents in Acts where fringe groups are baptized with the Spirit with results similar to the Pentecost event. Through dramatic experiences with the prophetic Spirit, the Samaritans, gentiles and followers of John the Baptist are brought into communion with the rest of the church. Any

sense of racial and religious inferiority on the part of these fringe groups is obviated as a result of their common experience with the Spirit.

The New Testament seems to show the exile that began so many years earlier finally ending with the crucifixion of Jesus. Jesus' payment for sin allowed the return to the pre-exilic relationship with God, including the possession of the prophetic Spirit. Since national sin had been the cause of the original exile, and continued sin the reason for its perceived extension in some "spiritual" (if not literal) sense, Jesus' decisive victory over sin allowed for a return to God's presence. However, this was not understood simply a return to a previous era, but rather as the beginning of a new age. The presence of the Spirit would now serve not only to renew the relationship of the people with God but to transform relations among God's people. Thus the distinctions that have divided people over the centuries do not matter in the kingdom of God. All distinctions of race, gender and economic status are meaningless when each follower of Christ possesses the same Spirit. Christians' common experience with the Spirit provides the basis for their unity. This was a radical redefinition of the people of God.

Despite the New Testament's teaching of equality based on the possession of the Spirit, the Church has struggled greatly with regard to unity and tolerance of differences. The Church has divided itself over every issue imaginable, including the issues of race, gender and economic status which Paul taught as being no longer relevant (Galatians 3:28). Racism, sexism, economic segregation, denominational prejudice and theological pride are only a few of the problems facing the modern Church.

The answer to these problems is the same as described in the New Testament: unity in the Spirit. Every so often the Church rediscovers the Spirit and the distinctions begin to

fall away once more. For example, in the beginning of the twentieth century with the Pentecostal revival that began at the Azusa Street Mission in Los Angeles, the Church rediscovered the Holy Spirit. In some churches, it was the first time that blacks and whites had worshiped together. Women were given opportunities to minister as never before, all because of an understanding that the Spirit was present. While charismatic revivals are not necessary for the Church's unity, an understanding of the Spirit's presence is required. Societal distinctions which are tearing the Church apart must fall away in the presence of the Church's common experience in the Spirit. If the church could rediscover the Spirit once more, battles over Arminianism vs. Calvinism, Catholicism vs. Protestantism, Fundamentalism vs. Feminist theology would lose all ability to divide the church. This is not to argue for a uniform church with no differences of opinion or style, but rather for a unified body of Christ in which each part, no matter how different, is joined together by the Spirit and is used to further the kingdom of God. This was the role of the Spirit in the New Testament church and it must be the role of the Spirit in the modern Church.

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