

Baptism with and Filling of the Holy Spirit

Gregg R. Allison

As the other contributions to this journal underscore, the ministry of the Holy Spirit during this intra-advent period is multifold; indeed, the expansive work of the Holy Spirit is characteristic of the new covenant.¹ Among unbelievers the Spirit works powerfully to convict of sin (especially unbelief), (self) righteousness, and

(false) judgment (John 16:8-11), and to bring them from spiritual death to spiritual life through his regenerating action (John 3:1-8; Titus 3:5). The Holy Spirit seals these new believers, being the guarantee of God's continuing work in their lives (Eph 1:13-14) and providing assurance that they belong to Christ forever (Rom 8:16). As Christians struggle in prayer, the Spirit helps them through his intercessory ministry (Rom 8:26-27) and, as they read Scripture, the Spirit

illuminates them to grasp properly its meaning and significance (1 Cor 2:10-3:4). His sanctifying work is an ongoing process of transformation into greater conformity to the image of Jesus Christ (2 Cor 3:18), which is noticeable in Christ-like characteristics, the fruit of the Spirit (Gal 5:22-23). The Spirit empowers church members for evangelism (Acts 1:8), endows them with spiritual gifts for growth (1 Cor 12-14), equips them to desire and carry out the will of God while resisting the enticements of their sinful nature (Gal 5:16-17), and much, much more (e.g., Acts 13:1-3; 20:28).

While rehearsing with great appreciation these mighty acts of the Holy Spirit, I will focus my attention on two often overlooked works that involve him: baptism with the Spirit and the filling of the Spirit. I will describe both of these works involving the Spirit, explain the biblical affirmations about them, present the controversies surrounding them, and conclude with an appeal for Christian respect for divergences on these two matters while urging the church toward greater dependence on the Holy Spirit.

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Personally, this topic is of vital importance to me. When I became a Christian my senior year of high school, the powerful work of the Holy Spirit rescued me out of a life of self-righteous striving to become acceptable to God and focused my attention on Jesus Christ and the salvation he offers as my only hope for a relationship with God. The very first thought that flooded my mind after I cried out to God to save me was “now you have eternal life,” striking evidence of the Spirit’s internal witness (Rom 8:16) that I would belong to Christ from that day onward. Together with the sixty or so high school friends that professed faith along with me, I boldly shared my newfound faith with schoolmates, family, even my teachers. We gathered regularly to read the Bible and pray, urged on by the Spirit in the absence of mentors who would disciple us new Christians. As the emotional impact of our conversion began to dissipate, however, our Christian faith seemed to evaporate—and we stagnated.

It was not until over a year later, at the prompting of a friend, that I found relief from this desperate situation. Attending a meeting of Campus Crusade for Christ at my university, now known as Cru, I found myself in a breakout session on the topic “have you made the wonderful discovery of the Spirit-filled life?”² What I took away from that presentation was this truth: I cannot live the Christian life in my own strength and by my own resources, but God provides all that I need to please him through the Spirit that indwells me. Grasping my utter dependence on the Holy Spirit, I began a journey that propelled me into campus ministry, international missionary service, pastoring, Ph.D. studies, and a nearly two decade career in theological education.

But I get ahead of myself. I begin with baptism with the Holy Spirit, and then I will treat the filling of the Holy Spirit.

BAPTISM WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT: BIBLICAL AFFIRMATIONS AND THEOLOGICAL FORMULATION

According to John the Baptist, Jesus is “he who baptizes with the Holy Spirit” (John 1:33).

The Greek construction—*ho baptizōn en pneumati hagiō*—indicates that an ongoing ministry of Jesus is to baptize new believers with the Holy Spirit. Because this idea may be somewhat hard to grasp, I will use an example—water baptism—to illumine this Spirit baptism. Water baptism consists of four elements: the agent who baptizes (the pastor), the one who is baptized (the new believer), the medium of baptism (water), and the purpose of baptism (e.g., association with the triune God [Matt 28:19]; identification with the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus [Rom 6:1-10]). Baptism with the Spirit similarly consists of four elements: the agent who baptizes (Jesus Christ), the one who is baptized (the new believer), the medium of baptism (the Holy Spirit), and the purpose of baptism (incorporation into the body of Christ [1 Cor 12:13]). Following this discussion, I define baptism with the Spirit as the work of Jesus Christ in which he pours out the Holy Spirit on new believers thereby incorporating them into his (Christ’s) body, the church.³

The three Synoptic Gospel passages that address baptism with the Spirit confirm this understanding. To cite one of these parallel passages, Luke narrates John the Baptist’s announcement of the future work of Messiah:

As the people were in expectation, and all were questioning in their hearts concerning John, whether he might be the Christ, John answered them all, saying, “I baptize you with water, but he who is mightier than I is coming, the strap of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. His winnowing fork is in his hand, to clear his threshing floor and to gather the wheat into his barn, but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire” (Luke 3:15-17; par. Matt 3:11-12; Mark 1: 7-8).

In ways similar to John’s ministry of pouring out water upon those who heard his message and repented, Messiah would engage in a ministry of pouring out the Holy Spirit upon his (Messiah’s) followers.

That the purpose of Jesus Christ's baptism with the Holy Spirit is to incorporate new believers into his body, the church, is established by Paul in his instructions to the Corinthians: "For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and all were made to drink of one Spirit" (1 Cor 12:12-13). In the midst of his discussion of spiritual gifts and before he talks about the diversity of spiritually-gifted Christians, Paul underscores a point of commonality for them: all are baptized in the same Spirit into one body. Though the earlier cited passages and this current passage differ as to their construction, their meaning is the same. Specifically, the Gospel passages, grammatically speaking, are expressed in the active voice:⁴ Jesus Christ baptizes [Christians] with the Holy Spirit. The Pauline passage, grammatically speaking, is expressed in the passive voice:⁵ all [Christians] were baptized with the Holy Spirit. The meaning of both the actively expressed Gospel passages and the passively expressed Pauline passage is the same: the baptizer, Jesus Christ, baptizes all of his followers with the Holy Spirit. Importantly, the Pauline passage adds the purpose of this Spirit baptism: to incorporate all Christians into the body of Jesus Christ.

Seven passages in the book of Acts further address this work of Christ involving the Holy Spirit. The first is the resurrected Savior's own prophecy, addressed to his disciples sometime during the forty days between his resurrection and ascension, that the promise regarding this Spirit baptism would be fulfilled imminently: "And while staying with them [his disciples] he [Jesus Christ] ordered them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Father, which, he said, 'you heard from me; for John baptized with water, but *you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit*⁶ not many days from now'" (Acts 1:4-5).⁷ The fresh, new, unprecedented outpouring of the Holy Spirit, as promised by John (in keeping with such Old

Testament prophecies as Ezek 36:25-27 and Joel 2:28-32), was just days from being actualized.

The second passage in Acts presents the fulfillment of Jesus' above-cited promise:

When the day of Pentecost arrived, they [the 120 disciples] were all together in one place. And suddenly there came from heaven a sound like a mighty rushing wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. And divided tongues as of fire appeared to them and rested on each one of them. And *they were all filled with the Holy Spirit*⁸ and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance (Acts 2:1-4).

Though Luke does not narrate this descent of the Holy Spirit in terms of Jesus baptizing the disciples with the Spirit (active voice) but in terms of them being filled with the Spirit (passive voice; "being filled with" rather than "being baptized with"), the terms are clearly synonymous, for two reasons: the promise/fulfillment structure of Luke's work (Acts 1:5 anticipating 2:4), and the confirmation given shortly afterwards in the concluding section of Peter's sermon about Jesus: "Being therefore exalted at the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, *he* [Jesus] *has poured out*⁹ this that you yourselves are seeing and hearing" (Acts 2:33). In terms of what happened on the day of Pentecost, Luke describes Jesus as the one who "baptized with the Holy Spirit" (Acts 1:4), or who "poured out" the Holy Spirit on the disciples (Acts 2:33), who were thereby "filled with the Holy Spirit" (Acts 2:4).

The third related Acts passage is Peter's promise to the audience listening to his preaching of the gospel on Pentecost. As those who responded to this message were convicted of sin, Peter indicated the appropriate response:

Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and *you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit*.¹⁰ For the promise is for you and for your children

and for all who are far off, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to himself (Acts 2:38-39).

According to Peter, salvation in Jesus Christ is appropriated by repentance from sins and baptism in his name, with the result that those who so respond are forgiven of their sins and receive the Holy Spirit.¹¹ This affirmation, being all of a piece with this narrative that earlier recounts the filling/baptism with the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:4/Acts 1:5) which Jesus pours out (Acts 2:33), clearly indicates that this divine work is baptism with the Spirit. Amazingly, three thousand people experience this mighty work of Jesus Christ and are incorporated into the new church of Jerusalem (Acts 2:41-47). Peter further promises to his audience that the gift of the Holy Spirit was not reserved for them but was intended for all who would find salvation through the divine call. Clearly, this promise anticipated future events such as the inclusion of the Samaritans and the Gentiles in the salvific plan of God.¹²

The fourth and fifth passages address this conversion of the first Gentiles, with Luke providing two very similar accounts of this stunning incident. Acts 10 is the first and lengthier story of Peter's preaching of the gospel to a centurion and his family and friends; it concludes:

While Peter was still saying these things, *the Holy Spirit fell on*¹³ all who heard the word. And the believers from among the circumcised who had come with Peter were amazed, because *the gift of the Holy Spirit was poured out*¹⁴ even on the Gentiles. For *they were hearing them speaking in tongues and extolling God*.¹⁵ Then Peter declared, "Can anyone withhold water for baptizing these people, who *have received the Holy Spirit*¹⁶ just as we have?" (Acts 10:44-47)

While the falling of the Holy Spirit upon these Gentiles was certainly unexpected and unprecedented, the fact that this event was Jesus baptizing them with the Holy Spirit was unmistakable. Peter and those with him heard the proof: now, even

the Gentiles were rehearsing the mighty acts of God in unusual utterances, as the Jewish disciples had done on the day of Pentecost when they were baptized with the Spirit.¹⁷ Expressed in a slightly different way, Peter insisted on (water) baptism for "these people [Gentiles], who have received the Spirit just as we [the Jewish disciples] have." Luke's further description of this phenomenon as the pouring out of "the gift of the Holy Spirit" recalls another earlier narrative promising "the gift of the Holy Spirit" to all who respond to the gospel (Acts 2:38) and confirms that baptism with the Spirit occurred as the Gentiles experienced salvation.

The second account of the conversion of the Gentiles (Acts 11:1-18) is shorter and presents Peter's personal reminiscence provoked by this incident:

As I began to speak, *the Holy Spirit fell on*¹⁸ them just as on us at the beginning. And I remembered the word of the Lord, how he said, "John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit." If then God gave *the same gift*¹⁹ to them as he gave to us when we believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I that I could stand in God's way? (Acts 11:15-17)

The startling experience of his Gentile audience reminded Peter of the startling experience of the 120 disciples—among which he himself was included—on the day of Pentecost.²⁰ The parallelism is striking:

- the Holy Spirit had fallen on the Jewish disciples; the Holy Spirit fell on the Gentiles;
- the Jewish disciples had been baptized with the Spirit; the Gentiles were baptized with the Holy Spirit;
- God gave the gift of the Holy Spirit to the Jewish disciples²¹ when they believed in Christ, who had promised them such a baptism (Luke 3:15-17; Acts 1:4-5); God gave "the same gift [of the Holy Spirit]" to the Gentiles when they believed.²²

The parallelism between the experience of the Jewish disciples on the day of Pentecost and the experience of the Gentiles confirms that baptism with the Spirit occurred as the Gentiles believed in Jesus Christ for salvation. Of particular note is Peter's identification of the day of Pentecost with the coming of the Spirit as the occasion "when we [the disciples and himself] believed in the Lord Jesus Christ." Even for the disciples of the Lord, baptism with the Spirit and faith in Christ were contemporaneous.

The conclusion to be drawn from these passages is that one of the aspects of God's work of saving sinful human beings is Jesus Christ's baptism of new converts with the Holy Spirit, by which they are incorporated into his (Christ's) body, the church. Such a baptism is (1) initiatory, occurring at the beginning of salvation (along with effective call, regeneration, justification, union with Christ, adoption, and initial sanctification); (2) universal, being a divine work in the life of every Christian; (3) purposeful, incorporating new believers into the church of Jesus Christ; and (4) indelible, being a permanent membership in the body of Christ, from which defection is not possible.²³

BAPTISM WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT: A PENTECOSTAL/CHARISMATIC INTERPRETATION OF KEY PASSAGES AND THEOLOGICAL FORMULATION

This position does not go without challenge. Pentecostal and charismatic theology generally maintains that baptism with the Holy Spirit is a second blessing, an experience of God's grace subsequent to conversion.²⁴ To be more specific, a distinction is commonly made between (1) *the doctrine of separability*, which maintains that baptism with the Spirit is different from regeneration (Spirit baptism can be *separated from* regeneration), and (2) *the doctrine of subsequence*, which holds that baptism with the Spirit follows regeneration, either temporally (Spirit baptism occurs *some time after* salvation) or logically (Spirit baptism and salvation occur *at the same time* but the former is *logically*

dependent on the latter).²⁵ In the following discussion, I will particularly interact with J. Rodman Williams, a leading Pentecostal theologian.²⁶

According to Williams, we must distinguish between two experiences involving the Holy Spirit. The first occurs at salvation and it involves Jesus Christ as the one who baptizes believers in the Holy Spirit (Mark 1:8; 1 Cor 12:13).²⁷ Essentially, this first experience corresponds to what I have set forth above.²⁸ The second experience is the coming of the Holy Spirit, who is said to be "poured out" (Acts 2:33; 10:45; Titus 3:5-6), to "fall upon" (Acts 8:16; 10:44; 11:15) and to "come upon" believers (Acts 1:8; 19:6). Accordingly, these Christians are said to be "baptized with" (Acts 1:5; 11:16) or "filled with" (Acts 2:2-4; 4:31; 9:17; 13:9, 52; Eph 5:18) the Holy Spirit.²⁹ This position by no means denies the powerful work of the Holy Spirit at the beginning of salvation, a work that includes conviction of sin (John 16:8) and regeneration (Titus 3:5; John 3:3, 5).³⁰ Indeed, Williams specifies, "There could be no repentance and faith without the work of the Holy Spirit making such possible.... But salvation itself was not the gift of the Spirit."³¹ Assessing that "none of the New Testament accounts of the coming of the Holy Spirit are concerned with salvation," Williams insists, "The gift of the Holy Spirit ... goes *beyond* salvation; it is promised to those who repent *and* come to faith in Jesus Christ."³² Thus, the purpose of this Spirit baptism is not soteriological—that is, to save nonbelievers—but missional—that is, to empower Christians for effective evangelism and ministry. This second experience of the pouring out of the Holy Spirit, which is available to all believers, takes place sometime—minutes, days, months, years, perhaps even decades—after salvation occurs.³³ Williams describes this divine work as "a profoundly internal experience of the Spirit of God moving throughout like wind or fire until all barriers are breached and the Holy Spirit pervades everything."³⁴ Accordingly, the gift of the Spirit, which is the pouring out of the Spirit such that believers are "baptized with" or "filled with"

him, is a second blessing following salvation.

This position is commonly supported by appealing to six key New Testament accounts in which the reception of the Holy Spirit is subsequent to salvation. These events, and the passages that narrative them, are:

- The command of Jesus to his disciples to wait for the Holy Spirit to come (Luke 24:48-49; Acts 1:4-5). The disciples had already “come to a vital faith in Christ” and had been “redeemed from their old life”; after all, they were disciples of Jesus, who had called them, led them, taught them, and even imparted the Holy Spirit to them (John 20:22). Accordingly, as believers saved by Christ, the disciples experienced the gift of the Holy Spirit subsequent to their conversion.³⁵
- The salvation of the three thousand people listening to Peter’s sermon on the day of Pentecost. As his audience acknowledges their sin, Peter exhorts them, “Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit” (Acts 2:38). According to Williams, “By such repentance and faith there would be salvation; and to such persons the Holy Spirit was promised.”³⁶ This passage upholds the doctrine that the reception of the Spirit is dependent on and subsequent to salvation.
- The carrying of the message of salvation to the city of Samaria. The narrative (Acts 8:4-25) recounts that Philip went to the Samaritans (8:4-5) and, “when they believed Philip as he preached good news about the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women” (8:12-13). Upon hearing of this mighty work of God among the Samaritans, the church in Jerusalem “sent to them Peter and John, who came down and prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit” (8:14-15). Luke provides an explanation for this event: “for he [the Spirit] had not yet fallen on any of them, but they had only been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus” (8:16). The two apostles “laid hands on them and they received the Holy Spirit: (8:17). This supporting passage again emphasizes that the gift of the Holy Spirit is subsequent to salvation.”³⁷
- The conversion of Saul of Tarsus. While this dramatic event took place on the road to Damascus (Acts 9:3-6; 22:6-10; 26:13-18), a few days later Ananias, while laying his hands on Saul, said, “Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus who appeared to you on the road by which you came has sent me so that you may regain your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit” (Acts 9:17). Again, the reception of the Spirit is subsequent to salvation.³⁸
- The expansion of salvation to the Gentiles. The narrative of the conversion of Cornelius and his family and friends cites Peter’s promissory words, “To him [Jesus Christ] all the prophets bear witness that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name” (Acts 10:43). To this insistence on faith to appropriate salvation is added the need to repent of sin, for it is also said of Peter’s audience, “to the Gentiles also God has granted repentance that leads to faith” (Acts 11:18). Accordingly, the first Gentiles repented and believed in Christ, resulting in the forgiveness of sins. With this stage set, the narrative suddenly breaks: “While Peter was still saying these things, the Holy Spirit fell on all who heard the word” (Acts 10:44); the apostle later describes these believers as “people who have received the Holy Spirit just as we have” (10:47). Williams underscores that “the relevant point here is that it was the Gentiles’ ‘repentance unto life,’ i.e., their salvation, that was the background for the reception of the Holy Spirit.”³⁹
- Paul’s encounter with twelve disciples of John

the Baptist. The narrative (Acts 19:1-7) can be understood in one of two ways: one, these men were Christians—hence, the descriptor “disciples” is used of them—who much later received the Holy Spirit; or two, they became Christians through the preaching of Paul, yet still subsequently received the Spirit. On the latter view, Paul stumbled upon a dozen men who had been baptized by John the Baptist. He sensed something unusual about them—“and he said to them, ‘Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?’ ‘No, we have not even heard that there is a Holy Spirit’” (Acts 19:2)—and promptly explained the good news about Jesus, to whom John the Baptist had pointed (19:4). “On hearing this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus” (19:5); subsequently, “when Paul had laid his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came on them, and they began speaking in tongues and prophesying” (19:6). As before “the occurrence of salvation was background for their receiving the Holy Spirit.”⁴⁰

BAPTISM WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT: AN ASSESSMENT OF THE PENTECOSTAL/CHARISMATIC INTERPRETATION OF KEY PASSAGES AND THEOLOGICAL FORMULATION

With all due respect to this position, I think that it may be unnecessarily confused by the complexity of the richness of the vocabulary used in the New Testament to describe the works and ministries of the Holy Spirit. Moreover, the point that the reception of the Holy Spirit is an event subsequent to salvation seems to make an issue of something that the narratives hardly underscore and, when attention actually is drawn to a delay in receiving the Spirit, the narratives themselves highlight how unusual the delay is.

As to the first point, the complexity of the richness of the vocabulary used in the New Testament to describe the works and ministries of the Holy Spirit can be handled fairly easily by carefully not-

ing three categories:⁴¹

- Vocabulary used for *the initial experience of the Holy Spirit*: as we have seen, this category includes “baptism with the Spirit” (Jesus baptizes with the Spirit; people were baptized with the Spirit), “the outpouring of the Spirit” (Jesus poured out the Spirit; the gift of the Spirit was poured out); “the coming of the Spirit” (the Spirit fell upon people); “the gift of the Spirit” (God gave the gift of the Spirit; people receive the gift of the Spirit); and “being filled with the Spirit.” Whether this vocabulary is used in reference to the descent of the Spirit in his new covenant mission on the day of Pentecost, or in reference to the experience of the Holy Spirit by Peter’s hearers later that day, the Samaritan Christians, Saul of Tarsus, Cornelius and the first Gentile believers, or the Ephesian disciples, it is used to describe the initial experience or work of the Holy Spirit in peoples’ lives.
- Vocabulary employed for *subsequent experiences of the Holy Spirit*: as we will see in the next section, the expression “the filling of the Spirit” is commonly used in reference to experiences of the Spirit that follow peoples’ initial experience of him. For example, Peter, “filled with the Holy Spirit,” addressed the Jewish leaders and proclaimed the gospel (Acts 4:8); the early believers, praying for boldness to preach the gospel, “were all filled with the Holy Spirit” and were emboldened to proclaim the word of God (Acts 4:31); Stephen, “full of the Holy Spirit,” saw God’s glory before his death (Acts 7:55); Saul/Paul, “filled with the Holy Spirit,” addressed a sorcerer, leading to his blindness (Acts 13:9); Paul, Barnabas, and other disciples, rebuffing their Jewish persecutors in Psidian Antioch and moving on to Iconium, “were filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit” (Acts 13:52).⁴² These fillings with the Spirit were all subsequent to the initial experience of the Spirit by Peter, the early believers, Stephen, Saul/Paul, and Paul and

other disciples, and they seem to be particularly related to empowerment for specific ministry.

- Vocabulary utilized for *characterization of people in relation to the Holy Spirit*: sometimes the expression “full of the Spirit” is used in acknowledgements of a praiseworthy Christian lifestyle. For example, a qualification for the servers of tables was that they are “full of the Holy Spirit and of wisdom” (Acts 6:3), a qualification that Stephen, “a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit,” met (Acts 6:5); Barnabas is characterized as “full of the Holy Spirit and of faith” (Acts 11:24). In these cases, the descriptor “full of the Spirit” underscores the general tenor of the life of the person so characterized.⁴³

For the purposes of our discussion of baptism with the Holy Spirit, the first category—vocabulary associated with the initial experience of the Spirit—is key. Whether describing this experience as baptism with the Spirit, the outpouring of the Spirit, the coming/falling of the Spirit, the giving/gift of the Spirit, receiving of the Spirit, or the filling of the Spirit, the New Testament vividly portrays the initial work involving the Spirit with several interchangeable expressions. A point of application comes from this fact: though believers who for years experienced an apathetic, listless, impotent Christian life may claim a decisive renewal through a crisis experience with the Holy Spirit and refer to that subsequent work of the Spirit as baptism with and/or the outpouring/falling/coming/gift of the Spirit, such an experience does not change the reality that they were already the recipients of the baptism with and/or the outpouring/falling/coming/gift of the Holy Spirit at the moment they experienced salvation.

The next issue involves the nature of this initial work of the Holy Spirit. Does the New Testament support the twin doctrines of separability and subsequence? It certainly affirms separability: baptism with the Spirit is a divine work distinct from regeneration. Careful consideration of these two

divine acts supports this doctrine. Regeneration is the work of the Holy Spirit (Titus 3:5) through the Word of God (1 Pet 1:23-25) by which people are born again (John 3:3, 5), brought from spiritual deadness to spiritual life and rendered new creations (2 Cor 5:17). Baptism with the Spirit is the work of Jesus Christ in which he pours out the Spirit on new believers, thereby incorporating them into his (Christ’s) body, the church. Importantly, the agents and the actions are different in these two divine works: In the case of regeneration, the Holy Spirit is the agent and his action is changing the nature of spiritually dead people so that they become spiritually alive. In the case of Spirit baptism, Jesus Christ is the agent and his action is pouring out the Spirit. Assuming we have correctly understood these two divine works, we rightly affirm the doctrine of separability.

What of the doctrine of subsequence? Does the New Testament support it? To read the narratives of Acts as portraying baptism with the Spirit as subsequent to conversion/regeneration seems to misinterpret these stories, focusing on something that they do not emphasize and indeed seem to deny. I return to the six key events, already outlined above, to which appeal is made to warrant subsequence and show that these narratives do not support this doctrine.

First, it is quite common to assume that the men who had followed Jesus from the outset of his ministry were “Christians.” Certainly, Jesus had called and commissioned them as his disciples, and he spent three years preparing them to be the eventual leaders of his upcoming mission. Certainly, these men had left everything to follow Jesus, and at times they demonstrated profound knowledge about and commitment to him (e.g., they left everything to follow him, Luke 5:1-11; John 6:66-69; to them Jesus made known the secrets of his kingdom, Matt 13:10-17; by divine revelation Peter confessed Jesus’ identity, Matt. 16:13-20). At the same time and by contrast, Jesus often rebuked his disciples as “you of little faith” (Matt 6:30; 8:26; 14:31; 16:8) and constantly had

to intervene to rescue them from misunderstanding and misbehavior (e.g., their argument over who is the greatest in the kingdom, Matt 18:1-4; Peter's rebuke of Jesus' prophecy of death, Matt 16:21-23; Peter's wrongheaded and futile attempt to rescue Jesus, Matt 26:51-54). Moreover, as we have seen, Jesus foretold an unprecedented outpouring of the Holy Spirit (e.g., John 7:37-39; John 14:17) upon which his disciples would be absolutely dependent as the founders and promoters of the new covenant church. If we are correct in defining a Christian as a member of the new covenant people of God (in contrast with, for example, being a member of the old covenant people of God), and if we are correct in affirming that a characteristic of the new covenant is the Holy Spirit and his dynamic ministry foretold by Jesus, then even the disciples were not—could not be—Christians until the death, resurrection, ascension, and exaltation of Jesus and the descent of the Holy Spirit for his new covenant mission on the day of Pentecost.⁴⁴ And is this not precisely what Peter affirmed in his personal reflection on the first Gentiles coming to faith in Jesus and receiving/being baptized with the Spirit? “If then God gave the same gift [of the Holy Spirit] to them as he gave to us *when we believed in the Lord Jesus Christ*” (Acts 11:17; emphasis added). In other words, Peter locates the disciples' coming to faith in Christ on the day of Pentecost! And it was on that same day that they were baptized with the Spirit—at the same time (“when”) they believed. If this is the case, then the disciples do not constitute an example of Christians experiencing the baptism with the Spirit subsequent to their coming to Christ.

Second, the narrative of the salvation of three thousand of Peter's listeners on the day of Pentecost actually emphasizes that repentance and (water) baptism are prerequisites for *both* salvation *and* reception of the Holy Spirit; this being the case, Acts 2:38 does not support the view that salvation constitutes the background for the (subsequent) gift of the Spirit. In this narrative, Peter instructs his audience how to appropriate

the gospel: “Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ.” The purpose for which repentance and baptism are enjoined is salvation—“for the forgiveness of your sins”⁴⁵—*and* receiving “the gift of the Holy Spirit.”⁴⁶ In other words, it is the case that salvation is promised to those who repent and are baptized, and it is the case that the gift of the Spirit is promised to those who repent and are baptized. We would be wrong to conclude from these two statements that salvation and the gift of the Spirit are the same mighty act of God. But we would be equally wrong to conclude that “[t]he gift of the Spirit ... goes *beyond* salvation” in the sense that “the prior activity of the Holy Spirit in repentance and faith”—salvation, or conversion, or regeneration—constitutes a prerequisite for receiving the Spirit.⁴⁷ Rather, on the basis of repentance and baptism, both salvation and the gift of the Spirit are granted, and the latter is not dependent on the former. Accordingly, this passage does not support the position that Christians are baptized with the Spirit after their salvation.

Third, the narrative of the conversion of the Samaritans and the subsequent apostolic-sanctioned visit by Peter and John to pray for their delayed reception of the Holy Spirit (Acts 8:5-24) is highlighted by Luke as an unusual experience of the Spirit.⁴⁸ Verse 8:16—“for he [the Holy Spirit] had not yet fallen on any of them [the newly converted Samaritans]”—is an explanatory clause (*gar*; “for”) indicating the reason why the Samaritans still needed to receive the Holy Spirit. This explanatory comment points to an unusual experience; delay is not normative. Indeed, if it were the case that this delay portrays the normal reality of experiencing the Holy Spirit, there would be no need for an explanation. But Luke—writing for those whose experience is that of receiving the Holy Spirit at conversion—needed to explain why prayer for the Samaritans to receive the Spirit was necessary. Accordingly, the Samaritans' delayed reception of the Spirit does not constitute an example of baptism with

the Spirit subsequent to salvation.

Fourth, the same is true of the conversion of Saul of Tarsas. Putting together the three testimonies of this event (Acts 9:1-19; 22:3-16; 26:12-18), the common threads in general but not specific order are: (1) as a persecutor of the church, Saul was travelling to Damascus to capture Christians and bring them in chains to Jerusalem; (2) about midday a lightning flash surrounded Saul who, falling to the ground, was confronted by the Lord; (3) identifying himself, Jesus questioned Saul and directed him to go to Damascus for further instructions; (4) blinded for several days by this encounter, Saul is guided to Damascus to find Ananias, who had been divinely commissioned to meet him; (5) laying his hands on Saul, Ananias said, "Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus who appeared to you on the road by which you came has sent me so that you may regain your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit" (Acts 9:17); (6) Ananias further explained Jesus' appearance to Saul, announced that Saul would become a witness of this revelation, and instructed him, "And now why do you wait? Rise and be baptized and wash away your sins, calling on his name" (Acts 22:14-16); (7) no longer blind, Saul "rose and was baptized" (Acts 9:18). If we are correct in piecing together Saul's testimony in this manner, then we would be incorrect to think that he was converted in his initial encounter with Jesus on the Damascus Road and later baptized with the Holy Spirit. On the contrary, it was the encounter with Ananias that was the occasion for his regaining of sight, filling with the Spirit, water baptism, cleansing from sin, and calling on the name of Jesus.⁴⁹ Furthermore, elapsed time is not the narrative point; indeed, the three testimonies demonstrate a high degree of fluidity in regard to the precise order of events.⁵⁰ Accordingly, to draw support for the doctrine of subsequence from Saul's conversion is unwarranted.

Fifth, the conversion of Cornelius and his family and friends is closely linked with their baptism with the Holy Spirit. Indeed, the issue of repentance from sin and faith in Jesus about whom they were hearing through Peter's preaching—that is, conversion as the response to the gospel—finds

little emphasis in the two narratives of this important event. Rather, the sudden falling of the Holy Spirit on Peter's attentively listening audience is underscored in both accounts (Acts 10:44; 11:15). It is the divine initiative in bringing salvation to the Gentiles that comes to the forefront, as confirmed by the narrative's conclusion, "And they [the "circumcision party" in Jerusalem, to whom Peter recounted his mission to Cornelius, Acts 11:2-3] glorified God, saying, 'Then to the Gentiles also *God has granted* repentance that leads to life'" (Acts 11:18; italics added). If anything in terms of order is to be noted, the sequence narrated is preaching/listening to the gospel, the falling of/baptism with the Holy Spirit as evidenced by speaking in tongues, astonishment that the same gift of the Spirit was given to the Gentiles as had been given to the Jewish disciples on Pentecost, and water baptism. Certainly, the faith of the Gentiles to appropriate the gospel is assumed, but it is implied in Peter's reflection on God's gift of the Spirit to the Gentiles being the same gift God had earlier given to the Jews when *they believed in Jesus* (Acts 11:17). If we are correct in our understanding of the order of events, the conversion of the Gentiles cannot be used in support of the doctrine of subsequence.

Sixth, Paul's encounter with the disciples in Ephesus (19:1-7) must be seen as quite unusual. His question—"Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?" (9:2)—underscores the normal experience of Christians; they receive the Holy Spirit upon embracing the gospel. Thus, the lack of receiving the Spirit pointed to an abnormal experience on the part of these disciples of John the Baptist. Indeed, these twelve men were not even believers in Jesus Christ, as the rest of the narrative demonstrates. They knew only the ministry of John the Baptist, who himself had pointed toward Jesus Christ. On hearing Paul's explanation of Jesus, they were baptized as disciples of Christ. Their reception of the Holy Spirit through the laying on of Paul's hands, accompanied by speaking in tongues and prophecy, corresponded to their becoming Chris-

tian disciples. Accordingly, the salvation of the Ephesian disciples does not provide support for the doctrine of subsequence.

In conclusion, these six key events to which appeal is made in support of subsequence do not uphold this doctrine. This is certainly true with respect to the form of the doctrine that emphasizes temporal subsequence; no support is found for a time lapse between conversion/salvation and baptism with the Spirit. This seems also to be true with respect to the logical form of this doctrine; no evidence is forthcoming for the view that Spirit baptism and salvation occur at the same time but the former is logically dependent on the latter.⁵¹

In conclusion, we should affirm the doctrine of separability; baptism with the Spirit is a divine work that is distinguishable from regeneration. But we should not affirm the doctrine of subsequence; rather, baptism with the Spirit is one of the divine works that occurs at the beginning of salvation along with effective calling, regeneration, justification, union with Christ, adoption, and initial sanctification.

More can and needs to be said, however.

FILLING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT: BIBLICAL AFFIRMATIONS AND THEOLOGICAL FORMULATION

Our discussion of baptism with the Holy Spirit as an initial experience of salvation, together with our denial of the doctrine of subsequence, cannot end here. As we have seen, vocabulary used to describe the initial experience of the Spirit is also commonly used in reference to experiences of the Spirit that follow peoples' initial experience of him. Peter in his confrontation with the Jewish leaders (Acts 4:8); the early believers in their prayer for boldness for gospel proclamation (Acts 4:31); Stephen in his vision of God's glory (Acts 7:55); Saul/Paul in his rebuke of a sorcerer (Acts 13:9); Paul, Barnabas, and other disciples in rebuffing their Jewish persecutors (Acts 13:52)—all of these Christ followers were "filled with the Spirit" subsequent to their initial experience of the

Spirit and were thereby empowered for specific, even extraordinary, ministry.⁵² Furthermore, the same vocabulary is sometimes used to describe an honorable Christian lifestyle. The table servers (Acts 6:3), as exemplified by Stephen (Acts 6:5), and Barnabas (Acts 11:24) were characterized as being "full of the Holy Spirit." This descriptor generally characterizes the lifestyle of these persons.

To be noted is the consistency of the New Testament vocabulary for this work of the Holy Spirit: people are "filled with" or "full of" the Spirit. Contrast this regularity with the diversity and richness of the vocabulary used in conjunction with the initial experience of the Spirit. What seems to be the case is that Christians, who first have been baptized with the Spirit when they experienced salvation, may/can/should experience ensuing "fillings of the Spirit" even to the point of being characterized as being "full of the Holy Spirit." As Sam Storms explains, baptism with the Spirit at salvation "does not preclude multiple, subsequent experiences of the Spirit's activity.... The New Testament endorses and encourages multiple subsequent experiences of the Spirit's power and presence."⁵³ Because these fillings are connected to the initial baptism of the Spirit, or the outpouring of the Spirit, the nature of such fillings may be understood in reference to two passages in Isaiah that promise that the land of Israel and its people will experience the outpouring of the Spirit:

- until the Spirit is poured upon us from on high, and the wilderness becomes a fruitful field, and the fruitful field is deemed a forest (Isa 32:15);
- For I will pour water on the thirsty land, and streams on the dry ground; I will pour my Spirit upon your offspring, and my blessing on your descendants. They shall spring up among the grass like willows by flowing streams (Isa 44:3-4).

If the outpouring of the Spirit is being inundate or engulfed with the Spirit—well emphasized by the expression *baptism* with the Spirit—leading

to saturation in place of desiccation and fertility in place of sterility, the sense of the filling or fullness of the Spirit is being thoroughly and regularly pervaded by or permeated with the Spirit resulting in fruitfulness, seen in productive ministry and proven godly character.

Importantly, the New Testament not only includes narratives of this experience of the Spirit; in Ephesians 5:18, it instructs Christians, “do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery, but be filled with the Spirit.”⁵⁴ Key interpretive elements in this instruction are:

- Its mood is imperative; it is a command to be obeyed: “be filled with the Spirit;”⁵⁵
- Its tense is present; it is an ongoing command: (to paraphrase) “keep on being filled with the Spirit;”
- Its voice is passive; it is not an active voice imperative (e.g., “transform this equation”), so does not call for some action on the part of Christians, but it is a passive voice imperative (e.g., “be transformed”), so it calls for receptivity;
- The expected or intended response to this command is for Christians to yield to the Holy Spirit, to be controlled—pervaded or permeated—by the Spirit in all their ways, to consciously place themselves under the guidance of the Spirit moment by moment.

Such yieldness to the Holy Spirit will be evidenced as together Christians experience genuine community, engage in powerful worship, express gratitude in every circumstance, and love one another through mutual submission (5:19-21):

speaking to one another with psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit; singing and making music from your heart to the Lord, always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, and submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ.

The four gerunds (participles in Greek)—speaking, singing, giving thanks, submitting—not only indicate the results that flow from Christians obeying the Pauline command and thus being filled with the Spirit; they also absorb some of the imperatival force of the main verb (“be filled”) and are thereby constituted concrete activities in which Christians filled with the Spirit are to be engaged. Accordingly, Spirit filled Christians develop authentic community by rebuking, admonishing, correcting, encouraging, and edifying one another; worship the Lord together with great delight; live intentionally with gratitude; and show preference for and serve one another for Christ’s sake.

In addition to Ephesians 5:18, which uses the language of “filling,” Paul employs what seems to be similar expressions to exhort Christians toward this ongoing yieldedness to the Spirit. When Christians “walk by the Spirit” (Gal 5:16), they are prompted to do the will of God rather than fulfill the desires of their sinful nature. Following a negative list of the outcome of yielding to the flesh (5:19-21), a positive list rehearses the “fruit of the Spirit: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control” (5:22-23). Accordingly, if death comes by yielding to the sinful nature—thus, Christians must crucify “the flesh with its passions and desires” (5:24)—and if life comes as “we live by the Spirit,” Paul’s concluding exhortation is “let us also walk by the Spirit” (5:25). He uses the same language in Romans, encouraging those

who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit. For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit. For to set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace (Rom 8:4-6).

Indeed, Christians “are not in the flesh but in the Spirit” (8:9), being “debtors, not to the flesh,

to live according to the flesh” (5:12), but “by the Spirit [putting] to death the deeds of the body” so as to live (5:13).

Though disputes over the meaning of baptism with the Holy Spirit may separate Pentecostal/charismatic Christians and non-Pentecostal/non-charismatic Christians, all must agree with the clear instruction of Ephesians 5:18-21 (and similar passages) about the necessity for Christians to be filled with the Spirit. Tragically, the former group of Christians may give the impression that they have experienced baptism with the Spirit while the latter group has not, leading to a lamentable division between “haves” and “have nots.”⁵⁶ Tragically, the latter group may be overly fearful of what they consider to be excessive attention given to the Spirit by the former group and thus end up neglecting the essential work of the Spirit in their lives and churches. Tragically, the former group may be characterized as being focused on the Spirit of God while the latter group may be characterized as being centered on the Word of God. Surely, this situation is not the way it’s supposed to be! Conversations between Pentecostal/charismatic Christians and non-Pentecostal/non-charismatic Christians may go a long way to overcoming misconceptions, fears, jealousies, dismissive attitudes, and the like.⁵⁷ Cooperative prayer, mercy ministries, and evangelistic efforts may result in greater appreciation for and unity between these different churches.⁵⁸ Developing a consensus vocabulary to describe the various experiences with the Holy Spirit—an initial baptism with the Spirit, subsequent and ongoing fillings with the Spirit, a fullness of the Spirit lifestyle—may help to overcome some barriers.⁵⁹

I began this article with a bit of my personal journey of faith and the importance of the Holy Spirit for it. Though I have failed often and reprehensibly to appreciate Jesus Christ’s baptism of me with the Spirit when I embraced the gospel and to be continuously and obediently filled with the Spirit so as to be characterized as one who is full of the Spirit, I am consciously aware that any

progress that has been mine as a Christian, any empowerment for ministry that has been fruitful, any resisting of temptation, any development of Christ-like attributes, any boldness for communicating the gospel, any unity with other brothers and sisters, any genuine worship of God together with them—any and all of it has been the result of the gracious and abundant work of the Holy Spirit.

May God grant to all of us greater reliance upon and obedience to his Spirit!

ENDNOTES

¹For systematic theological treatments of the work of the Holy Spirit, see: Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2000), 634-53; Michael Horton, *The Christian Faith: A Systematic Theology for Pilgrims on the Way* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2011), 551-86; Millard Erickson, *Christian Theology* (2nd ed.; Grand Rapids: Baker, 1998), 880-98; J. Rodman Williams, *Renewal Theology* (3 vols.; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2000), 2:155-409; Graham A. Cole, *He Who Gives Life: The Doctrine of the Holy Spirit* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2007); Sinclair B. Ferguson, *The Holy Spirit* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 1997).

²Those familiar with Campus Crusade for Christ (now Cru) will recognize this question as the title of the booklet, written by Bill Bright, founder of CCC, which treats briefly the empowering ministry of the Holy Spirit.

³It is important to articulate this Spirit baptism correctly: the agent who baptizes is Jesus Christ, while the medium of baptism is the Holy Spirit. It is incorrect biblically speaking to affirm that the Holy Spirit baptizes. For further discussion, see Williams, *Renewal Theology*, 199; Gordon Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians* (New International Commentary on the New Testament; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987), 606; John R. W. Stott, *Baptism and Fullness of the Holy Spirit* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1964), 27.

⁴In sentences written in the active voice, the subject does the action; e.g., I (the subject) throw (the action) the ball.

⁵In sentences written in the passive voice, the action is targeted to the subject; e.g., the ball was thrown (the action) to me (the subject).

⁶Italics added. In Greek: *humeis de en pneumati baptisthēsthe*.

⁷This passage reflects a similar passage at the end of Luke's first volume, and the link is intended to remind readers that the book of Acts is the sequel to the Gospel. In that work, Luke presents these instructions of Jesus to his disciples: "Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead, and that repentance and forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things. And behold, I am sending the promise of my Father upon you. But stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high" (Luke 24:46-49). Though he does not mention the Holy Spirit by name, Jesus' circumlocution "the promise of my Father" clearly refers to the Spirit because (1) the same expression is used of the Spirit in Acts 1:4-5 and 2:33, and (2) the promised result of the fulfillment of this promise—"you will be clothed with power from on high"—is the same result promised "when the Holy Spirit has come upon" the disciples (Acts 1:8).

⁸Italics added. In Greek: *eplēsthēsan pantes pneumatōs hagiou*.

⁹Italics added. In Greek: *execheen*.

¹⁰Italics added. In Greek: *lēmpsesthetēn dōrean tou hagiou pneumatos*.

¹¹Because Luke later refers to those who responded to the gospel as "believers" (Acts 2:44), we are right to include faith in Christ as another element in the appropriation of the good news.

¹²I will defer consideration of the narrative of the Samaritans' salvation and baptism with the Spirit until a later discussion while next treating the two accounts of the first Gentiles' conversion.

¹³Italics added. In Greek: *epepsen to pneuma to hagion*.

¹⁴Italics added. In Greek: *hē dōrea tou pneumatos tou hagiou ekkechutai*.

¹⁵Italics added. This expression provides another warrant for making the connection between what the Gentile converts experienced and the baptism with

the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost. According to Luke's account of the phenomenon of speaking in tongues on Pentecost, the audience responded to the disciples' unusual utterances with "we [the audience] hear them [the disciples] telling in our own tongues the mighty works of God" (Acts 2:11; *akouomen lalountōn autōn tais hēmeterais gōlssais ta megaleia tou theou*). Similarly, Luke describes Peter's and the others' response to the Gentiles' unusual utterances with "they [Peter and those with him] were hearing them [the Gentiles] speaking in tongues and extolling God" (Acts 10:46; *ēkouon autōn lalountōn glōssais kai megalunontōn ton theon*). Because an effect of the baptism with the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost was verbally magnifying the ways of God with unusual utterances, and because the indication that "the gift of the Holy Spirit was poured out even on the Gentiles" was them verbally magnifying the ways of God with unusual utterances, we must conclude that both events were the same reality: baptism with the Spirit.

¹⁶Italics added. In Greek: *to pneuma to hagion elabon*.

¹⁷"In 10:44 there is no explicit comparison with the Pentecostal experience such as we find [in Acts 11:15] ... but the language of 2:4, 11b is recalled in 10:46." F. F. Bruce, *The Acts of the Apostles: Greek Text with Introduction and Commentary* (3rd rev.; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans: Apollos, 1990), 268. Whether these utterances were in known human languages, as was certainly the case on the day of Pentecost when the disciples spoke in tongues (Acts 2:5-13), is debatable. In favor of the view that they were known languages is the fact that Peter and those with him recognized that the phenomenon experienced by the Gentiles was similar to the phenomenon experienced by the disciples on Pentecost; thus, if in the latter case the utterances were in known human languages, so also in the former case. Furthermore, Peter and the others clearly understood that what was being uttered was praise offered to God. Against this view is the fact that utterances in known human languages would not have served any purpose, for there were not diverse linguistic groups that needed to hear praise offered to God in languages that they spoke. Though appeal to the tongue speaking in Corinth would take us

far afield, a case could be made that the Corinthian phenomena were not known languages (again, what purpose would such languages serve?) yet the church could still acknowledge that “one who speaks in a tongue speaks not to men but to God; for no one understands him, but he utters mystery in the Spirit: (1 Cor 14:2).

¹⁸Italics added. In Greek: *epepsen to pneuma to hagion*.

¹⁹Italics added. In Greek: *hē dōrea*.

²⁰“At the beginning” (*en archē*) refers to the day of Pentecost. Bruce, *Acts of the Apostles*, 269.

²¹“As ... to us” (*hōs kai hēmin*) refers to the day of Pentecost, as confirmed by the similar expression (*hōs kai hēmeis*) in Acts 10:47.

²²Peter makes the very same point at the Council of Jerusalem, when he relates what the Gentiles had experienced when he preached to them: “And God, who knows the heart, bore witness to them, by giving them the Holy Spirit just as he did to us” (Acts 15:8).

²³Providing warrant for this fourth characteristic of baptism with the Spirit would take us far afield from our topic, but a substantial and convincing case for it could be made.

²⁴Although the issue of whether or not speaking in tongues is a necessary sign accompanying baptism with the Spirit is of great interest, space and time constraints preclude me from treating it here.

²⁵The Assemblies of God churches embrace both doctrines concerning baptism with the Holy Spirit: “This experience is distinct from and subsequent to the experience of the new birth.” *Assemblies of God Statement of Fundamental Truths*, 7.

²⁶One of the key reasons for choosing to interact with Williams is the thoroughgoing biblical nature of his treatment of this topic. While some of my readers may be quite dismissive of the Pentecostal/charismatic theology of baptism with the Spirit because of its articulation and defense by proponents who rarely if ever appeal to Scripture, they cannot so easily dispense with Williams’s work. A second reason for interacting with Williams is the ready accessibility of his treatment; readers who wish to do more study on this subject are encouraged to work through his *Renewal Theology*. Further profitable study will also

consult Douglas A. Oss, “A Pentecostal/Charismatic View,” in Wayne A. Grudem, gen. ed., *Are Miraculous Gifts for Today?* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996), 237-83; Roger Stronstad, *The Charismatic Theology of St. Luke* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1984); Robert P. Menzies, *The Development of Early Christian Pneumatology with Special Reference to Luke-Acts* (Journal for the Study of the New Testament, vol. 54; Sheffield: JSNTSup, 1991).

²⁷Williams, *Renewal Theology*, 199.

²⁸Williams is not followed by many other Pentecostal/charismatic proponents, who make a distinction between baptism in the Holy Spirit (Acts 2) and baptism by the Holy Spirit (1 Cor 12:13). With regard to this latter verse, he explains: “It would seem preferable to translate it thus: ‘In one Spirit we were all baptized.’ Accordingly, the Holy Spirit is again seen as element and not agent, and Christ (though not mentioned directly) is implied to be the agent.” Ibid. Williams is certainly correct in his understanding.

²⁹Ibid., 190-204.

³⁰Ibid. 206. Cf. Oss, Pentecostal/Charismatic View,” in Grudem, *Are Miraculous Gifts for Today?*, 241-42.

³¹Williams, 206.

³²Ibid., 205-206 (emphasis his). Williams offers a reason why these passages in Acts do not treat the work of the Spirit at salvation: “It should be added that Acts has little to say about the activity of the Holy Spirit in the occurrence of salvation because the focus of the book is on the role of the Spirit in the outreach of the gospel. This is a marked difference, for example, from the letters of Paul in which much attention is given to the Holy Spirit in the Christian life. The Book of Acts, on the other hand, deals almost wholly with the Holy Spirit in witness and mission.” Ibid., 206.

³³Though Williams does not speak of this second blessing in terms of the length of time elapsed between salvation and the experience of the Spirit, he does affirm that “the occurrence of salvation” is an “essential background for the gift of the Holy Spirit,” which gift assumes “the prior activity of the Holy Spirit in repentance and faith, or to use another term, in regeneration.” Ibid., 205-206. Accordingly, he holds to both the doctrine of separability and the doctrine

of subsequence, either in its temporal form or its logical form. As we will see in the next discussion, the examples to which he appeals seem to point more to a temporal distance between the experience of salvation and baptism with the Spirit than to a logical relationship between regeneration and Spirit baptism. Cf. Oss, Pentecostal/Charismatic View,” in Grudem, *Are Miraculous Gifts for Today?*, 242-43.

³⁴Williams, 203.

³⁵Ibid., 187.

³⁶Ibid.

³⁷Ibid.

³⁸Ibid., 187-88.

³⁹Ibid., 188.

⁴⁰Ibid.

⁴¹Williams concurs with this three-fold categorization (ibid., 201-202).

⁴²Because of the generic nature of this verse, it may be that this example belongs in the next category.

⁴³So is the case with reference to Jesus, who was characterized as being “full of the Holy Spirit” (Luke 4:1).

⁴⁴For further discussion and support of these points, see Gregg R. Allison, *Sojourners and Strangers: The Doctrine of the Church* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2012), chapter 2.

⁴⁵In Greek: *eis aphesin tōn hamartiōn humōn*. For an excellent discussion on the various elements involved in salvation—faith, repentance, confession, regeneration, and baptism—see Robert H. Stein, “Baptism and Becoming a Christian in the New Testament,” *Southern Baptist Journal of Theology* 2, no. 1 (1998): 7-17; and idem., Thomas R. Schreiner and Shawn D. Wright, eds., *Believers’ Baptism: Sign of the New Covenant in Christ* (Nashville: B&H Academic, 2006), 35-66.

⁴⁶The fact that this latter promise is expressed in the future tense does not mean that (1) it is disconnected from the means of appropriating the gospel (repentance and baptism), or (2) it occurs at a future point, that is, after the forgiveness of sins. For further discussion, see F. F. Bruce, *The Book of the Acts* (New International Commentary on the New Testament; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987), 75-78.

⁴⁷Williams, *Renewal Theology*, 205-206

⁴⁸Theologians like Grudem and Stott offer what seems to be a strong theological, or salvation-historical, rationale for Peter and John being sent by the other apostles to confirm the reality of God’s redemptive work among the Samaritans, a situation that necessitated a withholding of the gift of the Spirit until this divine work could be verified. Without in any way minimizing or denying this theological explanation, I offer also a textual reason for why such a delay should be seen as unusual and not normative for Christians today. Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 773-74; Stott, *Baptism and Fullness of the Holy Spirit*, 19-21.

⁴⁹On the basis of the narrative of Acts 22, Williams appreciates the view that Saul was not converted until his encounter with Ananias, though in the end (and on the basis of Acts 9:17-18) he denies that this is the case. Williams, *Renewal Theology*, 188, n. 20.

⁵⁰For example, in regard to Saul’s commission as the apostle to the Gentiles, Acts 9:4-6 says nothing about it in Saul’s conversation with Jesus, but 9:15-16 places it as part of Jesus’ conversation with Ananias; 22:14-15 presents the commission as part of Ananias’s instructions to Saul; and Acts 26:16-18 seems to condense the event (for example, it does not narrate the episode involving Ananias) by including the commission as part of Jesus’ conversation with Saul on the road. Accordingly, the point of these three narratives is not the time of Saul’s commission in relationship to the other events of his encounters with Jesus and Ananias. Another consideration is the timing of Saul’s regaining of his sight. In Acts 9:18, it is placed “immediately” after Ananias’s instructions to Saul and before he “rose and was baptized.” In Acts 22:13 a comment about it is placed in the midst of Ananias’s instructions—“And at the very hour I [Saul] received my sight and saw him [Ananias]”—but the comment gives only a general time frame. Accordingly, the narrative point is not the elapsed time of the various elements of Saul’s conversion.

⁵¹Could it be the case that by bringing together all the biblical passages about regeneration with all the biblical passages about baptism with the Spirit, we could establish a theological support for the logical form of subsequence? I don’t think this exercise would enable us to conclude that the logical form of the doctrine is

supported theologically. Additionally, Paul's discussion of the Holy Spirit in Galatians 3 closely associates several realities—receiving the Spirit (3:2), beginning by the Spirit (3:3), the divine supplying of the Spirit (3:4), justification (counting faith to Abraham as righteousness, 3:6; justifying the Gentiles, 3:7) and receiving “the promised Spirit” (3:14)—with faith. As emphasized above, if justification/salvation and reception of the Spirit alike are dependent on faith, and if no indication is given that the gift of the Spirit is dependent on a prior act of justification, then even a case for the logical form of the doctrine of subsequence seems very difficult to establish.

⁵²I intentionally don't treat three other cases—John the Baptist (Luke 1:15), Elizabeth (Luke 1:41), and Zechariah (Luke 1:67)—who, previous to the coming of Jesus and the descent of the Spirit at Pentecost, were said to be “filled with the Holy Spirit.” Certainly, the New Testament's association of these three people with the filling of the Holy Spirit underscores that we should not make a hard and fast discontinuity between the Spirit's work before and after the initiation of the new covenant. But as I am dealing with the experience of Christ followers in relationship to the Holy Spirit, I will not treat these three cases.

⁵³C. Sam Storms, “Third Wave View,” in Grudem, *Are Miraculous Gifts for Today?*, 176, 179.

⁵⁴To be acknowledged is a key element in this discussion, namely, the Pentecostal conviction that Luke develops a unique pneumatology that is quite different from, though complementary to, Paul's pneumatology. Briefly, this distinction is that Lukan pneumatology is missionally oriented—e.g., the purpose of baptism with the Spirit is empowerment for ministry—while Pauline pneumatology is soteriologically oriented—baptism with the Spirit is one aspect of the divine work in salvation. For scholarly discussion of this element, see particularly Stronstad, *The Charismatic Theology of St. Luke* and Menzies, *The Development of Early Christian Pneumatology with Special Reference to Luke-Acts*. For a good sum-

mary of the point, see Oss, “Pentecostal/Charismatic View,” in Grudem, *Are Miraculous Gifts for Today?*, 250-57. Without assessing this claim (the case for which is not built on individual passages like those that are discussed next), it does not seem to hold true in the case of 1 Cor 12:13 (which, as we have seen, has strong overlap with Luke 3:16 and Acts 1:4-5 and 2:4) and Eph 5:18 (which, as we have seen, has strong overlap with Acts 6:3, 5; 11:24). At the minimum, 1 Cor 12:13 and its overlapping Luke-Acts passages, and Eph 5:18 and its overlapping Acts passages, are two sets of Scripture where little is to be made of the diversity between Luke and Paul.

⁵⁵Unlike the initial baptism with the Spirit, the experience of which people are never commanded to seek, the filling with the Spirit is a command to be obeyed.

⁵⁶Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 775-77.

⁵⁷When I was a missionary in Italy and the Italian-speaking part of Switzerland, I readily accepted invitations by Pentecostal churches and charismatic movements to preach and teach. One of the highlights was teaching on baptism with the Spirit according to the position advocated in this article to a large group of Catholic charismatics, who offered great appreciation for my clear biblical treatment of a matter on which we disagreed.

⁵⁸Some of my readers will categorically reject this suggestion, and I understand their reasons for such a stance. In either case, we must all decide the proper course of action to take in a world in which the expansion of the gospel and the growth of the church is largely taking place through the efforts of Pentecostal/charismatic believers and churches. The relationship between our churches will become an increasingly important issue, as together we face an American society that is increasingly anti-Christian and as together we seek to make inroads with the gospel in predominantly non-Christian—e.g., Islamic, Hindu, Buddhist—societies. There is no way that we can ignore one another in the real world.

⁵⁹On this latter suggestion, see Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 779-83.

