LUKE AND PAUL: A THEOLOGY OF ONE SPIRIT FROM TWO PERSPECTIVES

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Raymond Brown calls the doctrine of the Holy Spirit "the most divisive feature in the history of Christianity." How can the Spirit from whom our spirituality originates be so divisive? In recent scholarship men such as Lampe, Schweizer, Dunn, Bruner and Ervin have produced major works on the Holy Spirit in the NT, while Bruce, Brown, Guthrie and Ellis have also contributed to the literature on the subject. The work of such men with unquestioned qualifications, although in some cases the validity of their presuppositions might be questioned, has led them to many varied conclusions, some directly in opposition to one another. One might begin to wonder if the doctrine of the Spirit is so inherently divisive that consensus is impossible.

The approach of this study is to reconsider the basic doctrine of the Holy Spirit underlying the work of Luke and Paul, whose writings include the most uses of the term pneuma in the NT and the most references of it to the Holy Spirit. The method is to survey the presentation of the Holy Spirit in their writings, drawing from the literature only for comparison to the conclusions reached in the textual study. I assume a unity of

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8 Brown, "Diverse Views."
doctrine and authority of Luke and Paul as inspired writers.  But I also recognize that this is a unity-in-diversity, a unity of underlying doctrine but difference in perspective due to the differing purposes, styles, and types of literature. The concepts of the Spirit found therein draw from an underlying doctrine of the Spirit in which the two agree.

This article will argue that the basic assumptions underlying Luke's and Paul's concept of the Spirit are that (1) the presence of the Spirit is evidence of God's approval, (2) all Christians receive the Spirit at conversion, (3) evidence of the Spirit's work in the lives of Christians is commonly in the form of ethical fruit but in the writings under consideration may also be in the form of miraculous gifts, although the latter are not associated with the reception of the Spirit at conversion and are found more in the period of beginnings of the Church than in later writings, and (4) the Christian may experience the Spirit in a way that is functionally and experientially inseparable from his experience of the Father, of Christ, of angels, or even of the Word. A summary of the references to the Spirit in Luke and Paul will be followed by evidence to support these underlying assumptions.

I. SUMMARY IN LUKE AND PAUL

In the gospel of Luke the Spirit demonstrates that the new age has dawned in Jesus' birth and ministry. During his ministry Jesus, as the approved one of God, moves toward his destiny that will redeem mankind. The focus of attention from the account of the Nazareth synagogue on is clearly on Jesus himself, the beloved Son of God. The reader of Luke's gospel would leave with the assurance that Jesus was indeed God's chosen one—by the work of the Spirit at his birth and the beginning of his ministry, by the signs and wonders he performed (cf. Acts 2:22; 10:38), and most of all by his resurrection.

In Acts the reader would find that God had fulfilled his promise to pour out his Spirit in the last days on the Church, would be reinforced in

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13 Most writers recognize the differences between Luke and Paul. But the evangelical cannot be content only to note differences; he will go on to find an underlying unity within the two rather than simply attribute the differences to sources, redaction, tradition, or mistake. The exegete is challenged, however, to interpret each in the light of its own perspective—not, e.g., to interpret Luke as though he were Paul or vice versa (cf. Stronstad, Charismatic 9-12).

14 Surely Lampe overstates the case when he argues that "the great turning point in the biblical history is the baptism of Jesus" ("Holy Spirit" 630). Luke gives no indication that Jesus' baptism is any more the turning point than is his conception.

15 Note the emphasis on the words at Jesus' baptism rather than on either the baptism itself or even on the Spirit's descent. Lampe takes Jesus' baptism as parallel to Pentecost in which Jesus thereafter lives as the archetypal bearer of the Spirit, a time in which no one else had the Spirit ("Holy Spirit in Luke" 179); cf. Stronstad, Charismatic 58; contra Schweizer, "Pneuma" 405.
the view of Jesus as the approved prophet of God of whom Moses had spoken, and would know that God approved the inclusion of all nations in the Church, including diaspora Jews, Samaritans, Gentiles, and disciples of John.

From Paul’s writings one would know that the Spirit is given by God (cf. 1 Thess 4:8; Rom 5:5; 2 Cor 5:5) as evidence of his approval. The Spirit comes with the gospel in power (1 Cor 2:4; 1 Thess 1:5–6) when one is redeemed (Gal 3:14; cf. Titus 3:5) to prepare Christians for final redemption as sons (Rom 8:23, 26–27) by keeping them pure in sanctification (1 Cor 3:16; 2 Thess 2:13). The Spirit seeks the unity of the Church (1 Cor 12:13; Phil 2:1) by giving spiritual gifts that build up the Church and by producing fruit of ethical conduct that helps people maintain a proper attitude toward one another (1 Corinthians 12–14; Gal 5:16–25). The Spirit operates through revelation and instruction to maintain the Church as God would have it (1 Cor 2:11–13; Eph 6:17).

II. BASIC ASSUMPTIONS THAT UNITE LUKE AND PAUL

Upon this foundation, let us now build the case for the basic assumptions introduced earlier.

1. Both Luke and Paul assume that the presence of the Spirit is evidence of God’s approval. Luke appeals to such to demonstrate (1) God’s selection of John, Jesus, the twelve, Stephen, Philip and Saul and (2) his approval of the ministries of the early Church, including the mission to Gentiles. Paul appeals to the Spirit to demonstrate God’s approval of a gospel without circumcision apart from the law and of the Gentile mission itself.

2. All Christians receive the Spirit at conversion. For Luke and Paul this comes in the emphasis of receiving the Spirit in faith (Gal 3:2, 5, 14; Rom 2:29; 7:1; Eph 1:13) and, especially, of Paul’s question to the Ephesians about the Holy Spirit (which assumes that Christians have the Spirit; Acts 19:1–2) and his statement that one who does not have the Spirit is not of God (Rom 8:9). There is no contemplation of a Christian without the Spirit. Such would be a contradiction in terms for both Paul and Luke.

The problem, however, arises in trying to find a pattern in Luke for the relationship of faith, baptism, and receiving the Holy Spirit. The Holy

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16 Jesus: Rom 1:4; 15:19; 1 Tim 3:16; Gentiles: Rom 15:16; Paul: 2 Cor 6:6; churches: 2 Cor 3:3; Christians: Rom 8:9.
Spirit can come apart from baptism (Acts 2:1-4), precede baptism (10:34-38), or come after baptism (8:4-24; 19:1-7). Moreover one can be baptized with no mention of the Spirit (8:36-39; 16:33).\textsuperscript{19} Bruner attempts to relate the reception of the Holy Spirit only to water baptism,\textsuperscript{20} while Dunn considers baptism only incidental and states that the Spirit is received at the point of conversion.\textsuperscript{21}

This problem lies in the assumption that only one reception of the Spirit by a Christian was contemplated. As will be shown, when it is recognized that the miraculous manifestations of the Spirit are separated from the Spirit whom all receive as Christians the texts display an underlying unity of doctrine.\textsuperscript{22}

3. The evidence of the Spirit's work varies between the ethical and the miraculous. Some, such as Lake and Schweizer, have argued that this distinguishes Luke from Paul, with Luke recognizing only the miraculous (external) and Paul noting both evidences.\textsuperscript{23} But such is an oversimplification of the issue. Both Luke and Paul recognize different evidences of the Spirit. Luke mentions the miraculous in gifts of prophecy (Acts 19:6), working of signs and wonders (2:43), tongues (2:4) and specific healings (10:38). But Luke can also write of men filled with the Spirit with no evidence of their performing miracles (6:3, 5).

Luke differentiates the abilities conveyed by the Spirit to the twelve and other select witnesses from those to other Christians. Leaving aside the ambiguity of whether the Pentecost experience of the Spirit came upon the twelve or the 120,\textsuperscript{24} the first evidence of this is Luke's references to miracles performed in the Jerusalem church subsequent to Pentecost—always by the apostles (2:43, 4:33; 5:12). The first in Acts to perform "wonders and signs" other than the apostles is Stephen (6:8), followed by Philip (8:6, 13), both of whom were "full of the Holy Spirit" prior to their


\textsuperscript{20} Bruner, Theology.

\textsuperscript{21} Dunn, Baptism.

\textsuperscript{22} In this the paper agrees with the pentecostal exegetes; cf. Ervin, These Are Not Drunken and Conversion-Initiation; Stronstad, Charismatic. But a difference will be noted in that the miraculous manifestations of the Spirit were not presented as normative to Christians in the same way that the reception of the Spirit was assumed of all Christians.

\textsuperscript{23} Even to the point of being Paul's "distinctive doctrine of the Spirit" (H. B. Carre, "The Ethical Significance of Paul's Doctrine of the Spirit," The Biblical World 48 [1916] 196); cf. Schweizer, "Pneuma" 424.

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selection to assist the apostles (6:3, 5). But Luke records miracles from neither until after the apostles “laid their hands upon them” (6:6). This may have seemed only coincidental without the situation in Samaria in which Philip performs great signs, but the Spirit does not “come upon” the Samaritans until two apostles arrive from Jerusalem (8:14-17). This leads Simon Magus, and the reader, to conclude that the Holy Spirit was given through the hands of the apostles (8:18). Simon is rebuked for his desire to buy this gift, but Luke gives no indication that he was incorrect in his assumption.  

Clearly there was something in the apostles’ ability that was not in that of Philip. The only difference was that two were apostles chosen by the Holy Spirit (1:4) and one was a servant chosen by the Church and by the apostles. The former apparently could lay their hands on someone that they might receive the Holy Spirit and perform miraculous signs, while the latter could perform miraculous signs but could not convey that ability to another. 

Not everyone who possessed the Spirit could necessarily perform miracles by the Spirit or convey that ability to others. Saul’s conversion seems to imply an exception in that no apostle was present when he received the Holy Spirit. That Saul’s case is exceptional is clear in that Jesus appears to him personally in order to make him a “chosen vessel,” or “witness” (9:11-16), at which time Ananias came and “laid hands on Saul” as a unique avenue of the Spirit so that Saul might be “filled with the Holy Spirit” (9:17). The extraordinary visitation of Jesus to both Ananias and Saul makes clear the Lord’s selection of Saul for a special role. Jesus personally set Saul apart from others as a chosen vessel (9:15), and the Holy Spirit personally selected Barnabas and Saul for their mission (13:2-3). Saul (and Barnabas by implication), especially for Luke, was thus chosen by Jesus through the Holy Spirit. One should also recall Luke’s supposedly nontechnical reference to Paul and Barnabas as apostles (14:14). 

The next great outpouring of the Spirit is described in the episode of Cornelius (Acts 10-11). Luke clearly details God’s role in bringing Peter and Cornelius together, and the resulting experience of the Holy Spirit

25 Contra Bruner, Theology 178. Lampe argues that the laying on of hands was related to an ordination at specific turning points in the mission; Seal 69-77. Pereira argues that the Holy Spirit did not come through the laying on of the hands of Peter and John, although Simon may have thought it did; Ephesus 98-99.

26 To argue, as does Dunn (Baptism 55-72), that the faith of the Samaritans is defective is to resort to what Wilkinson calls “desperate exegesis”; “Two-Stage” 11. See also M. Gourgues, “Esprit des commencements et Esprit des prolongements dans les Acts. Note sur la ‘Pentecote des Samaritains,’” RB 93 (1986) 376-385. Guthrie seems to support Dunn; Theology 541-542.

27 To argue only that Luke’s main purpose is to demonstrate the unity of the Jerusalem church and the Samaritan mission is to ignore the point. Peter and John were not just representatives of the Jerusalem church (so was Philip); they were “apostles” (Acts 8:18). Cf. Lake, “Gift” 108-109; Bruner, Theology 175-176. Bruner argues that the laying on of hands was simply a part of baptism (pp. 175, 212).


29 Emphasized by being mentioned twice in the text: Acts 9:12, 17.
falling on Cornelius and those gathered with him (10:44) was evidenced in their speaking in tongues and praising God (10:46). The text gives no indication that Peter or anyone else laid hands on them or that they were even converted before this experience. In his explanation of the event (11:1–18) Peter finds a parallel to the experience only back at Pentecost (11:15). If this pattern were normative, then such a statement would have made no sense. Peter would only have said that they were converted just as the Jews in Jerusalem and Judea, or the Samaritans in Samaria, or anyone else had been since the day of Pentecost. But the fact is that the experience of Cornelius and his household had only one other parallel: Pentecost.

As most commentators note, the main point is to strip away all prejudices the Jews might have against the acceptance of Gentiles without circumcision—a decision made not by Peter, by the apostles, or by the Jerusalem church, but only by God himself and approved by him (15:8, 14). This fact was further attested by God in performing miracles among the Gentiles at the hands of Saul and Barnabas (14:3; 15:12). These very arguments caused the Jerusalem council on circumcision to conclude, with the Holy Spirit (15:28), that God accepted the Gentiles by their faith without circumcision.

Final evidence from Acts that the performance of miraculous abilities by the power of the Spirit came only after a “laying on of hands” is the episode of the twelve in Ephesus (19:1–7). Leaving the question of whether or not Luke considered these “disciples” to be Christians, he clearly demonstrates that they believed, that they were baptized, and that, before any demonstration of the Spirit in an extraordinary way, Paul laid his hands upon them and the Holy Spirit came upon them (19:5–6). The result was speaking in tongues and prophesying (19:6). Once again, the laying on of the hands of a particularly chosen witness of God preceded miraculous demonstrations of the Spirit.

Paul also writes of various gifts of the Spirit (cf. especially 1 Cor 12:4–11; Rom 12:6–8), including both the clearly miraculous (e.g. healings, prophecy, tongues) and the seemingly nonmiraculous (e.g. faith, giving, teaching, mercy, wisdom, knowledge). Clearly the fruit of the Spirit in Gal 5:22–23 involves nonmiraculous personality traits that Christians are to develop in contrast to the flesh. While all were to cultivate the fruit of the Spirit (5:25), not all could expect to experience the miraculous gifts (1 Cor 12:4–11, 28–31). This fact accounted for the basic problem of pride in Corinth on the part of those who had these extraordinary gifts, especially that of speaking in tongues, who were exhorted to seek the better way, the way of love (12:31–14:1).

30 So Stronstad, Charismatic 5.
31 Bruner, Theology 194–196.
33 To argue that this was the ordination of the elders of the Ephesian church, while interesting, is surely to go beyond the evidence; cf. Pereira, Ephesus 106–107.
Paul can therefore speak of all Christians having the Spirit (Rom 8:9) without all having these miraculous gifts of the Spirit, of all having an earnest of the Spirit (Eph 1:14) without all healing, prophesying, or speaking in tongues by the Spirit, of all being baptized by one Spirit into one body (1 Cor 12:13) but not all evidencing miraculous gifts. On the one occasion that Pauline literature hints of how the reception of the miraculous differed from the nonmiraculous, Paul reminds Timothy of the gift received through the laying on of Paul’s hand (2 Tim 1:6).

Apart from the enigmatic time of the “perfect” (1 Cor 13:8–10), neither Luke nor Paul argue for a time of the end that would witness the miraculous gifts of the Spirit. There is implied in their writings, however, a deemphasis on these manifestations of the Spirit (see chart below). In Luke, as noted earlier, one finds the greatest emphasis on the Spirit at the times of beginnings: Jesus’ birth, Jesus’ baptism and inauguration of his ministry, Pentecost and the inauguration of the Jerusalem church, Samaria, Cornelius, and the Ephesian disciples. After this point the references to the Spirit and to varieties of experiences of the Spirit decline dramatically. The Spirit functioned in guiding Paul’s mission, appointed the elders of the Ephesian church, and spoke in Scripture. Perhaps Luke writes to a generation in which the miraculous phenomena accompanying the beginning of the Church have diminished. Theophilus is thus assured of God’s actions in miraculously confirming the beginnings by manifestations of his Spirit in extraordinary ways, but he is left with an emphasis on the Spirit’s role in appointing elders (Acts 20:28), guiding the apostle Paul, and inspiring Scripture (28:25). These works of the Spirit continue unto the succeeding generation.

**References to the Holy Spirit in Luke and Paul**

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**Paul**

|          | 88     | 59       | 1.49               |
| prison letters | 16*    | 15       | 1.07               |
| pastorals      | 5      | 13       | .38                |

*Note that 12 are in Ephesians.

34 Note that he writes Theophilus to assure him of these things rather than recalling a current miraculous manifestation of these things. Lake mentions the distinction in Acts and attributes it to Luke’s sources; “Gift” 109–110.
A parallel in Paul is found in noting the declining emphasis on the Spirit from the early epistles to the pastoral epistles. The Spirit’s experiential and ethical work is clearly emphasized in books such as Galatians, 1 Corinthians, and Romans. There is a shift, however, beginning in the prison epistles. By the time of the pastorals there is a clear deemphasis on the miraculous works of the Spirit. Some argue that this is due to the excesses of some in their application of the miraculous gifts, which were too divisive for the community. That such excess was prevalent and that the miraculous continued in the Church seems evident from early patristic literature. Paul’s response to the excesses in Corinth, however, was not to deemphasize the role of the Spirit but rather to teach the proper attitude toward the gifts and role of the Spirit in the community. This is the opposite of those who would say that the Spirit would be mentioned less during times of excess. Why not rather consider that the external miraculous, extraordinary gifts of the Spirit were diminishing for whatever reason? The emphasis then turns to Scripture (2 Tim 3:16–17), church (1 Tim 3:15), and leaders who emphasize truth in doctrine (Titus 1:9).

4. There is a functional and experiential unity of the Spirit’s work and that of the Father, Christ, angels, and the Word. In Luke this is illustrated in such stories as Ananias’ and Sapphira’s lying to the church, which was equivalent to lying to the Holy Spirit (Acts 5:3) or lying to God (5:4). When Philip is led to the Ethiopian, no difference is expected in Philip’s experience of an angel telling him to go (8:26), the Spirit telling him to catch the chariot (8:28), or the Spirit taking Philip away (8:39). More to the point is the conversion of Cornelius, which involved an angel appearing to Cornelius in a vision (10:3, 22), a voice to Peter (10:13–14), and the Spirit to Peter (who declares that he had sent Cornelius; 10:19), implying the Spirit’s work in the vision of the angel (10:20). Peter concluded that it was God who sent the vision to teach him not to call any man unclean (10:28). The Spirit, who fell upon Cornelius and his household (10:44–45), was given from God (11:17). The Spirit can thus be experienced, according to Luke, at work in visions, in a voice from heaven, and in an angel. From the receiver’s point of view there is a functional (not ontological) unity.

38 Although he does clearly deemphasize the importance of the gift of tongues.
39 Brown suggests an alternative in the problem of all charismatic groups if the gifts do not reappear in the second generation; “Diverse” 231.
Scholars have also long recognized that for Paul it seems interchangeable to speak of God (2 Cor 6:16), Christ (Rom 8:10), or the Spirit (8:9, 11; 1 Cor 6:19) in the Christian or of the Christian being in them (1 Thess 1:1; 2 Cor 5:17; Col 3:3). The discussion climaxes with reference to 2 Cor 3:17 in which Paul at least seems to declare that "the Lord is the Spirit."\(^{40}\) As with the examples from Luke, the basic underlying assumption about the Spirit is that he is experienced in a way functionally equivalent to the Father or the Son.\(^{41}\) It is this functional unity that makes it possible to refer to the Spirit as poured out by God the Father (Luke 11:13; Acts 5:32; 1 Thess 4:8; Rom 5:5), by Christ (Luke 24:49; Acts 2:32–33), or as initiating the action himself (Luke 3:22; 4:18); to speak of the Spirit as the Spirit of God (Rom 8:9; Phil 3:3), Spirit of Jesus (Acts 16:7) or Spirit of Jesus Christ (Phil 1:19), Spirit of the Lord (Luke 4:18; 2 Cor 3:17), or, simply, the Spirit (15 times in Luke/Acts; 73 times in Paul) or Holy Spirit (60 times in Luke/Acts; 13 in Paul).

This is not to limit the ontological distinction of the Spirit in Paul\(^{42}\) and Luke.\(^{43}\) Rather, it is to recognize that the Holy Spirit can work in the Christian in ways that are not extraordinary, just as do the Father and the Son, but that work can be just as real and effective. As Paul speaks of a mystical unity of the believer with Christ, Luke makes it clear that Christ continues with his people through the abiding presence and work of the Spirit.\(^{44}\)

This article sets forth the thesis that the key to the unity of Luke and Paul on the Spirit is found in four basic underlying assumptions. Without such principles one might prefer the teachings of the Spirit in either Luke or Paul, but there could be no unity of doctrine between the two.

\(^{40}\) For discussion and various viewpoints cf. R. Jewett, "Spirit," in IDBSup 840; Lampe, "Holy Spirit" 636–637.


\(^{42}\) See Paul's trinitarian statement in 2 Cor 13:13. A distinction is also implied in the title "the Spirit of the one who raised Jesus from the dead" (Rom 8:11) and the fact that Jesus was declared to be Son of God through the Spirit (1:4).

\(^{43}\) Evident at Jesus' baptism (Luke 3:22); cf. Jesus' promise that the Father would give the Holy Spirit (11:13).