

Chapter 5

(Guthrie – BTNT)

The Holy Spirit

(extract)

Acts

In turning from the gospels to the Acts, we at once find ourselves in a different era. Whereas in the ministry of Jesus the activity of the Spirit in believers was only foreshadowed, in Acts we move into the age of the Spirit. The activity of the Spirit is in fact in continuity with the mission of Jesus. What the church does is seen to be the work of the Spirit. The whole development of ideas in the early history of the Christian movement is dominated by the Spirit. This makes a study of Acts with a view to establishing the NT doctrine of the Spirit of paramount importance. As compared with the epistles there is less reflection on the role of the Spirit, but more on actions of the Spirit.⁶⁶ For this reason the Acts evidence is more historical than didactic, but is nonetheless as important for the special contribution it makes.⁶⁷

⁶⁴ For a valuable discussion of this point, cf. I. H. Marshall, *The Epistles of John* (NICNT, 1978), p. 235.

⁶⁵ F. F. Bruce, *The Epistles of John* (1970), pp. 120f., sees the witness of the Spirit in the baptism of Jesus (water) and in the passion (blood). He mentions, but does not accept, the view of W. Nauck, *Die Tradition und der Charakter des erstenjohannesbriefes* (1957), pp. 147ff, that three stages of Christian initiation are here being referred to. Even in this latter view the predominant witness of the Spirit is not in dispute.

⁶⁶ J. E. Fison, *The Blessing of the Holy Spirit* (1950), pp. 116f, regards as a gross exaggeration the attempt to drive a wedge between the ecstatic Spirit of Acts and the ethical Spirit of the epistles.

⁶⁷ For a recent discussion of the importance of the Acts account of the coming of the Spirit, cf. I. H. Marshall, 'The Significance of Pentecost', *SJT* 30, 1977, pp. 347-369.

THE PRELUDE TO PENTECOST

Even before the account of the outpouring of the Spirit at Pentecost, there are four references to the Holy Spirit in Acts 1 which set the scene and enable a true assessment of that event to be made. First of all Luke clearly shows that he sees his book as the outcome of revelations of the Spirit from the risen Lord to the apostles (Acts 1:2). In other words the key to the understanding possessed by the apostles was their communication with the risen Lord to which Luke had already drawn attention in Luke 24:27, 44ff. Moreover, the recognition that this continued the work of Jesus 'through the Holy Spirit'⁶⁸ is in line with the promise in John 14:26. This explains the authority for the apostolic proclamation. Pentecost was not something that burst on the waiting church unprepared. The disciples were reminded to wait for the coming baptism with the Spirit (Acts 1:5).⁶⁹

Of equal importance is the promise of Christ before his ascension in Acts 1:8: 'You shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and to the end of the earth.' This dynamic aspect of the Spirit has previously been met in Luke 24:49, and in the promise of aid for witnessing in John 15:26,27. Since this statement may be regarded as a foreshadowing of the expanding ministry of the church, the activity of the Holy Spirit in this ministry has key importance.

In passing it should be noted that Peter shows himself to be in line with the view of both the Jews and Jesus himself on the inspiration of Scripture. He cites Psalms 69:25; 109:8 under the formula, 'The Holy Spirit spoke beforehand by the mouth of David' (Acts 1:16). As the disciples faced the world with the gospel, they did so with the full conviction that the same Spirit who had spoken through the Scriptures had taken possession of them.

THE OUTPOURING AT PENTECOST

The origin of the Christian church must be traced back to Pentecost. It was that event which began the church age, which may also be regarded as the age of the Spirit.⁷⁰ This new age was distinct from, although a

⁶⁸ E. Haenchen, *Acts* (Eng. trans. 1971), p. 139, links the words 'through the Holy Spirit' in Acts 1:2 with the following words referring to the choice of the apostles, and thinks this is Luke's way of making plain to the readers the authority of the apostles. But it is more probable that the Spirit is to be seen as the agency through whom the commandments of Jesus were recalled.

⁶⁹ F. D. Bruner, *A Theology of the Holy Spirit* (1970), p. 156, writes, 'Luke's first sentence makes clear an intention of his entire book: the Spirit is not to be dissociated from Jesus. The Spirit is Jesus at work in continuation of his ministry'.

On Acts 1:5, Bruner points out that the announcement of the baptism of the Spirit is here set out as the 'promise of the Father', not the responsibility of the believers. Another point is that all disciples were assured of the baptism of the Spirit without conditions (*cf. idem*, p. 157).

⁷⁰ G. W. H. Lampe, *Cod as Spirit* (1977), p. 70, considers that Luke does not share Paul's profound understanding of life in Christ. He sees a parallel between the birth and baptism of Jesus, and the beginning

continuation of, the age of the ministry of Jesus. Whereas the Jews thought of an age to come which would immediately follow the present age, the NT portrays the ministry of Jesus as a unique event separating the old age from the age of the church.⁷¹ It is only when it is recognized that the Spirit's activities were concentrated in a different way in the ministry of Jesus and the ministry of the church that the full significance of the Pentecost experience can be seen. Jesus was the perfect example of a man of the Spirit, but not until Pentecost were others empowered to become men of the Spirit in a dynamic way.

We may sum up the main features of the Pentecost experience in the following way.

(i) Pentecost was the concluding act of the ascension. It was not only subsequent to it chronologically, but was dependent upon it. This had been foreshadowed by Jesus in John's gospel (Jn. 7:39; 16:7). It implies that Pentecost introduced a new age.

(ii) The accompaniments of the outpouring of the Spirit were symbolic. The wind and fire represented the power of the Spirit, one unseen, the other seen. These extraordinary signs must be regarded as singular to this initial experience, since they are not repeated elsewhere. The uniqueness of Pentecost adequately explains these features. Although the Spirit would continue to be outpoured, the outpouring would never again signify the inauguration of a new era.⁷² Once launched, the Christian church would have no further need for these objective signs. This may also apply to the distinctive manifestation of the Spirit when the apostles began witnessing in tongues (see below). The symbolic use of wind for Spirit has already been met in John 3:8 and the connection between fire and Spirit ties up with John the Baptist's prediction in Matthew 3:11.

(iii) The infilling of the Spirit extended to *all* believers. Not only does Luke say that 'they were all filled with the Holy Spirit' (Acts 2:4), but that the tongues of fire distributed and rested on 'each one of them' (2:3). The Spirit's coming is, therefore, seen as both corporate and individual. There is certainly no room for the idea that any believers were excluded from this initial experience. In fact, the wording in Luke's account is wholly in keeping with Paul's assertion that anyone who does not have the Spirit of

of the Acts account. His view is that the Pentecost story is a theological reconstruction modelled on the giving of the law at Sinai. But this suggestion is not convincing since the Acts record gives no indication of any connection between the Spirit and the law. It must be conceded that Paul's doctrine of the Spirit goes further than Luke's, but this is no justification for regarding Luke's as a reconstruction.

⁷¹ H. Conzelmann, in his *The Theology of St Luke* (1960), has drawn attention to this three-age scheme, although he attributes it to Luke.

⁷² It is significant that in the Qumran community the coming of the 'holy spirit' was associated with the inauguration of the new age (*cf.* 1 QS Iv. 20f). F. F. Bruce, 'The Holy Spirit in the Acts of the Apostles', *Irru* 27, 1973, p. 172, considers that the Qumran passage may be a rewording of Ezk. 36:25ff. Both in this passage and in Acts 2 dependence on the or can be seen, but a vital difference is that in the former case the 'holy spirit' cannot be considered to be personal.

Christ does not belong to him (Rom. 8:9). The whole company of believers were, therefore, in one act sealed by the same Spirit.

The expression, 'filled with the Holy Spirit' in Acts 2:4 is highly significant. It does not occur in any of the $\sigma\tau$ references to the Spirit. There is one use of it in relation to Jesus at his baptism (Lk. 4:1). But it became the hallmark of Christians (*cf.* Acts 6:3ff.). Evidently the phenomenon of being filled with the Spirit was easily detectable. At least at Pentecost the distinction was clear: those filled with the Spirit were believers; those outside the circle of believers were not possessed by the Spirit. There is no suggestion in this passage that anyone who believed was either not filled or only partially filled. 'Being filled' is equivalent to receiving the Spirit as a believer in Jesus. It is equally equivalent to being baptized with the Spirit (*cf.* Acts 1:5).

(iv) The gift of tongues is specifically said to be 'in other (*heterais*) tongues' (Acts 2:4). Moreover, the various racial groups present in Jerusalem heard the apostles speak in their own language (Acts 2:6). What amazed the people was not the sudden phenomenon of men speaking in unintelligible tongues, but that they heard simple Galileans speaking in their own language. It is not clear whether Luke thinks of the miracle as a miracle of speaking or of hearing, but he has no doubt that the Spirit was responsible.⁷³ There is no suggestion in the rest of his book that the gift of tongues was repeated as linguistic aid to the missionary endeavours of the church. In other words the gift of tongues did not facilitate the subsequent preaching of the gospel by providing a medium of communication.⁷⁴ There was no need for this since all the areas with which Luke deals in Acts would have been familiar with koine Greek.

It does not seem unreasonable to regard this particular manifestation of the gift of tongues as exceptional,⁷⁵ and to draw some distinction, at least in purpose, between the Pentecost experience and the later *charismata* of which Paul speaks in 1 Corinthians (see later discussion, pp. 764ff.).⁷⁶ In

⁷³ It has been pointed out that the Pentecost experience was a reversal of the Babel story in Gn. 11. G. T. Montague, *The Holy Spirit: Growth of a Biblical Tradition*, p. 282, notes that the Genesis passage was one of the prescribed readings in the triennial lectionary for the Jewish feast of Pentecost.

⁷⁴ Rabbinic tradition maintained that although the law on Sinai was given with a single sound, the voice went forth into seventy tongues and every people heard in their own language (Midrash *Tanchuma* p. 26). This provides an interesting parallel to Luke's account of Pentecost. The giving of law, like the inauguration of gospel preaching, was regarded as a unique event.

⁷⁵ R. J. Banks and G. Moon, 'Speaking in Tongues: A Survey of the NT Evidence', *Churchman* 80, 1966, pp. 278-294, points out that in Acts 10:44-46 and Acts 19:5,6, there is no hint of foreign languages being spoken when *glossolalia* was manifested (see pp. 282f.). These writers favour the view that *glossolalia* is the ability to speak in a spiritual language which might be a language of men or of angels.

⁷⁶ D. M. Smith, 'Glossolalia and Other Spiritual Gifts in a NT Perspective', *Int* 28, 1974, pp. 307-320, draws a distinction between Luke's reference to *glossolalia* as foreign languages and Paul's. He thinks Luke was unfamiliar with 'tongues'. But without agreeing with Smith that Luke has given his own interpretation, we may still recognize a major difference between the function of tongues at Pentecost and in subsequent Christian experience, due to different circumstances.

only two other places in Acts is speaking in tongues mentioned, in both cases as an accompaniment of the outpouring of the Spirit (Acts 10:46; 19:6). In neither case is any mention made, as in Acts 2, of the hearers being able to understand, and these occurrences may perhaps be closer to the 1 Corinthians experience than to Pentecost.⁷⁷ It should be noted, however, that in Acts 10 the manifestation accompanied the initial outpouring of the Spirit on Gentiles and there may be significance in that. Moreover, the Acts 19 occasion could be regarded as another Pentecost-type experience for the benefit of former disciples of John the Baptist, but this is debatable.

(v) The Spirit's activity at Pentecost is claimed to be a direct fulfilment of $\sigma\tau$ prophecy. The quotation from Joel 2:28-32 in Acts 2:17-21 refers to 'the last days' and to the inauguration of the great and manifest day of the Lord'. The way in which Peter grasps the significance of the fulfilment of this prophecy, and indeed his bold manner in proclaiming it, are evidence of the Spirit's activity. He was, in fact, exemplifying what he was proclaiming.

(vi) In his exposition Peter declared, not only that the gift of the Spirit came direct from the throne of God, but also that it followed the exaltation of Jesus (Acts 2:32-33). There is a similar understanding here as in the statement of Jesus in John 7:39. Peter's remarkable insight regarding the session of Jesus at the right hand of God, only a few weeks after the crucifixion, must have been through the revelation of the Holy Spirit. Indeed, the pouring out of the Holy Spirit was for the apostles an evidence that Jesus had been exalted.⁷⁸

(vii) The promise of the Holy Spirit was made to those who repent, are baptized and receive forgiveness (Acts 2:38). This meant in effect that all who truly repented and believed and identified themselves with the existing group of believers would receive the gift of the Spirit. It must be assumed therefore that all the 3,000 who were baptized also received the Spirit. The Spirit was available to all believers.⁷⁹ There is no suggestion in Acts 2 that the outpouring of the Holy Spirit was primarily to give power to existing

⁷⁷ A. A. Hoekema, *Holy Spirit Baptism* (1972), pp. 48f., points out four differences between the experience of tongues in Acts compared with the mention in 1 Corinthians, (i) Tongues in 1 Cor. needed interpretation; (ii) In 1 Cor. the purpose of tongues was edification, in Acts confirmation, (iii) In Acts tongues was irresistible, in 1 Cor. a continuing gift under the Spirit's control, (iv) In Acts all in the group spoke in tongues, in 1 Cor. only some (*cf.* 1 Cor. 12:30).

⁷⁸ On the possible influence of Ps. 68:19 on Acts 2:33, *cf.* J. Dupont, 'Ascension du Christ et don de l'Esprit d'après Actes 2:33', *Christ and Spirit* pp. 219f.

J. D. G. Dunn, *Baptism in the Holy Spirit*, p. 44, draws a distinction between the ascension and Pentecost by relating the former to the climax of Jesus' ministry for himself and the latter to the climax of Jesus' ministry for the disciples.

⁷⁹ E. Schweizer, *TDNT, pneuma*, 6, p. 412, maintains that the obedience must precede the reception of the Spirit. But the giving of the Spirit is past tense and the obeying is present (*cf.* Acts 5:32). *Cf.* E. Haenchen, *Acts* (Eng. trans. 1971), *ad loc.*, who takes 'those who obey him' to be all believers.

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believers as some have maintained. On the contrary it relates to the experience of conversion.

THE SPIRIT IN JERUSALEM AND SAMARIA

From the initial outpouring we turn to the continuing work of the Spirit through the early church leaders. Luke selects various samples to demonstrate how fundamental the Spirit's activity was in all aspects of the developing work of the church.

(i) The Spirit gives *courage* for witness before rulers. In view of the predictions of Jesus that his disciples would have to answer for their faith before rulers (Lk. 12:12 and parallels), it is not surprising that at an early stage in Christian history Peter and John were put to the test. There can be no doubt that Luke saw a connection between the promise that the Holy Spirit would teach the disciples what to say, and the extraordinary boldness of Peter and John which mystified the rulers (Acts 4:13; *cf.* also 4:31). Luke notes that Peter was filled with the Spirit as he addressed the council (Acts 4:8), and regarded this as a sufficient explanation of the transformation which had taken place in Peter.

(ii) The Spirit supports the *prayer and praise* of the believers. In the passage Acts 4:23-31, there are two mentions of the Spirit, one in connection with Scripture (a citation from Ps. 2 in verse 25) and one in connection with another dramatic demonstration of spiritual power in the course of worship (verse 31). The former is exactly parallel with Acts 1:16 and the latter with Acts 2:4. Moreover, this second affirmation of fullness of the Spirit is accompanied, as the former, with exceptional boldness in proclaiming the word of God.

The Spirit's power was clearly not given simply to strengthen the circle of believers. This is an instance in which the Spirit's activity is outgoing in witness.

(iii) A somewhat different aspect of the Spirit's work is seen in the promotion of *corporate awareness* among the believers. It began on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:41ff.) and it became strengthened in Acts 4:32ff. While in neither case is the communal consciousness of Christians attributed to the Spirit, yet in both cases it follows a reference to the infilling with the Spirit. It is important to recognize this communal aspect of the Spirit, for it explains the seriousness of the defection of Ananias and Sapphira. Indeed in keeping back part of his possessions while purporting to give the whole to the community, Ananias is charged with having lied against the Spirit (Acts 5:34). The subsequent judgment upon him and his wife, although at first sight seeming to be out of proportion to the offence, nevertheless impressed on the community the extreme seriousness of lying to the Spirit. In no more awe-inspiring way could they have learnt that the Spirit was presiding over the affairs of the church. Moreover, Peter equated lying to

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the Spirit with lying to God (5:34). Ananias' and Sapphira's great mistake was to treat the church as an organization of man instead of a community of the Spirit.

(iv) At an early stage the *administrative* activity of the Spirit in the community is seen in the method adopted to resolve the internal problem of the dispute between the Hellenistic and Hebrew believers. All the men appointed to assist the apostles by distributing food were to be men 'full of the Spirit and of wisdom' (Acts 6:3). Stephen is specially marked out as such a man. Although the task was essentially practical, it needed to be done by men under the direction of the Spirit. There could be no dichotomy between the sacred and the secular while the Spirit presided over the church's affairs. In Stephen especially the two aspects merged, for he powerfully disputed with men of the Hellenistic synagogue who 'could not withstand the wisdom and the Spirit with which he spoke' (Acts 6:10). The Spirit's sovereign transference of Stephen from a table-server to an effective apologist demonstrates again that he, not the apostles, was in charge. At the conclusion of his defence before the council Stephen still shows evidence of his fullness of the Spirit (Acts 7:55). Moreover, what caused the uproar among his hearers was the charge that they were resisting the Holy Spirit as their fathers had done (7:51). This is an interesting instance of continuity between the old and the new as far as the Spirit is concerned. Stephen accepted that the same Spirit who was dwelling in him had been active in Jewish history.

(v) The first outpouring of the Spirit on *non-Jews* happened at Samaria. Philip, like his fellow administrator Stephen, was led to preach. The change of location was due to circumstances outside his control (Saul's persecution), but there is no mention of the activity of the Spirit until the arrival of Peter and John from Jerusalem. The Samaritan situation (Acts 8:4ff.) raises an interesting question, for many had believed Philip and had been baptized, and yet had not received the Spirit.⁸⁰ Luke gives no indication of why the Spirit had not confirmed the preaching as he confirmed Peter's preaching at Pentecost. It has been suggested that Philip had no authority to lay hands on these Christians since he was not an apostle.⁸¹ But the case of Paul in Acts 9:12, 17, who received the Spirit through the laying on of

Cf. J. D. G. Dunn's full discussion of the Acts 8 problem, *op. cit.*, pp. 55-72. He takes the view that the Samaritans were not true believers until they received the Spirit.

Some regard the reception of the Spirit through the laying on of the apostles' hands as the visible manifestation of what had already happened (*eg.* J. H. E. Hull, *The Holy Spirit in the Acts of the Apostles* (1967), pp. 106ff. *Cf.* also G. R. Beasley-Murray's discussion, *Baptism in the NT* (1963), pp. 118f. For a Pentecostalist view, which regards it as a second reception of the Spirit, *cf.* H. M. Ervin, *These are not Drunken, as ye Suppose* (1968), pp. 92ff.

For further comment on this passage, *cf.* L. Dewar, *The Holy Spirit and Modern Thought*, pp. 54ff.; W. F. Flemington, *The NT Doctrine of Baptism* (1948), p. 41; J. Munck, *Acts*, p. 75; R. B. Rackham, *Acts (WC)*, 1901, p. 116.

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hands of Ananias, sufficiently refutes this view. It will hardly do to attribute apostolic status to Ananias for this exceptional task,⁸² since this would weaken the whole concept of 'apostle' for which Paul so staunchly contended. It cannot therefore be argued that Luke held the theory that only the Jerusalem apostles could confer the Spirit.

How then is the distinction between the Samaritans' believing and being baptized, and their receiving of the Spirit, to be explained? Can it be maintained that the Spirit's coming was some kind of later experience distinct from the earlier experience of faith? It has been suggested that the separation was intentional because of the need for some special sign to show that the despised Samaritans had really been received.⁸³ Another view is to maintain that there was something defective about the Samaritans' / belief. Luke uses an unexpected construction when he says that the Samaritans gave heed to what Philip said, *i.e.* in the sense of intellectual assent rather than in the sense of personal commitment to Christ.⁸⁴ If this is a valid interpretation it would be reasonable to conclude that the Samaritans entered into true faith only when the Spirit came upon them. This would be supported by the fact that Simon the magician also 'believed', but did not receive the Spirit. In fact Peter gave judgment that he was 'in the gall of bitterness and in the bond of iniquity' (Act 8:23).

There was clearly something defective about both his belief and baptism. It seems reasonable to suppose, in view of their high regard for magic, that the Samaritans were particularly superstitious and needed some remarkable demonstration of spiritual power to overcome this characteristic. The transformation effected was sufficiently electrifying to be noted by Simon and sufficiently impressive for him to desire to work such transformation in others. The whole incident again vividly draws attention to the sovereign character of the Spirit. Peter at once rejects as unthinkable any idea of the manipulation of the Spirit by man, especially by bribery which marks the worst antithesis to real spiritual power.

A further note is needed on the fact that only in Acts 8:17 and in two other places in Acts is reception of the Spirit linked with the laying on of

⁸² Cf. G. W. H. Lampe, *The Seal of the Spirit* (1951), p. 68, who maintains that Ananias was commissioned as an apostle for this particular task. His reason for this view is that Ananias had seen the Lord and had been 'sent'. But this suggests a 'temporary' apostleship, for which there is no other NT support.

⁸³ F. F. Bruce, *Int* 27, 1973, p. 174, suggests that the Samaritans, who had so long been the objects of Jewish disapproval, needed a special gesture from the Jerusalem apostles to assure them of incorporation into the fellowship of believers. Hence the delay in the reception of the Spirit. F. D. Bruner, *A Theology of the Holy Spirit*, pp. 175f, inclines to the view that the delayed reception was due to the design of God that the apostles should see for themselves the descent of the Spirit on the racially despised Samaritans. He takes the 'not yet' of this passage to point to an exceptional separation between baptism and the receiving of the Spirit.

⁸⁴ Cf. Dunn's discussion of the whole section, *Baptism in the Holy Spirit*, pp. 55f., in a chapter he calls, 'The Riddle of Samaria'. He points out that *episteusan* in Acts 8:12 is followed by the dative and does not have the same meaning as with *eis* or *o*.

hands (Acts 9:17; 19:6). It cannot, therefore, be claimed to be an essential means. Again the Spirit is sovereign and sometimes dispenses with such means, as in the case of Cornelius and his household (Acts 10:44). Moreover, laying on of hands is also used for special commissioning, as in the case of the Antioch church sending out Saul and Barnabas (Acts 13:3).

(vi) The activity of the Spirit is also seen in *individual guidance* in the narrative of the encounter between Philip and the Ethiopian. While Luke says that an angel of the Lord directed Philip away from Samaria towards Gaza (Acts 8:26), it is the Spirit who superintends the approach of Philip to the Ethiopian (8:29) and who transfers Philip from the scene after Philip had baptized the eunuch (8:39). In this instance no mention is made of the descent of the Spirit on the Ethiopian. It is noticeable that one textual variant attempted to remedy this omission by adding that the Spirit fell on the eunuch. The focus falls rather on the guidance of the evangelist. This constant presentation of the varied activities of the Spirit is particularly characteristic of Luke's narrative. It leaves the reader with the vivid impression that those activities cannot be reduced to a stereotyped pattern. The idea of the Spirit transporting a person to a different place is familiar in the OT (1 Ki. 18:12; 2 Ki. 2:16; Ezk. 3:14; 8:3). It is a striking acknowledgment of the direction of the Spirit in individual movements. In view of the importance of the conversion of the Ethiopian for the on-going mission of the church, the Spirit's control in the event is particularly significant.

THE SPIRIT'S WORK IN TWO NOTABLE CONVERSIONS

The key to the whole experience of the conversion of Saul of Tarsus is his infilling with the Holy Spirit. The prior questionings in his mind, the cataclysmic experience on the Damascus road, the challenge of the heavenly voice, the temporary blindings, and the sending to him of Ananias as the result of a vision were all steps in the way leading to the climax of his receiving the Spirit. Ananias announced to Saul that the scales would fall from his eyes and he would be filled with the Spirit (Acts 9:17).⁸⁵ Luke relates the falling of the scales but says nothing about the actual infilling. This, however, may be assumed. It is noticeable that in Saul's case the Spirit's infilling seems to be prior to Saul's baptism, which in Luke's narrative followed immediately after, unless, of course, the infilling was co-incident with the baptism. The main feature of importance in Luke's account is the indispensable activity of the Spirit in the conversion of Saul. When later the apostle relates his own conversion experience before non-Christian hearers (Acts 22, 26), he understandably says nothing about the

⁸⁵ G. Stahlin, *Die Apostelgeschichte* (NTD 10, 1962), pp. 137f., maintains that the construction in Acts 9:17 and 18 indicates that the infilling is connected with baptism. Cf. also W. Heitmiiller, *Im Namen Jesu: Erneuerungssprache- und religionsgeschichtliche Untersuchung zum Neuen Testament, speziell zur altchristlichen Taufe* (1903), p. 302 n. 3, who regards being filled with the Spirit as a paraphrase of baptism.

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Holy Spirit. But his epistles confirm the central place of the Spirit in his Christian experience and form an exposition of the outworking of the initial experience to which Luke refers. Until then he had identified himself among those who, in Stephen's words, had resisted the Spirit (Acts 7:51), but at the point when that resistance was finally overcome he was filled with the Spirit.

The other notable conversion was that of Cornelius, particularly because he is the first Gentile to embrace the Christian faith. The events leading up to Peter's visit to his home in Caesarea are related in detail by Luke because of the significance of the event in the development of the Christian church. After the vision, the Spirit directed Peter to go with Cornelius' men (Acts 10:19). In the course of his address Peter describes Jesus as being anointed by God 'with the Holy Spirit and power' (Acts 10:38), an interesting tie-up with the historical Jesus. But the climax came when the Spirit fell on the hearers while Peter was still speaking (10:44). Luke notes that Peter's Christian companions (clearly Jews) were amazed that the Gentiles received the Spirit. Again, on the strength of the Spirit's infilling, baptism followed, because the former had demonstrated that the people concerned were true Christians. It was the Spirit who had confirmed for Cornelius and his household the forgiveness of sins through Christ's name (Acts 10:43). As at Pentecost, the gift of tongues was seen to be a sign of the giving of the Spirit.⁸⁶

When later Peter reported the events leading to Cornelius' conversion he mentioned the Spirit's leading (Acts 11:12) and the descent of the Spirit while he was speaking (11:15), but further reflection had jogged his memory about the Lord's promise that his disciples would be baptized with the Holy Spirit (11:16). Peter represents the growing awareness of the Christians that what was happening was no accident, but the planned operation of the Spirit.⁸⁷ This is reflected in the statement in Acts 9:31 that the church in Judea, Galilee and Samaria had peace and multiplied as it walked in the fear of the Lord and the comfort of the Holy Spirit.

THE SPIRIT IN PROPHECY

One of the gifts of the Spirit which figures in Paul's discussions is the gift

⁸⁶ Bruner, *op. cit.*, p. 192, drawing support from O. Dibelius, *Die werdende Kirche: Eine Einführung in die Apostelgeschichte* (Hamburg, Im Furche-Verlag, 1951), claims that tongue-speaking in Acts is 'a corporate, church-founding, group-conversion phenomenon, and never the subsequent Spirit-experience of an

individual.

⁸⁷ H. R. Boer, *Pentecost and Missions*, pp. 32f., considers that Luke's main interest is to demonstrate how Gentiles

commission had anything to do with Peter's preaching to the Gentile Cornelius. The form of words used in Acts 11:16 - 'Be baptized with the Spirit' - is not Luke's normal phraseology. He uses 'receive'. The form in Acts 11:16 probably echoes the pre-Pentecostal promise of Jesus.

of prophecy and this is twice manifested in Acts in the person of Agabus.⁸⁸ In Acts 11:28 he foretold by the Spirit a world-wide famine, as a result of which the Antioch Christians at once sent contributions to their Judean brethren. To them prophecy through the Spirit carried with it a responsibility to act. The spontaneous nature of the response reveals the sensitivity of the Antioch church to the Spirit's leading. The second exercise of Agabus' prophetic gift is recorded in Acts 21:1 Off. and is again directly attributed to the Holy Spirit. It concerned the destiny of Paul at Jerusalem. Luke notes how he and the other people tried to dissuade Paul from going, but the apostle puts a totally different construction on the prediction, recognizing its truth.⁸⁹ For him the only suitable response was 'The will of the Lord be done' (Acts 21:14). It is also possible that prophecy was the means through which the Spirit directed the Antioch church to send out Barnabas and Paul and also restrained the missionaries from entering Asia and Bithynia.⁹⁰

THE SPIRIT'S ACTIVITY IN RESOLVING CONTROVERSY

When the question of Gentile circumcision was referred to the Jerusalem church, Peter's contribution centred on the fact that the Holy Spirit had been given to Gentiles as well as Jews (Acts 15:8). His key argument is that the Holy Spirit had made no distinction between Jew and Gentile. In James' letter sent to Gentile churches he gives his conclusion in the words, 'It has seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things. . .' (Acts 15:28f). In no clearer way could the Jerusalem Christians indicate that they accepted the dictates of the Spirit on this issue, the result of which vitally affected the future of the Gentile mission. On so crucial an issue it was the Spirit who did not permit a decision to be made which would have caused Christianity to remain a sect of Judaism. This event brings out clearly the way in which the leaders of the early Church were themselves Spirit-led.

Since the prohibitions suggested in Acts 15:29 do not appear to have been regarded as absolute demands, they must be treated as matters of

⁸⁸ J. D. G. Dunn, *Jesus and the Spirit*, pp. 174f., points out that Luke links prophecy and *glossalia* and describes these in ecstatic terms. He says nothing, however, about false prophecy and how this is to be distinguished from Spirit-directed prophecy. Nor does Luke comment on the fact that Paul disregarded the Spirit-prompted advice of the people of Tyre not to go to Jerusalem (Acts 21:4).

It is significant that even before Agabus' Spirit-directed prophecy, Paul had declared that the Spirit had in every city testified that imprisonment and afflictions awaited him (Acts 20:23). The Acts record certainly gives the impression that Paul was prepared for the opposition facing him at Jerusalem. Commenting on the phrase 'bound by the Spirit' in Acts 20:22, F. F. Bruce, *Int 27*, 1973, p. 182, says that it probably refers more to the driving power of the Spirit, than to inward spiritual constraint.

On the subject of Christian prophecy in Acts, cf. E. E. Ellis, 'The Role of the Christian prophet in Acts', *Apostolic History and the Gospel* (ed. W. Gasque and R. P. Martin, 1970), pp. 55-67.

⁹⁰ This is suggested by G. T. Montague, *The Holy Spirit: Growth of a Biblical Tradition*, p. 296. As far as Luke is concerned the detailed means are unimportant. His purpose is to show the Spirit's initiative.

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temporary expediency which later became modified. James refers to them again in discussion with Paul in Acts 21:25, but they are not mentioned elsewhere in the NT (unless some allusion to them is seen in Rev. 2:14, 20).⁹¹ What is more important for NT theology is the way in which Paul argues for the basic unity of Jew and Gentile (*cf.* his Galatian letter and in Eph. 2:16-22), in the course of which discussion he has much to say about the part played by the Spirit.

THE SPIRIT IN THE GENTILE MISSION

It was unquestionably a highly significant policy move on the part of the Antioch church to contemplate the Gentile mission, for it was a breakthrough which launched a movement of rapid expansion.⁹² Luke describes the move explicitly in terms of the Holy Spirit, who issued the charge to set Barnabas and Saul apart for other work (Acts 13:2). Not only was the selecting, but also the sending, seen to be the work of the Holy Spirit (13:4). The whole of the subsequent first missionary itinerary is, therefore, seen as an operation of the Spirit. Indeed in his encounter with the magician Elymas in Cyprus, Paul is said to be filled with the Holy Spirit (13:9). This is seen as the explanation of his clear perception of the true state of Elymas' heart and mind. It was Elymas' sudden blindness that convinced the proconsul of the truth of Christianity. He must have seen it as an evidence of the authoritative word of Paul, which was in fact the voice of the Spirit.

Luke comments that the Christians, whom Paul and Barnabas left behind at Antioch in Pisidia, were filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit (Acts 13:52). Since this was in face of considerable opposition from Jews and others whom they had incited, it is a strong testimony to the continual reality of the fullness of the Spirit in believers.

Another feature of the Spirit's work in the Gentile mission is his guidance, an aspect which comes out clearly in Acts 16:6. Luke states that Paul and his party were forbidden by the Holy Spirit to speak the word in Asia and equally forbidden to enter Bithynia (16:7).⁹³ Luke does not tell how the missionaries knew they were forbidden, but his narrative leaves no doubt that he himself was convinced that the assessment that it was the work of the Spirit was right. Since Luke joined Paul's party immediately after this (*cf.* the use of the first person in Acts 16:10), it is reasonable to

⁹¹ *Cf.* G. R. Beasley-Murray's discussion, *Revelation*, pp. 86f.

⁹² See E. M. B. Green, / *Believe in the Holy Spirit* (1975), pp. 58ff, for a succinct discussion on the Spirit and mission.

⁹³ It is noticeable that whereas in Acts 16:6 Luke refers to the Holy Spirit, in 16:7 he uses the expression Spirit of Jesus. This throws some light on Luke's theology of the Spirit, for it is inseparably linked with the person and work of Christ. G. Stahlin discusses the implication of this in an article in *Christ and Spirit*, pp. 229-252. He concludes that the Spirit of Jesus is the Spirit who belongs to Jesus. In this sense the Spirit is God's representative. At the same time 'he is the personal spiritual power whereby the Lord Jesus is present: and active in the church.'

suppose that he learned firsthand that Paul himself was equally convinced. Moreover, the prohibitions led immediately to the vision of a European mission, and it is not unreasonable to suppose that this represents the positive side of the Spirit's leading. One highly significant feature is that in Acts 16:7 the Spirit is named as 'the Spirit of Jesus', indicative of the continued work of the risen Christ through the Spirit. The Spirit is the representative of Jesus.

THE SPIRIT AND THE 'DISCIPLES' AT EPHESUS

Luke's account of Paul's meeting with the twelve men at Ephesus merits careful comment because it has been variously understood. Paul's immediate question to them was, 'Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?' (Acts 19:2). He clearly detected a lack. Their response that they have not heard of the Holy Spirit prompts Paul to ask, 'Into what then were you baptized?' Since their baptism was John the Baptist's, it is clear that these people had not yet reached the stage of Christian belief. Although they are called 'disciples', the term must be understood here in a different sense from elsewhere in Acts.⁹⁴ In Luke's normal usage 'disciples' means Christians, but he generally uses the word with the article to denote a specific group. In the present case the reference is vague and some distinction seems to be implied. They probably considered themselves to be Christians, but if they knew only the baptism of John their knowledge of Christianity was clearly defective. Moreover, even their knowledge of John's baptism was not precise, since he had predicted a baptism of the Spirit by Jesus. We must conclude that these 'disciples' were not in the main stream of Christianity.⁹⁵ It is no surprise, therefore, that as yet they had not received the Spirit.

Does Paul's question imply the possibility of faith without the possession of the Holy Spirit? In his epistles Paul emphatically denies such a possibility (*cf.* Rom. 8:9). Could it be that Luke is portraying a different approach? But there is no support in Acts for such a view. It is more reasonable to suppose that Paul detected the lack of the Spirit (otherwise why the question?), and inferred from this that these 'disciples' were not as yet Christians.

⁹⁴ *Cf.* Dunn's discussion of this passage, *Baptism in the Holy Spirit*, pp. 83ff.

⁹⁵ L. Goppelt, *Apostolic and Post-Apostolic Times* (Eng. trans., 1970), p. 90 n. 36, regards the disciples as not yet real disciples, but adherents of John the Baptist. *Cf.* H. Conzelmann, *Apostelgeschichte (LHB 1963)*, p. 110. G. Stahlin, *Apostelgeschichte*, pp. 252f., disagrees. It seems clear that baptism and the receiving of the Spirit are closely linked for Paul's question to be intelligible. *Cf.* W. F. Flemington, *The New Testament Doctrine of Baptism*, p. 47. F. D. Bruner, *A Theology of the Holy Spirit*, pp. 207-244, strongly combats the use of this passage in support of a 'second' experience. R. Bultmann, *History of the Synoptic Tradition* (Eng. trans. 1963), p. 247 n. 1, maintained that for Acts baptism and the reception of the Spirit belong together. The contrast of John's baptism with Christian baptism in Acts 19:1-7 shows that for Christian baptism it is the gift of the Spirit that is characteristic. *Cf.* also his TAT 1, p. 139.

Another problem which arises from this passage concerns the interval which separated the baptism of these twelve believers and their receiving the Spirit when Paul laid his hands on them. Some see this as evidence of the fact that the receiving of the Spirit is subsequent to the initial act of conversion. But the passage before us hardly supports such a view. Luke records the baptism and the laying on of hands as if they were parts of one act, not two. Although it is a possibility, it is not the most natural understanding of these words to claim that they support a baptism of the Spirit subsequent to conversion.⁹⁶ The exercise of gifts of the Spirit (speaking in tongues and prophecy) was a tangible evidence in this case of the reality of the infilling (see later section under Paul's doctrine).

Some comparison might be made between these Ephesians and Apollos, who also knew only of John's baptism (Acts 18:25). Nevertheless, he is said to be 'fervent in spirit', which may legitimately be taken to refer to the Holy Spirit.⁹⁷ He still needed further instruction, but was nevertheless already a Christian.

There is one other reference to the Holy Spirit in Acts, also related to the Ephesian church. In Paul's address to the elders, he asserts of them that the Holy Spirit has made them guardians of the flock, to feed it (Acts 20:28). This suggests that Paul accepts as a matter of course that elders were appointed by the Holy Spirit.⁹⁸ This is in line with the earlier allusions to the table administrators in Acts 6 and the mission delegates in Acts 13. It is the Spirit who not only sets men aside for the work of the ministry, but also directs them into the kind of ministry to which they are to be appointed. The work of oversight and the work of shepherding was the direct concern of the Holy Spirit.

SUMMARY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT IN ACTS

We may observe at once that this evidence from the book of Acts does not provide us with any reflection on the theology of the Spirit. It is wholly concerned with his activity. In this there is a close parallel with his activity in the ministry of Jesus, although much more detailed. The theological exposition of the doctrine of the Spirit did not fit into Luke's purpose in Acts, but comes to fuller expression in the epistles.

⁹⁶ It must be noted that the book of Acts does not present an entirely consistent procedure. Cornelius received the Spirit before baptism and the 120 in Acts 2 independently of baptism. This shows that some caution must be exercised before concluding that there was a fixed order.

⁹⁷ G. W. H. Lampe, *The Seal of the Spirit*, p. 66, suggests that the fact that Apollos is so described, although he knew only the baptism of John, may be because Luke regarded as normal that the Spirit was imparted through baptism. But he admits that Luke may have thought that a direct commission of the Lord conferred the Spirit in view of his high ranking among the apostles (as for instance at Corinth).

⁹⁸ Since Luke gives no indication of the manner in which the Spirit appointed elders, there is much to be said for F. F. Bruce's view that the men were appointed and recognized because they were those on whom the Spirit had bestowed the necessary qualifications (*The Book of Acts*, 1954, p. 416).

There is no question in Luke's mind that the emergence of the Christian church is due to the work of the Spirit. Moreover, the Spirit is clearly the same Spirit who worked in the ministry of Jesus, which justifies the occasional use of the title 'the Spirit of Jesus'.⁹⁹

Another feature of the Acts narratives is that the Spirit's activities are a fulfilment of the promises given by Jesus himself. Luke illustrates the Spirit's guidance, his power to convict, his abiding with the people of God, the overflowing of the message through Christians like rivers of living water and the abundant power seen in witnessing. There is therefore a direct link between what Jesus said about the Spirit and what the early church experienced.

It is worth noting that each new stage in Christian development is seen as a work of the Spirit. The beginnings at Pentecost are the most obvious illustration of this, but not the only case. The Spirit's activity is seen in the early defence of the gospel, in the extension of the church to the Gentiles, in the launching of world-wide mission, in the resolution of the terms for Gentile admittance, and in the specific control of mission activities. The emphasis falls more on the corporate than on the individual aspects, which again are more to the fore in the epistles. This may also account for the fact that Acts says virtually nothing about the ethical aspects of the Spirit's work. The writer's main interest is the narration of the church's activities rather than the attitudes of individuals or groups. This need not imply that ethical issues were of no interest to him, but simply that space did not permit him to include such issues in his writing.