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## **Bible Studies from the Book of Acts: The Work of the Holy Spirit in the Spread of Christianity**

### **Focusing the Topic**

How is the Holy Spirit (HS) active in the book of Acts with regard to the spread of Christianity?

What is the work of the HS in Acts? What does the HS do in the book of Acts? What kinds of things are attributed to the HS in Acts?

How does this activity impact the spread of Christianity?

### **Acknowledgment**

I assigned a topic much like this to Phil Slate for the April 2002 Ohio Valley College Lectureship. I have at times borrowed from his work and sources in this paper. I am especially grateful for his material regarding the fulfillment motif. I have given him appropriate credit for specific ideas and wording.

### **Introduction**

A. What does the HS do in the book of Acts?

1. In Appendix A is a list of references to the HS in Acts categorized by activity. I have included verses which reference the "Holy Spirit" as well as those which use only the word "Spirit" when the reference is clearly to the Holy Spirit. I have included each verse in only one list. One may wish for a different number of categories, either more or fewer, and for different descriptions, but I have tried to be fair with the biblical words and contexts. In summary, there are twelve (12) passages listed in which the HS is said to reveal, instruct, speak or communicate. There are two (2) references to the baptism in or with the HS. There are ten (10) passages in which persons are filled with or full of the HS. There are nine (9) passages listed that I have described as empowerment or commissioning texts. There are three (3) clear fulfillment texts. There are fifteen (15) passages referencing the presence, gift of, reception of, coming, or promise of the HS. Three (3) passages I have included in a miscellaneous list (lie to the HS, test the HS, and resist the HS). Some of the actions of the Holy Spirit are past tense, for example, the anointing of Jesus during his ministry, and do not apply to our question of the role of the HS in the early church.

B. Backgrounds.

1. Lucan authorship. Luke and Acts may be identified as companion volumes authored by Luke (Luke 1:1-4, Acts 1:1; Lk. 24:44-49 cf. Acts 1:1-8, et. al.).

2. Lucan theology, especially regarding pneumatology. Luke's writings have a clear focus on the spirit world. The references in Luke's gospel are numerous in comparison to

the other gospels, especially the Synoptics. The gospel of Luke includes references to the HS, the human spirit, and evil spirits. There are approximately three times as many references to the HS in Luke as in Mark. This emphasis continues in Acts, at least in the early chapters. The Lucan emphasis on the HS must be taken into account when we survey the large number of word occurrences in Acts. This emphasis must also be taken into account when we consider that references to the HS wane considerably in the latter part of the book of Acts. How does one explain that an author who has demonstrated a primary interest in and focuses on the HS in his writings, with multiple references, suddenly and noticeably decreases the number of references?

Obviously, the number of references varies with the translation one uses, and even with the Greek text one uses. In the NIV there are 42 references to the Holy Spirit and 64 references to spirit in Acts. [In the NIV there are 13 references to the Holy Spirit and 28 references to spirit in Luke's gospel.] These numbers are significant compared with other NT books. A listing of passages is available online and with Bible software programs, in various versions as well as in the Greek text.

3. The purpose of the book of Acts. We are especially interested in the Luke's purpose as it might provide information concerning references to the HS. Some studies treat Luke-Acts as a single narrative, at least from the standpoint of defining Luke's purpose in writing (Green). Several purposes have been suggested for the writing of Acts, and in current studies these are often synthesized so the writer is thought to have had several purposes. The content of the book of Acts should be consistent with these purposes, i.e. the purposes should be suggested contextually, and the work of the HS as recorded in the book of Acts should be consistent with these purposes. Among the purposes one can list are Luke as historian, theologian, and apologist (Winn); Acts as confirmation of the gospel (van Unnik), defense with clear apologetic (Bruce), Roman and Jewish apologetic (Conzelmann), Paul's personal apology/defense (Mattill), evangelistic (Marshall), pastoral document (Martin), conversions (church of Christ), activity of risen Lord in his church (Reicke), fulfillment themes (Dupont, Gasque concurring), preach gospel to unbelievers (O'Neill), and a defense against Gnosticism (Talbert).

4. In considering the purpose of the book of Acts, one must also ask whether the identified purpose is consistent across the various audiences of the book.

a. Original readers. How did Acts function in the lives of the original recipients, those for whom the book was written, Theophilus by name, and other readers? What did they understand about the role of the HS in their lives as a result of this correspondence from Luke? When we inquire about the purposes of Acts, we are asking first about this group. How did Acts function for the readers?

b. Those who lived during the historic period recorded in Acts. How did the HS in these events function in the lives of the people who lived during this time?

c. Today's readers. How might we expect the HS to function in our lives today, especially with regard to the spread of Christianity?

5. Consistency between the purpose of Acts and the role of the HS. Not all of the suggested purposes of the book of Acts are of interest to us, although such purposes may suggest directions in future studies of the role and work of the HS. The purposes of Acts of interest to us here are those clearly connected to the work of the HS in the book of Acts. When we consider the theological focus of Luke and the purpose of Acts, we can conclude that the HS functioned in at least the following ways: confirmation, expectation, and equipping.<sup>1</sup> Thus the purposes of Acts of special interest for this study are those views associated with the apologetic, fulfillment, and promise themes.

6. As previously mentioned, we must deal with the significant diminution or even absence of references to the HS in the last half of the book of Acts.

C. The task before us is thus clear. We must (1) demonstrate that confirmation, expectation, and equipping are in fact functions or activities of the HS in the book of Acts, (2) inquire as to the significance of these functions in the historical time period covered by Acts, that is, the work of the HS in the spread of Christianity around the middle of the first century as outlined in the book of Acts, (3) conjecture what these functions meant in the life of the readers of the book of Acts, that is, the work of the HS in the spread of Christianity in the latter half of the first century, and (4) suggest applications for the present day regarding the work of the HS in the spread of Christianity.

### **I. Fulfillment: the activity of the HS in confirmation and authentication**

A. Slate provides a helpful beginning point in citing Peterson's comment on the fulfillment motif: "Even the casual reader of Luke-Acts must notice the extent to which the author employs fulfillment terminology throughout his narrative and focuses on how the divine plan of salvation is being realized."<sup>2</sup>

1. Peterson provides a list of "fill" and "fulfill" terms in Acts.<sup>3</sup>

2. A list of selected OT citations used in Acts. Following is a partial list of OT passages which are fulfilled, either by the death and resurrection of Jesus, or in the events

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<sup>1</sup> As I have studied for this presentation, my list of activities has at times included gifting and empowering, but these are now subsumed under the three categories. In this study, I sometimes use synonyms to communicate these concepts. For example, confirmation is related to verification, authenticating, and is closely connected to the fulfillment theme. Expectation as it relates to the HS considers the HS as a seal, promise, guarantee or surety. Equipping, empowering, commissioning and gifting are all aspects of the same category. While I have separated the equipping activity of the HS from the confirmation and expectation roles, there is a possibility that the equipping role is best understood as an aspect of the confirmation role.

<sup>2</sup>David Peterson, "The Motif of Fulfillment and the Purpose of Luke-Acts," 83, in The Book of Acts in Its Ancient Literary Setting, Vol. 1 of "The Book of Acts in Its First Century Setting," edited by Bruce W. Winter and Andrew D. Clarke (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993).

<sup>3</sup>Ibid. 83-104.

recorded by the author of Acts. A list can be developed by studying the OT passages cited by Luke as well as allusions to the OT.

<b><i>Acts Text</i></b>	<b><i>OT references</i></b>	<b><i>Topic</i></b>
1:20	Ps. 69:25; 109:8	prophecies about Judas' replacement
2:17-21	Joel 2:28-32	the coming (pouring out) of the HS
2:25-28, 34	Ps. 16:8-11; 110:1	David's Lord, the Lord who reigns
3:22-23	Dt. 18:15, 18-19	the prophet who will be raised up
3:25	Gen. 22:18	the promise to Abraham
4:11	Ps. 118:22	the rejected stone
8:33	Isa. 53:7-8	the suffering servant
15:16-17	Amos 9:11-12	rebuilding David's tent
28:26-27	Isa. 6:9-10	unhearing, hardened Israel

Many other references could be cited, especially in the Stephen speech (Chap. 7) and Paul's Antioch (of Pisidia) sermon (Chap. 13). The former mentions several OT events and prophecies including God's intention to raise up a prophet, Israel's idolatry, and God's sovereignty as Creator. The account of Paul's sermon includes OT texts which foretell the resurrection, blessings from David, and light for the Gentiles.

3. Some charts list as many as 140 OT passages which the Acts author uses to support his purpose of demonstrating Christ as fulfilling the OT.<sup>4</sup>

B. Restoration prophecies from the OT (concerning the restoration of the Jews) may also be considered as fulfillment passages. Therefore, we should notice the mention of the HS in such passages in Luke-Acts, and investigate the use of such OT restoration prophecies in Luke-Acts.

1. In Luke, Isa. 61:1ff is quoted as explanation for Jesus' ministry (Luke 4:18-19).
2. As mentioned in the listing above, Joel 2:28-31 is quoted in Acts 2:17-21
3. Gen. 22, 26, Dt. 18:15, 18-19, as quoted in 3:22-25
4. Is Isa. 44:3 in view in Acts 2:39?
5. Prophecies concerning the coming of the Spirit are frequent in the OT (especially note Ezek. 36-39; Isa. 40-66).

C. Lucan gospel references to the Spirit of God, the HS, reflect OT backgrounds and are seen as fulfillment, especially in the phrase (filled with the HS....)

1. 1:15; 1:35; 1:41; 1:67; 2:26; 2:29-32, et.al.
2. In Luke's gospel, these events are not seen as common. Luke's references to the HS as an important part of God's new work distinguish his gospel from the other Synoptics. Luke is describing a new and unusual appearance of the work of God through his Spirit (for example, at the baptism of Jesus). While John baptizes in water, the one coming (Jesus) will

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<sup>4</sup>An example pointed out by Phil Slate is G. T. Manley, ed., The New Bible Handbook (London, IVP), appendix V.

baptize with the HS and fire. The HS is mentioned in connection with Jesus' temptation, his return in the power of the Spirit, and his early ministry as introduced by the synagogue reading and comments (Luke 4). Remember that evidences and activities of the HS were unusual among the Jews in the intertestamental period. References to the coming of the Spirit are clearly designed to provide evidence of the inbreaking of the Messianic age, and serve to identify Jesus as fulfillment of OT prophecy and promises.

D. Lucan references to the work of the HS in Acts. That the HS is a prominent part of the book of Acts is undeniable, especially in the first section (chapters 1-12). Acts 1-12 has the greatest number of references in the entire NT in comparison to its length, 37 references according to Schweizer.<sup>5</sup>

1. It may be significant in terms of the fulfillment motif that the piling up of references to the HS is in that section of Acts where the gospel is going primarily to the Jews. It appears that the HS is especially active during this time. I believe the internal geographic outline (1:8) is also initially completed in this section of Acts. We can overview the ways in which the HS was working in this time period.

- a. The HS in Acts is regarded as inspiration of Scripture past (1:16; 4:25; 7:51-52; 28:25)
- b. Is now poured out through Christ (2:33)
- c. Is connected with and is a significant factor in preaching (1:8; 4:8,31; 5:32; 10:44; 11:15)
- d. Is involved in apostolic selection-succession (1:2, 20)
- e. Is involved in communicating the gospel with tongues (foreign languages) and prophecy (2:4,17f; 11:28; 19:5; 21:11)
- f. Works miracles (2:17f; 4:30; 13:9) [for what purpose?]
- g. Gifts the early church with wisdom (6:3,5,10), instruction (8:29; 10:19; 11:12), boldness (3:8,13; 4:29,31), guidance (19:6; 20:22-23; 21:4,11), guided missionary work (8:29,39; 10:19; 11:12; 13:2,4,9; 16:6-7), etc.<sup>6</sup>

2. In the second half of Acts, there are only 18 references to the work of the HS in chapters 13-28, although this section is longer than the first part of the book by almost a third. What is the reason for this diminution of references to the HS? We must try to understand the factors behind this phenomenon.

E. Connecting the Acts narrative to the motif of fulfillment: If we are correct in affirming that the vigorous work of the HS (1) affirmed the breaking in or presence of the Messianic age, (2) officially identified Jesus Christ as the fulfillment of God's promises or the one through whom those prophecies and promises would find fulfillment, and thus (3) authenticated the activities of the early church as the work of God, these connections are

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<sup>5</sup>Eduard Schweizer, "pneuma, pneumatikos," Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, Vol. VI (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1968), 404.

<sup>6</sup>This list is expanded from a list provided by Slate.

designed to have a special appeal to the Jews. Notice, it was in this initial period of Christianity that the HS was most active in an extraordinary sense.

1. These served as confirmation that what was occurring in the early church was a continuation of what God was doing among his people Israel in the OT. These are connected by Luke to the OT both with numerous citations and with the frequently recurring restoration theme. The HS was most active in this extraordinary sense in the initial period of the early church. Slate's citation of Jervell's comment on Acts 3:25 is to the point: God "testifies by the HS to the church that it is God's Israel and 'the sons of the prophets.'" (Jervell, p. 97) <sup>7</sup>

2. The role of Jesus as the one to whom the prophets were pointing (Jesus as Lord and Christ) is first proclaimed in the Pentecost events, then in the continuing wonders performed by the apostles, and finally in the continuation of the miracles and signs which were done by the power of the Spirit and authenticated and gave legitimacy to these activities.

3. The authenticating role of the HS was necessary to convince the Jews of the legitimacy of the journey or geographic motif, tied to the internally declared purpose (1:8). It was the Jews who struggled with the move from Jerusalem and Judea to Samaria and then to the nations at large. This is seen in the events of Acts 8 where the mere fact that the Samaritans had accepted the message preached was not sufficient evidence that God had fully accepted these "partial Jews." This is step one in the continuing spread of the gospel. It was necessary that apostles (Peter and John) go to Samaria where they serve as witnesses to the legitimacy of the baptisms of the Samaritans (and the subsequent promised gift of the reception of the HS, Acts 2:38-39?), and are also the means through which the HS was given to them as to the Jews. For the present, it should be sufficient to accept this as an authenticating work of the Spirit without demanding any connection also to the gifting work of the Spirit.

4. The eunuch is perhaps the first representative of the "uttermost parts of the earth." While geographically qualifying, he is a proselyte, and does not appear to be the first proselyte convert. He is significant as one unclean from the Jewish perspective. He is certainly distanced from the heart of Judaism (Bruce).<sup>8</sup> Perhaps that the text does not make this event more significant in the thinking of the Jews is due to the lack of witnesses (Stephen was alone in his encounter with the eunuch).

5. Cornelius is thoroughly Gentile (not a half-breed Samaritan, not a proselyte), although he is said to be a god-fearer. The role of the HS in this story is especially important. As Peter is preaching, the HS "fell on all who heard the word," and they spoke in tongues. What was the meaning of this? The context clarifies: (1) the believing Jews saw that the HS was poured out (no human intervention) on the Gentiles, indicating the right to be baptized and be accepted by God just as the Jews, (2) Peter's later explanation of the events identifies the

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<sup>7</sup>The wording and importance of this conclusion draws significantly on the paper by Slate, especially with regard to section E and point E1.

<sup>8</sup>F. F. Bruce, Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1971), 186-87.

coming of the HS as “just as on us at the beginning” (11:15), again signifying without human intervention; (3) Peter’s explanation at the Jerusalem meeting is that “God bore witness to the Gentiles, giving them the HS just as he did to us (15:8), again signifying the uniqueness of the coming of the HS in this case. Peter’s explanation of the coming of the HS on Cornelius was as authenticating the full acceptance of the Gentiles into the people of God.

6. The Gentile conversions continue without a mention of the HS (although see 16:6). The method employed by the author of Acts has been established: like the account of the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus, and as in the accounts of Peter’s and Paul’s sermons, the detail does not need to be repeated every time.<sup>9</sup> The case of the twelve disciples from Ephesus in Acts 19 (we do not know for certain whether they were Jews or Gentiles; they were likely Jews) involves some who knew only the baptism of John, and after Paul preached the current version of the good news to them, they were baptized, and through the imposition of Paul’s hands the HS came on them so they spoke in tongues and prophesied. We can conclude that the HS only validated (authenticated) their baptism by Jesus’ authority because the baptism of John was no longer valid.

F. Conclusion. The fulfilling or validating work of the HS was focused in the initial events of the new Christian era. It seems clear that the Jews were to be first to hear the gospel (Acts 3:26; 13:46; and Rom. 1:16), but when they rejected, the gospel went to the Gentiles. The establishment of Jesus as Messiah was essential for the Jews so they could see that the old Israel had become the new Israel, perhaps we could correctly say with a new dimension, but once that point was clearly established, it did not need to be reconfirmed again and again. The validating work of the HS and the record of Acts functioned just as did the record of events such as Abraham’s call, the Exodus, and the Exile and Return in the OT. The confirmation aspect of the work of the HS was not necessary or intended as part of the continuing experience of the church.

## **II. Promise: the activity of the HS in expectation**

A. Much of what we have seen to this point of the activity of the HS in Acts (esp. in chap. 1-15) is dramatic and visible. These events are associated with the initial establishment and identification of the church as God’s new Israel. It does not follow that the HS was no longer needed. Indeed, Peter’s focus on restoration in Acts 2-3 suggests that the new Christian era is to be characterized by the continuing presence and work of God’s spirit.

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<sup>9</sup>Slate’s citation of Jervell’s comment is helpful: “It is significant that nearly all the sayings about the Spirit in Acts are found in Chapters 1-15, that is, in the part of Acts where we above all have depicted the initial mission of the church and the life of the church until the apostolic council in Jerusalem. Here we find 45 instances out of a total of 57 in Acts. The last part of Acts has only a few sayings, most of them dealing with Paul and his last journey to Jerusalem (16:6-7; 19:2,6,21; 20:22,23,28; 21:4,11; 28:25). And even in Acts 1-15 the sayings about the Spirit and the Gentiles are very few.... When it comes to Gentiles, we have but one scene which tells us about the outpouring of the Spirit upon non-Jews (10:44f, 47; 11:15; 15:8 all deal with the same event).” Jacob Jervell, The Unknown Paul: Essays on Luke-Acts and Early Christian History (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1984), 105-106.

B. The HS is connected with water baptism (2:38; 19:1-3).<sup>10</sup> Paul's question to the twelve he encounters in Ephesus is "did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?" The implication is that they should have received the HS when they were baptized. That they did not know about the HS calls into question their baptism. The promise of the HS which is connected with baptism is solely for the baptism of Christ or into Christ or in the name of Jesus. The presence of the HS in the life of the believer is affirmed in various NT texts (1 Cor. 3:16; 6:18-20; Eph. 2:20-21; et.al.). Despite the failures of their lives, even in a sin so serious as sexual immorality, Paul affirms to the Corinthians that there is "a temple of the HS within you" (6:19).<sup>11</sup> Those who are a part of God's restoration of Israel (Acts 1:6; 13:34; 15:16-17; et. al.) have received the HS.

C. This fact (the presence of the HS in the life of a Christian) is accepted and considered sufficient in the early experience of the church without a continuing special emphasis on the HS. Slate notes and expands upon the helpfulness of Bruner's comment in this regard. Bruner mentions that in Acts 14:19-28 when Paul and Barnabas are revisiting Lystra and Iconium to strengthen those churches, "exhorting them to continue in the faith and saying that through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God" (14:22), it would seem most effective to have elaborated the doctrine of the HS as a blessing to those seeking him, as a means of guidance for those following him, and as a clear evidence of their commitment. But instead of exhortations to strive, pray through, or agonize, they were exhorted to continue in their faith. In fact, it may be considered strange that Luke does not mention the HS in any of the messages during this "missionary journey."<sup>12</sup> Likewise, Bruner's comments on Acts 20:17-38 point out that despite the more frequent mention of the HS in this passage, the Spirit is not something godly elders strive for as evidence of a deeper spiritual experience. Paul preaches repentance and faith and kingdom of God. Paul does not commend to them the Spirit as power for the tough times ahead, but rather commends them to God and the Word of his grace, able to build you up and give you an inheritance among those who are sanctified.<sup>13</sup>

D. Conclusion. The work of the HS in expectation relating to the promises of God is to insure the security of the promise. This work of the HS in the book of Acts continues past the

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<sup>10</sup>I suppose something should be said concerning the identity of the "gift of the HS" in the Acts 2 passage since this has been and continues to be debated. I believe this to be an appositive genitive, thus the Spirit Himself as the gift. I do not believe this to be baptism in the Spirit, reference to spectacular gifts of the HS, or simply a gift (salvation?) given by the HS. On this topic, see Nichols, Lectures on the Holy Spirit, (Plainview, TX: Nichols Publishing, 1967), pp. 167ff.

<sup>11</sup>Harvey Floyd, Is the Holy Spirit for Me? A Search for the Meaning of the Spirit in Today's Church (Nashville: 20<sup>th</sup> Century Christian, 1981), presents a helpful study of the continuing place of the HS in the life of the Christian.

<sup>12</sup>Frederick Dale Bruner, A Theology of the Holy Spirit: The Pentecostal Witness and the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1970), 198.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid., 215.

initial events of the new Christian era. The new Christian era will be characterized by the continuing presence and work of God's HS. This is signified in the reception of the HS at baptism, and in the promise that the HS is for all obedient believers (5:32). Sufficient as security for the promise (the HS as seal or promise in 2 Cor. 1:20; Eph. 1:14) is the presence of the HS in our lives, guaranteeing the certainty of God's eternal intention as reality in our lives. This aspect of the work of the HS in the book of Acts explains, at least in part, the change in emphasis in the latter half of Acts.

### **III. Gifting: the activity of the HS in equipping or empowering**

A. A final possibility concerning the work of the HS in the book of Acts concerns the function of equipping the early church with special gifts to assist with the spread of the gospel. As noted earlier, this may be more properly understood as a confirming work, but given the intense interest and emphasis in today's religious world on the gifts of the HS, it seems good to treat this material in a separate section. The gifting work of the Spirit, perhaps not especially obvious in Acts, is certainly in view in the NT. If we have correctly identified the role of the HS in the Samaritan account (Acts 8) and the Cornelius account (Acts 10) as validation (the reason that gifts were given), we have few other texts in Acts which specifically focus on the gifting work of the HS in equipping or commissioning (see Appendix A).

B. This may not be surprising when we ask how the gifting work of the Spirit would provide support for any of the purposes of Acts as outlined in the introduction. There seems to be little if any connection. There is little justification in the book of Acts for the contemporary focus on spiritual (miraculous) gifts. If modern day gifts serve as confirmation, one might legitimately inquire why the revealing, speaking, and communicating function of the HS cannot serve as confirmation today as it did in the first century. There is even less justification for seeing the modern church as ill-equipped for ministry without special visible endowments of the Holy Spirit. The presence of God in this world has never depended upon his visibility in supernatural manifestations. Further, in Scripture the HS also supplies spiritual gifts which are non-miraculous.

C. Are there any references in Acts which are primary references to the gifting work of the HS? Candidates would include Acts 2 (Pentecost); 8 (Samaritans); 10 (Cornelius and his household); 9,16, and 22 (Paul); and 19 (rebaptized disciples of John the Baptist). When these five cases are considered against the background of the history recorded in Acts, perhaps what is most surprising is how few references there are which can be certainly applied to the gifting or equipping role of the HS.

D. Of course, there are other activities recorded in the book of Acts which may be thought to involve the HS, even though there are not specific references to the HS in those contexts. For example, consider the following questions: Did the HS inspire preaching? If so, how? How did the HS guide in selecting the apostles and Judas' replacement? What was the role of the HS in working miracles? What part did the HS play in providing wisdom? How did the HS help people speak boldly? How did he comfort or encourage? Did all of these activities

(gifts) require the prior laying on of hands? The list of questions may also be brought into the present to provide profitable reflection upon what it means that the HS is involved in the work of God's church today, e.g. does the HS inspire preaching? etc.

E. Conclusion. Outlining the activity of the HS in equipping the early church with miraculous or non-miraculous gifts does not seem to be a primary function of the book of Acts. This emphasis is more read into the book (eisegesis) than out of the book (exegesis). The limited references to gifts which do occur in the book of Acts may be better understood as confirmational than equipping. The reference to the "gift of the Holy Spirit" in Acts 2 likely connects best to the role of the HS in guaranteeing the continuing expectation of God's presence.

#### **IV. Conclusion**

A. This study has focused primarily on the role of the HS in Luke-Acts materials, chiefly on Acts, and first on the verifying (authenticating) role of the HS as connected to the Lucan fulfillment motif and purpose. Secondly, the study has addressed the connection of the HS to securing the promise and to providing gifts which equipped or empowered the early church. A study such as this requires placing the Acts events in the first century setting in which they occurred to ask what impact they would have had on the original hearers and observers. This is the question of "what Acts meant." This study has not attempted to answer all of the questions that could be raised concerning the work of the HS, for many of those questions have been previously treated, and an adequate treatment requires a study of more of the NT texts where biblical teaching occurs on these topics.

B. This study has attempted to stay within the context of Acts (as the focus of this week) to ask what we might know of the work of the HS from the Acts text. Despite the narrow focus on a limited number of activities or works of the HS, various lessons can be seen. Acts clearly communicates that the work of the HS must have (1) continuity with the past, (2) a purpose consistent with God's purpose in the present, and (3) hope for the future. God sought to convince the Jews of his new work. The functions of the HS support this task among the old Israel as well as the task of including the new Israel--confirming, promising, and providing.

C. Additionally, there are clear implications in the reading of the text beyond those items we have been able to deal with specifically in this brief study. Extraordinary gifts of the HS are not designed to give people a higher level of spirituality as the Pentecostals often claim, much of the work of the HS was confined in Acts to the earliest days of the church, the HS as a gift is part of the Christian's identity with God and participation in the promises of God, and the HS bestows gifts other than supernatural.

D. The role of the HS in the time period reflected in the history of the book of Acts (around the middle of the first century) in the spread of Christianity. The text of Acts indicates that the HS functioned in the life of the church (as recorded in Acts) to confirm God's continuing action in the church, to provide continuity with God's plan for his people Israel, and to provide validity or authentication for the teachings and actions of the Christians. Some of

this confirming task was accomplishing by special gifts for believers. While the Holy Spirit as guarantor of the promises and the foundation for expectation is not as apparent as in other NT texts, the continuing presence of the HS in the life of Christians is clearly in view, perhaps as support or validation of one's life.

E. The role of the HS in the time period of the readers of Acts (the second half of the first century) in the spread of Christianity. The book of Acts apparently functioned in the lives of the original recipients as confirmational, especially in its emphasis on the events recorded as fulfillment or promise. For the original readers, the text of Acts not only confirmed the history of the church, but also confirmed the continuing work of the church in the tasks set forth in Acts. One can speculate that the confirming or validating function was increasingly significant in the life of the church as Christianity and Judaism became more and more distinct and separated. The lessening of references to the extraordinary work of the HS in the second part of the book of Acts suggests that the confirming or authenticating role of the HS with regard to the OT was perhaps waning in favor of an expecting or promising role for the individual believer. The presence of the HS in the life of believers was sufficient to serve as guarantee of God's promises. The equipping role of the HS continued, but not in the extraordinary miraculous way characteristic of the first years of the church.

F. The role of the HS in today's church in the spread of Christianity. The role of the HS in the spread of Christianity today is similar to that traced in this study. The word of God, the Christian Scriptures (as the sword of the Spirit), is confirmed as valid and true (miracles are not necessary to confirm that Jesus is the Christ, the one prophesied about in the OT). The HS continues to function in the life of the believer as guarantee and seal (promise). The HS continues to provide gifts to the church to equip and empower (not all spiritual gifts are miraculous). The message spreads as the inspired words are proclaimed by those gifted by the HS to participate in that preaching, as believers accept those inspired and confirmed words of God in the language of men, and as the church functions by the gifts God gives through his Spirit.

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The briefly annotated bibliography on the next page suggests some resources for those wishing further study in this area. I have tried to include resources which can be appreciated by thoughtful Christians with or without scholarly backgrounds. I obvious include those which are most useful to me. I have purposefully omitted some technical works and some works I presume people would know about and use.

## Bibliography

Bales, James D. The Holy Spirit and the Christian. Shreveport: Lambert, 1966.

This older work provides helpful historical background concerning HS studies in churches of Christ.

Bruce, F. F. The Book of Acts. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1971 (8<sup>th</sup> printing).

A standard work, part of the New International Commentary on the New Testament.

Bruner, Frederick Dale. A Theology of the Holy Spirit: The Pentecostal Witness and the New Testament. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1970.

A bit more specialized, but an excellent response to Pentecostalism with good exposition of the text.

Camp, Franklin. The Work of the Holy Spirit in Redemption. N.p., n.p., 1972.

Sets forth the proposition that the Holy Spirit works through the word in conversion and sanctification.

Floyd, Harvey. Is the Holy Spirit for Me?" A Search for the Meaning of the Spirit in Today's Church. Nashville, TN: 20<sup>th</sup> Century Christian, 1981.

Jervell, Jacob. The Unknown Paul: Essays on Luke-Acts and Early Christian History.

Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1984.

Jividen, Jimmy. Alive in the Spirit: A Study of the Nature and Work of the Holy Spirit. Nashville, TN: Gospel Advocate, 1990.

Material especially suitable for Bible classes in the church setting.

McGuigan, Jim. Where the Spirit of the Lord Is. West Monroe, LA: Howard Publishing, 1999.

An interesting and helpful work which raises practical questions concerning the influence and impact of the Holy Spirit in the life of the Christian.

Nichols, Gus. Lectures on the Holy Spirit. Plainview, TX: Nichols Publishing, 1967.

Takes the opposite position of Camp with regard to the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

## **Appendix A**

### **References to the Holy Spirit in the Lucan Literature: Luke and Acts**

While the purpose of this essay is to trace the role and work of the Holy Spirit in the book of Acts, the reader may find it helpful to survey the way in which Luke describes the activity of the Holy Spirit in his Gospel. This appendix contains a list of occurrences in Luke as well as in Acts. These lists are provided sequentially in the first two sections of this appendix, and in a third section of the appendix the occurrences in Acts are categorized as described in the essay. The occurrences are counted according to verses and not the larger context or passage. There are, of course, some references which are difficult to categorize and could be placed in a different category.

This appendix contains references both to the Holy Spirit and to the Spirit, the latter when the reference is clearly to the Holy Spirit. Citations which refer to the "Holy Spirit" are in bold; those citations which refer to the Holy Spirit only as "Spirit" are in regular typeface.

#### **Section A-1**

##### **References to the Holy Spirit in the Gospel of Luke**

###### Luke 1:15

for he will be great in the sight of the Lord. He is never to take wine or other fermented drink, and he will be filled with the Holy Spirit even from birth.

###### Luke 1:35

The angel answered, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God.

###### Luke 1:41

When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the baby leaped in her womb, and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit.

###### Luke 1:67

His father Zechariah was filled with the Holy Spirit and prophesied:

###### Luke 2:25

Now there was a man in Jerusalem called Simeon, who was righteous and devout. He was waiting for the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was upon him.

###### Luke 2:27

Moved by the Spirit, he went into the temple courts. When the parents brought in the child Jesus to do for him what the custom of the Law required,

###### Luke 2:26

It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not die before he had seen the Lord's Christ.

###### Luke 3:16

John answered them all, "I baptize you with water. But one more powerful than I will come, the thongs of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire.

###### Luke 3:22

and the Holy Spirit descended on him in bodily form like a dove. And a voice came from heaven: "You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased."

###### Luke 4:1

Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit in the desert,

Luke 4:14

Jesus returned to Galilee in the power of the Spirit, and news about him spread through the whole countryside.

Luke 4:18

"The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed,

Luke 10:21

At that time Jesus, full of joy through the Holy Spirit, said, "I praise you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and learned, and revealed them to little children. Yes, Father, for this was your good pleasure.

Luke 11:13

If you then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!"

Luke 12:10

And everyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man will be forgiven, but anyone who blasphemes against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven.

Luke 12:12

for the Holy Spirit will teach you at that time what you should say."

## **Section A-2** **References to the Holy Spirit in the Book of Acts**

Acts 1:2

until the day he was taken up to heaven, after giving instructions through the Holy Spirit to the apostles he had chosen.

Acts 1:5

For John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit."

Acts 1:8

But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

Acts 1:16

and said, "Brothers, the Scripture had to be fulfilled which the Holy Spirit spoke long ago through the mouth of David concerning Judas, who served as guide for those who arrested Jesus—

Acts 2:1

When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place.

Acts 2:4

All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them.

Acts 2:17

"In the last days, God says, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your young men will see visions, your old men will dream dreams.

Acts 2:18

Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days, and they will prophesy.

Acts 2:33

Exalted to the right hand of God, he has received from the Father the promised Holy Spirit and has poured out what you now see and hear.

Acts 2:38

Peter replied, "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 4:8

Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them: "Rulers and elders of the people!

Acts 4:25

You spoke by the Holy Spirit through the mouth of your servant, our father David: " 'Why do the nations rage and the peoples plot in vain?

Acts 4:31

After they prayed, the place where they were meeting was shaken. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God boldly.

Acts 5:3

Then Peter said, "Ananias, how is it that Satan has so filled your heart that you have lied to the Holy Spirit and have kept for yourself some of the money you received for the land?

Acts 5:9

Peter said to her, "How could you agree to test the Spirit of the Lord? Look! The feet of the men who buried your husband are at the door, and they will carry you out also."

Acts 5:32

We are witnesses of these things, and so is the Holy Spirit, whom God has given to those who obey him."

Acts 6:3

Brothers, choose seven men from among you who are known to be full of the Spirit and wisdom. We will turn this responsibility over to them

Acts 6:5

This proposal pleased the whole group. They chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit; also Philip, Procorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolas from Antioch, a convert to Judaism.

Acts 7:51

"You stiff-necked people, with uncircumcised hearts and ears! You are just like your fathers: You always resist the Holy Spirit!

Acts 7:55

But Stephen, full of the Holy Spirit, looked up to heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God.

Acts 8:15

When they arrived, they prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit,

Acts 8:16

because the Holy Spirit had not yet come upon any of them; they had simply been baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus.

Acts 8:17

Then Peter and John placed their hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit.

Acts 8:18

When Simon saw that the Spirit was given at the laying on of the apostles' hands, he offered them money

Acts 8:19

and said, "Give me also this ability so that everyone on whom I lay my hands may receive the Holy Spirit."

Acts 8:29

The Spirit told Philip, "Go to that chariot and stay near it."

Acts 8:39

When they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord suddenly took Philip away, and the eunuch did not see him again, but went on his way rejoicing.

Acts 9:17

Then Ananias went to the house and entered it. Placing his hands on Saul, he said, "Brother Saul, the Lord—Jesus, who appeared to you on the road as you were coming here—has sent me so that you may see again and be filled with the Holy Spirit."

Acts 9:31

Then the church throughout Judea, Galilee and Samaria enjoyed a time of peace. It was strengthened; and encouraged by the Holy Spirit, it grew in numbers, living in the fear of the Lord.

Acts 10:19

While Peter was still thinking about the vision, the Spirit said to him, "Simon, three men are looking for you.

Acts 10:38

how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and power, and how he went around doing good and healing all who were under the power of the devil, because God was with him.

Acts 10:44

While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit came on all who heard the message.

Acts 10:45

The circumcised believers who had come with Peter were astonished that the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out even on the Gentiles.

Acts 10:47

Then Peter said, "Can anyone keep these people from being baptized with water? They have received the Holy Spirit just as we have."

Acts 11:12

The Spirit told me to have no hesitation about going with them. These six brothers also went with me, and we entered the man's house.

Acts 11:15

"As I began to speak, the Holy Spirit came on them as he had come on us at the beginning.

Acts 11:16

Then I remembered what the Lord had said: 'John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.'

Acts 11:24

He was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and faith, and a great number of people were brought to the Lord.

Acts 11:28

One of them, named Agabus, stood up and through the Spirit predicted that a severe famine would spread over the entire Roman world. (This happened during the reign of Claudius.)

Acts 13:2

While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, "Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them."

Acts 13:4

The two of them, sent on their way by the Holy Spirit, went down to Seleucia and sailed from there to Cyprus.

Acts 13:9

Then Saul....also called Paul, filled with the Holy Spirit, looked straight at Elymas and said,

Acts 13:52

And the disciples were filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit.

Acts 15:8

God, who knows the heart, showed that he accepted them by giving the Holy Spirit to them, just as he did to us.

Acts 15:28

It seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us not to burden you with anything beyond the following requirements:

Acts 16:6

Paul and his companions traveled throughout the region of Phrygia and Galatia, having been kept by the Holy Spirit from preaching the word in the province of Asia.

Acts 16:7

When they came to the border of Mysia, they tried to enter Bithynia, but the Spirit of Jesus would not allow them to.

Acts 19:2

and asked them, "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?" They answered, "No, we have not even heard that there is a Holy Spirit."

Acts 19:6

When Paul placed his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came on them, and they spoke in tongues and prophesied.

Acts 20:22

"And now, compelled by the Spirit, I am going to Jerusalem, not knowing what will happen to me there

Acts 20:23

I only know that in every city the Holy Spirit warns me that prison and hardships are facing me.

Acts 20:28

Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. Be shepherds of the church of God, which he bought with his own blood.

Acts 21:4

Finding the disciples there, we stayed with them seven days. Through the Spirit they urged Paul not to go on to Jerusalem.

Acts 21:11

Coming over to us, he took Paul's belt, tied his own hands and feet with it and said, "The Holy Spirit says, 'In this way the Jews of Jerusalem will bind the owner of this belt and will hand him over to the Gentiles.' "

Acts 28:25

They disagreed among themselves and began to leave after Paul had made this final statement: "The Holy Spirit spoke the truth to your forefathers when he said through Isaiah the prophet:

### **Section A-3**

#### **References to the Holy Spirit in the Book of Acts Categorized**

##### **Revealing, instructing, saying, communicating (12)**

Acts 1:2

...until the day he was taken up to heaven, after giving instructions through the Holy Spirit to the apostles he had chosen.

Acts 4:25

You spoke by the Holy Spirit through the mouth of your servant, our father David: "'Why do the nations rage and the peoples plot in vain?

Acts 9:31

Then the church throughout Judea, Galilee and Samaria enjoyed a time of peace. It was strengthened; and encouraged by the Holy Spirit; it grew in numbers, living in the fear of the Lord.

Acts 10:19

While Peter was still thinking about the vision, the Spirit said to him, "Simon, three men are looking for you.

Acts 11:12

The Spirit told me to have no hesitation about going with them. These six brothers also went with me, and we entered the man's house.

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While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, "Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them."

Acts 15:28

It seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us not to burden you with anything beyond the following requirements:

Acts 20:23

I only know that in every city the Holy Spirit warns me that prison and hardships are facing me.

Acts 21:4

Finding the disciples there, we stayed with them seven days. Through the Spirit they urged Paul not to go on to Jerusalem.

Acts 21:11

Coming over to us, he took Paul's belt, tied his own hands and feet with it and said, "The Holy Spirit says, 'In this way the Jews of Jerusalem will bind the owner of this belt and will hand him over to the Gentiles.' "

Acts 28:25

They disagreed among themselves and began to leave after Paul had made this final statement: "The Holy Spirit spoke the truth to your forefathers when he said through Isaiah the prophet:

**Baptism in or with the Holy Spirit (2)**

Acts 1:5

For John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit."

Acts 11:16

Then I remembered what the Lord had said: 'John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.'

**Filled with the Holy Spirit, full of the Holy Spirit (10)**

Acts 2:4

All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them.

Acts 4:8

Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them: "Rulers and elders of the people!

Acts 4:31

After they prayed, the place where they were meeting was shaken. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God boldly.

Acts 6:3

Brothers, choose seven men from among you who are known to be full of the Spirit and wisdom. We will turn this responsibility over to them

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This proposal pleased the whole group. They chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit; also Philip, Procorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolas from Antioch, a convert to Judaism.

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Acts 11:24

He was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and faith, and a great number of people were brought to the Lord.

Acts 13:9

Then Saul....also called Paul, filled with the Holy Spirit, looked straight at Elymas and said,

Acts 13:52

And the disciples were filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit.

**Commission, authorize, give power (9)**

Acts 1:8

But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

Acts 8:29

The Spirit told Philip, "Go to that chariot and stay near it."

Acts 8:39

When they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord suddenly took Philip away, and the eunuch did not see him again, but went on his way rejoicing.

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Acts 20:28

Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. Be shepherds of the church of God, which he bought with his own blood.

### **Fulfillment (3)**

#### **Acts 1:16**

and said, "Brothers, the Scripture had to be fulfilled which the Holy Spirit spoke long ago through the mouth of David concerning Judas, who served as guide for those who arrested Jesus—

#### **Acts 2:17**

"In the last days, God says, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your young men will see visions, your old men will dream dreams.

#### **Acts 2:18**

Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days, and they will prophesy.

### **Presence, gift, reception, coming, promise of Holy Spirit (15)**

#### **Acts 2:33**

Exalted to the right hand of God, he has received from the Father the promised Holy Spirit and has poured out what you now see and hear.

#### **Acts 2:38**

Peter replied, "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 5:32**

We are witnesses of these things, and so is the Holy Spirit, whom God has given to those who obey him."

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When they arrived, they prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit,

#### **Acts 8:16**

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While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit came on all who heard the message.

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Acts 19:6

When Paul placed his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came on them, and they spoke in tongues and prophesied.

**References to the Holy Spirit in which the Holy Spirit does not act**

Acts 5:3

Then Peter said, "Ananias, how is it that Satan has so filled your heart that you have lied to the Holy Spirit and have kept for yourself some of the money you received for the land?"

Acts 5:9

Peter said to her, "How could you agree to test the Spirit of the Lord? Look! The feet of the men who buried your husband are at the door, and they will carry you out also."

Acts 7:51

"You stiff-necked people, with uncircumcised hearts and ears! You are just like your fathers: You always resist the Holy Spirit!"