

Holy Spirit in Old Testament and Luke-Acts

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Holy Spirit is one of those topics in the Christian faith where it's almost impossible to talk about with a blank slate. Most people come with premade categories of Holy Spirit dependent on their church tradition. Some people grow up going to a church where Holy Spirit is downplayed and believed to no longer use individuals to perform miraculous signs, while others come from a church tradition where Sunday gatherings are very energetic and action-packed with people yelling in unknown languages and uncontrollably shaking of bodies. Whichever tradition one relates to, studying the biblical theological theme of Spirit, *ruakh* (Hebrew) and *pneuma* (Greek), offers a beautiful opportunity to appreciate how the Scriptures reveal a God who is personally present, sustaining and orchestrating His created and ordered world. For a biblical author such as Luke, whose understanding of Spirit is saturated in the Old Testament, God's personal presence animates and energizes everything that exists from creation's first moments of origin to the consummation of a new heaven and new earth (Gen. 1:1, Rev. 22:17). Luke's words echo this concept in Acts 17:28, "In Him, we live and move and have our being," For the biblical authors, *ruakh* and *pneuma* represent a translucent veil between humanity and the presence of God.

Ruakh In the Old Testament

God's Life Creating Breath

The first and most basic meaning in the Hebrew Bible for *ruakh* is "breath". One does not have to look very far in the Bible to find God's own personal life animating energy. The first lines of the Bible read “¹In the beginning God created sky and land. ²It was chaotic and waste, darkness was over the abyss, and the Spirit of God moved upon the waters. ³And God spoke...” (Gen. 1:1-3). Verse one introduces the reader for how God is going to create and order the cosmos. Verse two depicts the universe in a state of waste, desolation, with chaotic waters. The author uses the Hebrew

word *tohu-wa-bohu* to represent this idea. Old Testament scholar, John Walton notes that *tohu-wa-bohu* as a negative word in all twenty occurrences in the Hebrew Bible.¹ The Spirit of God was amidst the *tohu-wa-bohu* and as God's *ruakh* moved, the *tohu-wa-bohu* became *mahyim*. The subtle change of Hebrew words, *tohu-wa-bohu* (abyss) for *mayhim* (water) is credited to God's presence, His *ruakh*. What did God do next? He spoke the cosmos into order. Speaking is of course the very action of breathing out *ruakh*. What we see in the first sentences of the Bible is God's *ruakh* at work in and among creation. The Psalter surely had this in mind as he proclaimed, "By the word of the Lord the heavens were made, their starry host by the *ruakh* of his mouth" (Ps. 33:6).

In this context, the activity of God's *ruakh* is recognized as the Creator and sustainer of life. This is demonstrated in Genesis 2:7, "Then the Lord God formed a man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and the man become a living being." God takes dirt and forms the man, but it is not until God breathes His breath of life into him that it become human. Job also talks about the same life sustaining *ruakh* of God in man, saying "If it were [God's] intention and [God] withdrew his *ruakh* and breath, all humanity would perish together and mankind would return to the dust" (Job 34:14-15, 27:3). The Psalter also resounds this concept, proclaiming "When you take away their breath, they die and return to the dust. When you send your Spirit, they are created, and you renew the face of the ground" (Ps. 104:29-30). Both Job and the Psalter recognize that even the *ruakh* that we are breathing right now is not actually our own; it is God's life giving and sustaining *ruakh*.²

¹ John H Walton, *Lost World of Genesis One : Ancient Cosmology and the Origins Debate*. (Readhowyouwant Com Ltd, 2012), 47.

² Christopher J H Wright, *Knowing the Holy Spirit through the Old Testament* (Downers Grove Intervarsity Press, 2015), 34.

God's Providential Wind

Another common usage of ruakh in the Hebrew Bible is “wind”. Wind can be described as an invisible power that one sees swaying and moving trees, flags, and kites. In our modern sense of the word, we have disassociated the element that animates the trees with the element that animates us. In the Hebrew imagination they are one and the same. Similar to breath, wind (ruakh) is depicted as God’s invisible energy that animates all that it interacts with. This is best depicted in Genesis Three after Adam and Eve have eaten from the forbidden tree. “Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the Lord God as he was walking in the garden in the ruakh of the day, and they hid from the Lord God among the trees of the garden” (Gen. 3:8). God’s very presence, portrayed as walking in the garden to address Adam and Eve, is described in terms of wind. Another example of God’s ruakh identified as wind is found in the story of Abraham’s descendants fleeing slavery in Egypt. “Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and all that night the Lord drove the sea back with a strong east ruakh and turned it into dry land” (Ex. 14:21). After they crossed over the sea they began to wander in the wilderness, where God’s ruakh, wind, provided for their needs by sending quail for them to eat (Num. 11:31-33). Ruakh was the biblical authors’ way of expressing a God who providentially sustains and provides for creation, including the invisible wind.

God's Empowering and Anointing Spirit

Another major activity of ruakh in the Old Testament is God’s Spirit empowering His people for specific tasks. The first person recorded in the Bible to be filled with God’s Spirit was Joseph. No one was able to interpret Pharaoh’s dreams until Joseph was pulled from prison and told Pharaoh what his dreams meant. Pharaoh responded, “Can we find a man like this, in whom

is the Ruakh of God” (Gen. 41:38). The writer of Genesis depicts Joseph’s abilities as being filled with God’s Spirit which were purely given by the Divine source. Bezalal, the next recorded person to be filled with God’s empowering Spirit, was tasked with creating the Tabernacle. “Then the Lord said to Moses, “See, I have chosen Bezalel son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah, and I have filled him with the Spirit of God, with wisdom with understanding, with knowledge and with all kinds of skills” in order to create the Tabernacle of God (Ex. 31:1-3). Joshua, too, was filled with God’s Ruakh of wisdom when he was commissioned to lead the Israelites in place of Moses (Deut. 34:9). The ancient writers believed God's ruakh to interact with and influence the human ruakh in such a divine way that they were looked at as completely set apart.

Anointing of oil is another image that Old Testament writers use to depict God’s Spirit coming upon people.³ To be anointed meant to be appointed and commissioned to do something on God’s behalf. The prophet Samuel anointed Saul and David with oil as a symbol to mark the moment when God's ruakh filled them, commissioning them to rule and lead His people. The Book of Judges holds examples of God’s Ruakh empowering man’s ruakh as God fights for His covenant people. God’s appoints judges such as Othniel, Ehud, Gideon, Jephthah, to rescue His people. These anointed judges in Israel’s history demonstrate how God's ruakh can influence man’s perverted ruakh to enact God’s task. God's Ruakh and influence does not mean that He endorses all their behaviors, but rather, testifies to God’s faithfulness in partnering with humans and choosing humanity to rule and bless on His behalf.

Prophets are the other main type of people who receive the anointing ruakh of empowerment. God's ruakh influences the ruakh of the prophets to say and preach in the streets

³ Ibid., 91.

and at the temple what God wants His people to hear.⁴ Micah, for example, said “I am filled with power and with the ruakh of the Lord, and with justice, and courage to make known to Jacob, his rebellion, and to Israel his sin” (Mic. 3:8). Micah and the other prophets were given unnatural attentiveness to His divine perspective on Israel’s state and the meaning of surrounding events. Peter explained this phenomenon experienced by the prophets in his second epistle, writing “Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet’s own interpretation of things. For prophecy never had its origin in the human will, but prophets, though human, spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit” (2 Pet. 1:20-21). It is important to note that in the Old Testament although Holy Spirit empowered and anointed certain people, it was usually for a specific task and time period. At this point in the story, God’s Spirit was not given as a new way of life to every follower of God.

Prophecy of a Spirit Anointed King and New Creation

The central hope of the prophets’ messages to God’s people was that one day God’s presence would return and dwell amongst His chosen.⁵ In Luke’s writings, the most significant activity is the anticipated restoration of creation. The prophets’ believed a future Davidic King would come to rule through the empowerment of God’s ruakh and completely transform God’s covenant people from both sin and oppression. Isaiah paints one of the most epic Messianic prophecies in the Old Testament.

A shoot will come up from the stump of Jesse; from his roots a Branch will bear fruit. The Spirit of the Lord will rest on him—the Spirit of wisdom and of understanding, the Spirit of counsel and of might, the Spirit of the knowledge and fear of the Lord—and he will delight in the fear of the Lord...The wolf will live with the lamb, the leopard will lie down with the goat, the calf and the lion and the yearling together; and a little child will lead them. The cow will feed with the bear, their young will lie down

⁴ Ibid., 63.

⁵ Gordon D Fee, *Paul, the Spirit, and the People of God* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2011), 10.

together, and the lion will eat straw like the ox. The infant will play near the cobra's den, and the young child will put its hand into the viper's nest. They will neither harm nor destroy on all my holy mountain, for the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea (Isa. 11:1-3,6-9).

It is repeated four times that God's ruakh would influence this Davidic king: the ruakh of the Lord will rest on this future king, the ruakh of wisdom and understanding, the ruakh of counsel and strength, the ruakh of the knowledge and fear of the Lord. Every aspect of this king's leadership will be influenced and empowered by God's ruakh. As a result, earth will be permeated with the knowledge of God. This king will bring about such a new creation that the only words the prophet Isaiah could use to describe is something as absurd as a lion and the lamb living in peace together and a child playing in harmony with a cobra's nests. The prophet Malachi also understood the significance of an awaited Davidic king, saying "I will send my messenger, who will prepare the way before me. Then suddenly the Lord you are seeking will come to his temple; the messenger of the covenant, whom you desire, will come," says the LORD Almighty" (Mal. 3:1). But even if a Davidic king, empowered and permeated by God's ruakh, dwelt amongst creation, the prophets still anticipated something else would have to happen to God's people in order for them to truly walk in step and live in obedience to His commands.

When the prophets envisioned how the transformation of a rebellious Israel would take place, they again envisioned a new creation by way of God's Spirit. Although certain people were filled and appointed with God's ruakh, it was not a benchmark for every child of God. The prophets saw the need for creation to receive a complete transformation and special empowerment, "wisdom from God", that would be available for everyone (1 Cor. 2). Moses hoped that "all the Lord's people were prophets and that the Lord would put his Spirit on them" (Num. 11:29). Consequently, Jeremiah told the exiled Israelite nation that in order for them to be the obedient bride, God would have to make a new covenant with them. He would put His law in their minds

and write it on their hearts. He would be their God, and they would be His people. No longer would Israel have to remind each other to “Know the LORD”, for they would all know Him (Jer. 31:31-34). Joel attributed Jeremiah’s new covenant language, as the pouring out of God’s Spirit, proclaiming “And afterward, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your old men will dream dreams, your young men will see visions. Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days” (Joel 2:28-29). Isaiah also reminded the people to await the Spirit that one day would be poured out from on high (Isa. 32:15).

No prophet contributed more to this promised, Spirit filled, new creation revelation than Ezekiel. He envisioned that the only way humanity was ever going to live as true image bearers of God was if God's ruakh recreated them. He wrote, “Moreover, I will give you a new heart and put a new ruakh within you; and I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. I will put My ruakh within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will be careful to observe My ordinances” (Ez. 36:26-27). God told Ezekiel that He will give a new heart to transform to His covenant people and a new ruakh that will cause them to obey His statutes and observe His laws. In the very next chapter Ezekiel provides one of the most spirit infused scenes in the Old Testament.

“The hand of the Lord was on me, and he brought me out by the Ruakh (Spirit) of the Lord and set me in the middle of a valley; it was full of bones. He led me back and forth among them, and I saw a great many bones on the floor of the valley, bones that were very dry. He asked me, “Son of man, can these bones live?” I said, “Sovereign Lord, you alone know.” Then he said to me, “Prophesy to these bones and say to them, ‘Dry bones, hear the word of the Lord! This is what the Sovereign Lord says to these bones: I will make breath enter you, and you will come to life. I will attach tendons to you and make flesh come upon you and cover you with skin; I will put ruakh (breath) in you, and you will come to life. Then you will know that I am the Lord.’” So I prophesied as I was commanded. And as I was prophesying, there was a noise, a rattling sound, and the bones came together, bone to bone. I looked, and tendons and flesh appeared on them and skin covered them, but there was no breath in them. Then he said to me, “Prophesy to the ruakh; prophesy, son of man, and say to it, ‘This is what the Sovereign Lord says: Come, ruakh (breath), from the four ruakh (wind) and breathe

into these slain, that they may live.’” So, I prophesied as he commanded me, and breath entered them; they came to life and stood up on their feet—a vast army” (Ez. 37:1-10).

Ezekiel not only provides a great summation of the Old Testament conception of God's ruakh by uniting breath, wind, God's creative life and personal presence, but he also gives one ultimate image of an anticipated new creation. Ezekiel believed the only hope for creation and humanity was for God to (re)create humanity through His ruakh.

Pnuema In Luke's Writings

Spirit in the Infancy Material

Luke's accounts of God's program realized through Jesus is saturated with imagery and language of Holy Spirit. Similar to the Old Testament, God's *Pnuema*, the Greek word for spirit, is still active in His creative, life-giving energy. This is portrayed in Luke's infancy material of Jesus Christ. On the first pages of the Gospel according to Luke, an angel of the Lord appeared to Mary, a young, soon to be bride, and told her she would give birth to a son named Jesus and he would be “called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over Jacob's descendants forever; his kingdom will never end.” Mary asked how this was possible since she is a virgin. The angel replied to her, “The Holy Spirit will come on you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you” (Luke 1:30-35). Luke presents a constant connection of Jesus and Holy Spirit in order to have the reader understand the continuation of God's life creating Spirit, but more importantly, to unveil that Jesus is the anointed king that Jeremiah, Isaiah, Joel, and Ezekiel hoped for.

Luke introduces three new activities of Holy Spirit in the infancy material that are prominent in the rest of his writings: the establishment of a new area (the kingdom of God), the power of Jesus, and the empowerment of children of God to bear witness of Jesus the Messiah.

After the angel visits Mary, she goes to visit her sister, Elizabeth. Not knowing of Mary's pregnancy, Elizabeth was filled with Holy Spirit and exclaimed "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the child you will bear! But why am I so favored, that the mother of my Lord should come to me...Blessed is she who has believed that the Lord would fulfill his promises to her" (Luke 1:42-45). This scene not only serves to link Jesus' origin and existence to God's Spirit, but also marks a new purpose of Holy Spirit: the empowerment to give witness to Jesus.

Shortly after Jesus' birth, Mary and her husband, Joseph, bring Jesus to the temple to fulfill the purification laws. There, Simeon, a righteous and devout follower of God, approached Jesus, and said "Sovereign Lord, as you have promised, you may now dismiss your servant in peace. For my eyes have seen your salvation, which you have prepared in the sight of all nations: a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and the glory of your people Israel" (Luke 2:29-32). In the preceding verses, Luke identified Holy Spirit's presence, revelation, and empowerment upon Simeon, who gives witness to Jesus, Israel's long-awaited Messiah.

John the Baptist's infancy story is also steeped with imagery of Holy Spirit. Not only is John "filled with the Holy Spirit before birth" in order to "make ready a people prepared for the Lord" and bear witness to Jesus the Messiah, but it is also believed that the new era began with him.⁶ For this reason, John's story is closely represented by God's Spirit: He was filled with Holy Spirit from birth (Luke 1:15), he leapt for joy in the womb when his mother was filled with Holy Spirit (Luke 1:41), and his father, filled with Holy Spirit, prophesied of him (Luke 1:67). The repeated imagery of John, representative of the new era, and Holy Spirit cues the reader for the new era brought about through a pivotal event focused on Holy Spirit.

⁶ Darrell L Bock and Köstenberger Andreas J, *A Theology of Luke and Acts : Biblical Theology of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 2012), 212.

Spirit Empowering Jesus and His Mission

Luke depicted the beginning of Jesus' ministry through three sequential, Spirit infused scenes: Jesus' baptism, Jesus tested in the wilderness, and Jesus' teaching in the temple of His hometown. One day John was baptizing people when Jesus decided to get baptized as well. During Jesus' baptism, "As he was praying, heaven was opened, 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 3:21-22). Jesus' baptism is a hyperlink to Genesis One. As the Spirit of God hovered over the waters in Genesis One, Luke depicts Holy Spirit hovering over the water at Jesus' baptism. This scene parallels the imagery of His ministry and Kingdom. As God's Spirit brought creative life out of the desolate wasteland, Jesus' ministry will bring about newness of life to those who are humbly wanting to escape the wilderness and chaos of life. Important to note, Jesus' baptism is also one of the first times in one setting that we have a distinct picture of a Trinitarian God- God the Father speaking, God the Son being spoken to, and God's Spirit descending in bodily form.

Immediately after His baptism, "Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, left the Jordan and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness, where for forty days he was tempted by the devil" (Luke 4:1-2). Luke's account of Jesus' testing in the wilderness hyperlinks to Genesis One to Three. The sequential scenes of Jesus' birth as Holy Spirit empowered, His baptism that inaugurated His ministry, and His temptation by the devil in the wilderness parallels when God's animating Spirit created Adam, his call to rule and tend the garden, and his temptation by the slanderer. However, opposite of Adam and Eve who fell prey to sin, Jesus, full of the Spirit, demonstrated power over the snake.

After the wilderness experience, Jesus returned to town and began to teach in the synagogues. While teaching in his hometown, Jesus read from the Isaiah scroll, reading “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 prisoner and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor” (Isa. 61:1-2). At this, he rolled up the scroll and said, “Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing” (Luke 4:21). Up to this point in Luke’s gospel account, it has only been alluded (convincingly so) that Jesus is the Spirit anointed servant king, but the words “anointed” and “Holy Spirit” have not been said together, until now. Jesus explicitly discloses that He is the one whom the prophets have foretold would come. Luke included stories like these three, that like a thread of yarn is woven into an entire tapestry which, proved Jesus to be God incarnate, the true Adam and Isaiah’s Spirit filled, anointed King.

Holy Spirit is also associated with power throughout Jesus’ ministry. The power of the Lord was present for Jesus to heal the sick (Luke 5:17, Luke 6:19, Luke 8:46). Miracle after miracle, Jesus healed with the power from God’s Spirit. New Testament theologian, Derrell Bock, comments that the power of Holy Spirit in Jesus’ ministry shows that God is not only with Jesus but also has given Jesus full authority.⁷ This is most notable when Jesus sent out the twelve disciples and “gave them power and authority to drive out all demons and to cure diseases, and he sent them out to proclaim the kingdom of God and to heal the sick... So they set out and went from village to village, proclaiming the good news and healing people everywhere” (Luke 9:1-2,6). The fact that Jesus was able to give the very Spirit of God to whom He desired indicated the authority He shared with God.

⁷ Ibid., 218.

Identity is also another activity of Holy Spirit vital to Jesus' ministry. Becoming uncertain of Jesus as the Messiah, John the Baptist sent his disciples to ask Jesus if he was the "one who was to come" (Luke 7:19). Before Jesus replied he healed a handful of people, then told John's disciples to tell John all that they have seen. Jesus believed his identity as the Messiah was directly tied to God's Spirit, demonstrated through the miraculous healings. While Jesus was still alive, His disciples experienced glimpses of His power (healings) and life-giving identity, but it was not until the time of Pentecost that all followers of Jesus were transformed into a new creation and received a new identity through the manifestation of Holy Spirit.

Jesus' life, death, and resurrection were the inauguration of the new covenant. Again, Theologian Derrell Bock profoundly notes, "The beginning hast to come after Jesus' work on the cross, with his provision of forgiveness, which sanctifies people and allows the spirit enter a clean vessel."⁸ The outpouring of Holy Spirit is God's promise that Jesus' death and resurrection has inaugurated God's kingdom on earth. Paul describes Holy Spirit as a stamped promise and down payment (Eph. 1:13-14) for the eventual consummation of God's Kingdom. This Spirit infused time is known as the "already, not yet" stage of creation. The Israelite audience of the first century saw it as the last days.

After His death, Jesus appears to some of his followers walking on the road. Kept from recognizing Him, Jesus explained that the events of His life were foretold about in the Scriptures. When they arrived at their destination, Jesus broke bread with them and "their eyes were opened, and they recognized Him" (Luke 24:13-32). Luke reveals a spiritual dimension to grasping the reality and significance of Jesus and His resurrection.⁹ Although the word Holy Spirit is not

⁸ Ibid., 372.

⁹ Alan J Thompson, *The Acts of the Risen Lord Jesus : Luke's Account of God's Unfolding Plan* (Nottingham, England: Apollos ; Downers Grove, IL, 2011), 75.

explicitly stated, it would be a tragedy to believe that He was not responsible for the opening of their eyes. Luke depicts what theologians call “Illumination” (1 Cor. 2:14). Professor and Theologian Kevin Vanhoozer describes Holy Spirit’s role in illuminating one’s heart by saying, “The Spirit does not alter the semantics of biblical literature. Locution [saying or writing words] and illocution [the goal and meaning of the words] inscribed in Scripture remain unchanged. The Spirit’s agency consists rather in bringing the illocutionary point home to the reader and so achieving the corresponding perlocutionary [the authors desired effects to the recipient]— whether belief, obedience, praise or some other.”¹⁰

Luke ends his first volume with Jesus’ disciples being commissioned to teach of Jesus’ life, death, and resurrection to all nations once they are clothed with Holy Spirit (Luke 24:46-49). Similarly, John’s account of the disciple’s commission is Spirit focused and uses direct language from Genesis Two. Just as God breathed life into Adam and commissioned him to rule on his behalf, Jesus sent out His disciples by breathing on them, saying “receive Holy Spirit” (John 20:21-22). Luke ends his gospel account the same way he begins his book of Acts, centered on Holy Spirit.

Spirit in New Creation- Israel Restored

The book of Acts tells of the formation and continuation of the new era revealed through the outpouring of Holy Spirit. In Acts, we see the long awaited and prophesied role of Holy Spirit come to fruition in the restoration of Israel and new creation of humanity. After Jesus died and rose, he appeared on earth for an additional forty days teaching his disciples about the kingdom of God. Jesus told His disciples to wait in Jerusalem to receive Holy Spirit. Jesus’ disciples responded

¹⁰ Kevin J Vanhoozer, *First Theology : God, Scripture & Hermeneutics* (Downers Grove, Ill.: Intervarsity Press ; Leicester, England, 2002), 155.

by asking Him if this meant He was going to restore Israel. Jesus replied by telling them only the Father knows the time, but “[they] 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 1:1-8). Some theologians believe Jesus’ response to the disciples’ question is only meant to reprioritize the disciple’s mindset for God’s mission now rather than the time of consummation.¹¹ I disagree and believe Jesus rejects only the attempt to calculate the timing of the restoration rather than their interest in Israel and the kingdom.¹²

The literary design of this section indicates three reasons why Holy Spirit coming on the disciples is directly related to the restoration of Israel on the day of Pentecost. First, assuming the disciples asked their questions out of ignorance is unlikely given that in the immediate context of Acts 1:6-8, Jesus has been with his disciples for forty days teaching about the kingdom of God. Their question was not out of ignorance but connected to what Jesus taught during that period of time. Secondly, the Greek word *Oun* (so, therefore) connects verse six to verse five, proving direct correlation to the baptizing of Holy Spirit that Jesus explains in verse five to their question in verse six. Lastly, Israel is in fact mentioned in Jesus’ reply in verse eight. When Jesus refers to Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria and ends of the earth, he is referring to the nation of Israel. Jerusalem is the capital of Israel, and Judea and Samaria are representative of a fractured northern and southern kingdom that had been displaced throughout the known world. Luke is relying on the ancient reader to see the language of the prophet Ezekiel, specifically in Ezekiel Thirty-Seven, that Israel would one day be restored.¹³

¹¹ Derell Bock, 220.

¹² Alan J. Thompson, 105.

¹³ Ibid., 106

Holy Spirit coming on the day of Pentecost (Acts Two) is more than fitting for the restoration of Israel that was mentioned only verses prior. Pentecost was one of three feasts mentioned in the Torah where the Israelites would embark on a pilgrimage from all around the world to gather together (Ex. 23:14-17, Deut. 16:13-17). Luke represents this in his comprehensive list of regions in Acts 2:9-11 which seems to originate from Isaiah Eleven's restoration of the exiled nation of Israel. There is an adopted Jewish belief that Pentecost is the day that celebrated when God descended on Mount Sinai and established the descendants of Abraham as an Israelite nation.¹⁴ The strong symbolism of restoring the nation of Israel on the same celebration that honored God for the establishment of the Israelite nation supports the interpretation that God restored Israel on the day of Pentecost as detailed in Acts Two.

The events of Pentecost culminate in Peter's speech to the crowd in Acts Two. Peter quotes and adapts Joel Two in the opening lines of his explanation to the Israelite crowd. Although Joel 2:28-32 begins with "And afterward I will pour out my Spirit", Peter states "In the last days, God says, I will pour out my Spirit" (Acts 2:17). His specific interpretation of "in the last days" in relation to Joel 2:28-32 is meant to be understood within the framework of the fulfillment of God's promises for the end-time restoration of his people.¹⁵ Throughout his speech, Peter's emphasis on the collective of the Israelite nation (Acts 2:5-11, 14, 22, 36) parallels the language of Ezekiel 37, 'The whole house of Israel', when describing the restoration from exile.¹⁶ Ultimately, Pentecost was a depiction of Israel's restoration as 3,000 scattered Israelites came together, accepted the message of Jesus, and were baptized.

¹⁴ Tim Mackie, "Pentecost and the Unexpected Spirit" (Bible Project, May 7, 2018), bibleproject.com/podcast/acts-e2-pentecost-and-expected-unexpected-spirit/.

¹⁵ Alan J. Thompson, 112.

¹⁶ Tim Mackie.

Spirit in New Creation- Gentiles Transformed

The restoration of Israel was just one part of God's program Holy Spirit represented. In Acts Ten and Eleven the outpouring of Holy Spirit upon the gentiles fulfilled the adoption of the Gentiles and "nations" (non-Israelite) into God's family that was prophesied by Hosea (Hosea 2:23) and Isaiah (Isa. 42:1-4, 56:1-8). Luke records how in the middle of Peter's meeting with a roman soldier, Holy Spirit was poured out on all the gentiles there, causing Peter to confess "I now realize how true it is that God does not show favoritism but accepts from every nation the one who fears him and does what is right" (Acts 10:34-35). Luke uses the same language to describe Holy Spirit being poured out on the day of Pentecost in Acts Two as he does as Holy Spirit is poured out upon the gentiles in Acts Ten. In both stories, the giving of Holy Spirit leaves the early church no doubt that God has granted both Jew and Gentile repentance that leads to life. Luke's literary symmetry of Pentecost to the events at Cornelius' house is meant to illustrate Holy Spirit's role in bringing about a new creation of all nations and of all people.

God's New Temple

Holy Spirit's activity in re-creating a new humanity is crucial for the identity of followers of Jesus Christ. Luke uses temple imagery when talking about human's new identity. In Acts 2:1-3 Luke records that "when the day of Pentecost came, [the disciples] were all together in one place. Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit". His imagery of fire and Holy Spirit in this scene is paramount for the understanding of what it means for humans to be a new creation.

Luke, an Israelite immersed in the Hebrew Scripture, would have known the resting of fire was the most common way the Old Testament communicated God's dwelling presence. God is described as a smoking firepot and blazing torch when he solidified His covenant with Abraham and passed between the split animals (Gen. 15:17). God revealed himself to Moses through a burning bush (Ex. 3:2-4). God led the Israelite nation in the wilderness through pillar of fire (Ex. 13:21). God met Moses and the Israelites again on Mount Sinai by descending on it in fire (Ex. 19:17-18). God met and protected Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego in the fire of a blazing furnace (Dan. 3:25-26). Story after story, God came down to meet His people through fire.

But the most prevalent imagery of God's fiery presence is in terms of the tabernacle and temple. The author of Numbers reminds the reader that God's presence covered the tabernacle in "the appearance of fire" (Num. 9:15-23), and after King Solomon finished building the temple "the Israelites saw the fire come down from heaven and the Glory of the Lord on the Temple" (2 Chron. 7:1-3). It is with temple imagery that Luke (and Paul) designated the spirit as the renewed presence of God on His people.¹⁷ Luke records in Acts 2:3 a profound theological truth: through the gifting of Holy Spirit, Christ followers have now become the dwelling place of God, the new temple. Jesus' ministry is not done because His physical body is no longer present on earth, instead, Holy Spirit has been poured in and to them, creating Jesus' new kingdom temple. Paul picks up on this realization and reminds the church in Corinth they are the new temple of God because God's Spirit dwells in them (1 Cor. 3:16-17). In his book, *Living in Union with Christ: Paul's Gospel and Christian Moral Identity*, Grant Macaskill summarizes Luke's temple imagery and Paul's new creation language, saying:

Our own flesh, then, no longer defines the limits of existence or constitutes the true outline of ourselves, for we are in a Christ and Christ is in us. Identity of "Christ in me" is the basis for his righteousness being imputed to us; it is not a transaction that

¹⁷ Gordon Fee, 17.

occurs between external parties, [from The Father to us] but an incorporation into a person whose relationship with God is perfect. And the Spirit who inhabits us is not an energizing infusion of power; he is very specifically Christ's Spirit, who makes his goodness a reality in our limbs. Entry into the kingdom and moral identity within the kingdom are both defined and constituted by the identity of Jesus. The same gospel rules both. We cannot, then, think about the Christian moral life as something I do, assisted in some sense by the Spirit. Rather It is something that Christ-in-me does; he is as much the acting subject of my verbs of obedience as I am.¹⁸

Holy Spirit at Work Among God's People

The book of Acts details Holy Spirit at work in and through followers of Jesus. What Jesus promised in Luke 12:11-12 came about as Holy Spirit filled those who believed with boldness to witness about the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus. The link between the enablement of the Spirit and the ability to speak for God is evident throughout Acts (Acts 2:14-41, 3:12-26, 4:1-20, 5:19-42, 6:10, 7:2-53, 7:55-56, 8:26-39, 13:16-41, 13:46-47, 13:52, 14:7, 14:21, 15:7-21, 16:32, 17:2-3, 17:10-11, 17:17-34, 18:5, 18:19, 19:8, 19:10, 20:2, 20:7, 20:23-31, 22:1-21, 23:1-11, 24:10-21, 26:1-29, 28:23-31). Holy Spirit unveiled Christ in the followers of Jesus as their lives resembled the same power of Jesus' ministry: healing the sick, lame, and dead (Acts 2:43, 3:1-11, 5:1-10, 5:12-16, 6:8, 8:5-8, 8:14-17, 8:33-34, 9:10-19, 9:32-35, 9:36-43, 12:1-7, 12:7-17, 13:6-12, 14:3, 14:8-10, 16:16-34, 19:1-7, 19:11-12, 20:9-12, 28:3-6, 28:7-10). Even Acts' literary layout mirrors the literary layout of Jesus' ministry in Luke's Gospel in order to reassure followers of Jesus that the same power that raised Jesus from the grave lives in them and they too can take part in eradicating the hell on earth by being the Spirit filled new creation that partake in bringing God's presence and God's kingdom on earth.

¹⁸ Grant Macaskill, *Living in Union with Christ : Paul's Gospel and Christian Moral Identity* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Academic, a division of Baker Publishing Group, 2019), 56.

Practically, cultivating a life of discipleship is learning to discern, hear, and be moved by Holy Spirit. Acts tells the stories where disciples of Jesus were guided and influenced by God's Spirit. In Acts Thirteen, God had the church at Antioch send off Paul and Barnabas, saying "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.'" So after they had fasted and prayed, they placed their hands on them and sent them off" (Acts 13:2-3). In Acts Fifteen the Apostles and believers in Jerusalem sent a letter to the believers in Antioch, Syria, and Cilicia writing "It seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us not to burden you with anything beyond the following requirements..." (Acts 15:28). In Acts Sixteen, Paul and his companions were "kept from preaching the word in the province of Asia" (Acts 16:6).

Many wrestle with the providence of God's Spirit after reading stories like these. Did Paul and the prophets hear an audible voice from Holy Spirit to be sent or was it a peace they experienced while fasting and praying that confirmed their decision? Did the Apostle hear God approve the conclusion they came to or did they believe that by all coming together with this idea it must have been God's will? Did Paul hear God tell him not to go to a specific region or did he just attribute the circumstances as God's will? It seems these ideas are not separate but unified given that the Old Testament authors present God's *ruakh* speaking and influencing our *ruakh* and the New Testament reveals *pneuma* infused believers. It is as if Luke demonstrates that part of being a disciple is seeing, recognizing, and obeying God's Spirit. Each story in the book of Acts is a small part of the larger mosaic that reveals how believers are to fulfill Jesus' great commission, through Holy Spirit (Acts 1:8). The story of the Acts of God in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ through the outpouring Holy Spirit to His followers is not finished. Each reader is encouraged to take, live and share His story wherever they go- to the workplace, to school, at home

with children, to the gas station, to the coffee shop, to the local park, and to the “ends of the earth”- because God’s life giving, new creation forming, witness emboldening, and power manifesting Spirit dwells in them.

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