LIBERTY BAPTIST THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

THE “COMING OF THE SPIRIT” AT PENTECOST

SUBMITTED TO DR. RODNEY WOO

IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR

NBST 522- B09 201320

BY

JAMES BERT TESTERMAN

LYNCHBURG, VIRGINIA

MARCH 3, 2013
**Table of Contents**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Who is the Holy Spirit?</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The “Coming of the Spirit”</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Meaning of Glossolalia</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peter’s Eschatological Revelation</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What Was the Result of Pentecost?</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Present Ministry of the Holy Spirit</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Misunderstandings and Heretical Doctrine</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pentecostalism and Theological Extremism</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusion</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bibliography</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Introduction

The instantaneous mass conversion of three thousand people on the Day of Pentecost ushered in the Inauguration of the Church Age and was one of the most significant events in the history of mankind; however, properly understanding the doctrine of the “Coming of the Spirit” is an oft neglected, yet necessary tenet for Christian growth. Since the beginning the Third Person of the Trinity, the Holy Spirit, has been often overlooked, forgotten and misunderstood.

The Holy Spirit is equally divine with God the Father and Christ the Son, and His ministry continues to transform lives. The purpose of this research is to determine who the Holy Spirit is, what happened on the Day of Pentecost, the meaning of the signs and wonders that accompanied the Baptism of the Holy Spirit, the eschatological implications of Joel’s prophecy, and several heretical and theological extreme positions surrounding the events of Pentecost.

Who is the Holy Spirit?

In the Old Testament, the Spirit of the Lord (יהוה רוח, ruah yhwh) generally referred to the Power of God; the extension of Himself by which He carries out mighty works. The origins of the word “spirit” in both the Hebrew (ruah) and Greek (pneuma) are similar to one another and are associated with the words “breath” and “wind”. The primary function of the Holy Spirit in the Old Testament is as the spirit of prophecy; inspiring prophets to the revelation of God’s message, and generally implying that the prophets were inspired by the very Spirit of God.

The phrase “Holy Spirit” appears within two contexts in the Old Testament (Psalm 51:11 and Isaiah 63:10-11, 14), but “is qualified both times as God’s holy spirit, such that it is clear

---

2 Ibid.
that God Himself is the referent, not the Holy Spirit who is encountered in the New Testament”.\(^3\) While the Holy Spirit is not seen in the Old Testament as a “semi-independent divine entity”, we see expressions of God’s activity through men and anticipates a time when God will pour out His Spirit on men and women (Isa. 11:1-2; Ezek. 37:14; Joel 2:28-32).\(^4\) It is within this context that one can begin to understand exactly what occurred on the Day of Pentecost and the Inauguration of the Church Age.

**“The Coming of the Spirit”**

The word Pentecost is derived from the Greek word *pentekostos*, meaning “fiftieth” and applied to the fiftieth day after Passover.\(^5\) In the Christian church Pentecost is the anniversary of the coming of the Spirit. Before Jesus ascended into Heaven, He commanded His disciples to stay in Jerusalem until the time that they received power from on high.\(^6\) Luke 24:49 and Acts 1:4 document Jesus’ promise to send the Holy Spirit that are fulfilled on the Day of Pentecost. In giving the Great Commission, Jesus specifically promises the power of the Holy Spirit to His disciples, “But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth”.\(^7\) Through a casual reading of John’s Gospel, it becomes apparent that Jesus regarded the Holy Spirit as a personality, and calls Him the *paraclete* or “comforter”.\(^8\) It is this promised Comforter that arrives on the scene in Divine power on the Day of Pentecost.

At the beginning of Acts 2, the disciples have obeyed the Lord, remained in Jerusalem and are awaiting His promised Comforter. As a group of 120 disciples were praying in

\(^3\) Ibid.
\(^4\) Ibid.
\(^6\) Ibid., 899.
\(^7\) Acts 1:8, ESV.
\(^8\) John 14:16, ESV.
Jerusalem, fifty days after the death of Jesus, the Holy Spirit descended upon them with the sound of a great wind and with tongues of fire which settled on them. The disciples began to speak in other languages and to preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ. All of those present are filled with the Holy Spirit and begin to speak in tongues as the Spirit gives them utterance; Williams believes that tongues in this reference are connected with praise.

Following the disciples’ filling of the Spirit, many hear them speaking in different tongues and believe they are intoxicated, a charge that Peter rebukes them for. He begins to preach to the crowd a stirring sermon incorporating the eschatological passage from Joel 2:28-32 together with the truth of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Peter informs the crowd that this promised Spirit has already been poured out on the disciples and was available to be received by all who repent and are baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Altogether, over three thousand people are saved on this remarkable day when God’s Holy Spirit is poured out on those who believe. This event marks the Inauguration of the Church Age.

The Meaning of Glossolalia

The use of tongues (glossolalia) has been a tremendous source of debate throughout the years, with the controversy surrounding the exact meaning and motivation behind these spiritual phenomena. Through supernatural means, God pours out His Spirit onto the believers and uses the sound of a “mighty rushing wind” (pnoes biaias) and the manifested use of tongues as both auditory and visual elements to this heavenly gift. These “tongues” allow the disciples to witness to those around them who have come from the various nations which have gathered for the Feast of Pentecost. Among the nations and people groups represented are Parthians, Medes,

---

9 Tenney, 899.
11 Acts 2:38, ESV.
Elamites, residents of Mesopotamia, Judea, Cappadocia, Pontus, Asia, Phrygia, Pamphylia, Egypt, parts of Libya belonging to Crete, visitors from Rome (both Jews and Proselytes), Cretans and Arabians, not to mention the Jews already in Jerusalem.\(^{13}\)

Without a doubt, the Spirit’s enabling the disciples to speak in the known languages of those present for evangelistic purposes encapsulates the “gift of tongues”. Speaking in tongues has been defined as “...prayer and praise spoken in syllables not understood by the speaker”.\(^{14}\) These utterances are to be interpreted and if an interpreter is not available or present, the speaker should remain silent, speaking only to themselves and God (1 Cor. 14:28).\(^{15}\) From the Day of Pentecost until today, the debate over the use and often abuse of spiritual gifts has endured, divided and has broken fellowship between believers world-wide.

The New English Bible used the unfortunate translation of “ecstatic speech” instead of “speaking in tongues”, leading to the belief that those who speak in tongues “lose awareness of their surroundings or lose self-control or are forced to speak against their will”.\(^{16}\) This has given rise to the more extreme elements of the Pentecostal movement and has led to a great deal of disorderly conduct during their worship services; as ecstatic speech replaces the proper New Testament illustration given on the Day of Pentecost. Grudem informs readers that while the disciples spoke in tongues and the Spirit gave utterance, at no time was there indication of a disorderly gathering and the disciples ceased speaking in tongues so that Peter could give his sermon.\(^{17}\)

In Corinth, the Apostle Paul had to remind the Corinthian congregation that spiritual gifts were about edifying the church through speaking in tongues and proper interpretation. Paul tells

---

\(^{13}\) Acts 2:5-11.
\(^{15}\) Ibid., 1071.
\(^{16}\) Ibid., 1073.
\(^{17}\) Ibid., 1074.
the church in 1 Corinthians 14 that the unifying work of the Holy Spirit’s bestowing of spiritual gifts must be measured by the fundamental principle of building up the church.  

Schnelle says:

“Glossolalia, a charisma obviously highly valued in Corinth and limited to this church, is not rejected by Paul but is bound by him to the critical goal of οἰκοδομή and thus can no longer be the means of individualistic showmanship. If glossolalia is translated, it has the same significance as prophecy: it strengthens the brothers and sisters in the faith (14:16-17), serving the church and the individual Christian.”

Glossolalia therefore appears to be a gift to the corporate church, rather than the individual, which is often in direct contrast to the beliefs of many denominations such as the Pentecostals. In later chapters, Pentecostalism will be revisited and reviewed more deeply.

**Peter’s Eschatological Revelations**

Peter preaches a sermon at Pentecost that includes passages from the Old Testament book of Joel 2:28-32 prior to sharing the Gospel; a teaching pattern exemplified by Christ to the apostles in pointing first to the Scriptures and then showing a fulfillment and application. The prophet Joel predicted the outpouring of the Holy Spirit to all who believed, an event those at Pentecost had just witnessed. Jesus fulfilled the prophecy that Joel predicted when He sent the Holy Spirit, however many believe that the prophecy was only partially fulfilled. A close look at Peter’s usage of Joel’s words support this argument:

“And in the last days it shall be, God declares, that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams; even on my male servants and female servants in those days I will pour out my Spirit, and they shall prophesy. And I will show wonders in the heavens above and signs on the earth below, blood, and fire and vapor of smoke; the sun shall be turned to darkness and the moon to blood, before the day of the Lord comes, the great and magnificent day. And it shall come to pass that everyone who calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.”  

---

19 Ibid.
20 Joel 2:28-32.
A careful reading of Joel’s prophecy reveals that while some of the events on the Day of Pentecost were partially fulfilled, the Old Testament prophet also speaks of a still-future time. Peter is describing the “activity of God’s Spirit at work in events surrounding a future second coming of Christ”\textsuperscript{21} He begins with the words “And in the last days…” (Acts 2:17), a phrase that is always descriptive in the Old Testament for events taking place either during the Tribulation or in conjunction with the second coming of Christ.\textsuperscript{22} Since the Spirit’s activity in Joel cannot be separated from the future events of the Tribulation, it is impossible that Joel’s prophecy was entirely fulfilled at Pentecost.

**What was the Result of Pentecost?**

The results of the Holy Spirit’s outpouring at Pentecost were immediately evident in the form of tongues, signs and wonders, Peter’s eschatological revelations and the mass conversion of three thousand new believers (not to mention the thousands they converted upon their return to their homelands). However, there were other ramifications to the Spirit’s arrival for the church. Grudem says:

“…the Holy Spirit was poured out in new covenant fullness and power on the disciples. This day marked the point of transition between the old covenant work and ministry of the Holy Spirit and the new covenant work and ministry of the Holy Spirit”\textsuperscript{23}

This new covenant power gave the disciples a more effectiveness with regard to their ministry and witness (Acts 1:8; Eph. 4:8, 11-13), an increased power for victory over the influence of sin in every believer’s life, and power to rebuke demonic and satanic attacks (2 Cor. 10:3-4; Eph. 1:19-21; 6:10-18; 1 John 4:4).\textsuperscript{24} It also included the distribution of spiritual gifts to followers of Christ, which carried a corporate intention for edifying the body of Christ (1 Cor.

\textsuperscript{22} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{23} Grudem, 1250.
\textsuperscript{24} Ibid., 771.
12:7; 14:12). Grudem adds, “It also meant that the gospel was no longer effectively limited to the Jews only, but that all races and all nations would hear the gospel in power and would be united into the church”.25 When the Spirit poured out at Pentecost, the church also assumed a new identity, one completely separated from Judaism.

The Present Ministry of the Holy Spirit

One of the greatest sources of information concerning the present work of the Holy Spirit came from Jesus Himself, recorded in John 16: 4-15. Jesus tells the disciples that it is advantageous for them that He to go to the Father, so the “Helper” will come to assist them in the work the Lord has for them. Of the functions of the Spirit, Jesus includes convicting of sin and righteousness, unbelief, judgment, guidance to the truth and things to come, and finally, glorifying the Lord Jesus.26 Of this list, the final entry of glorifying the Lord Jesus Christ appears to be the primary function of the Holy Spirit, as all of the others works mentioned are included within this one purpose.27 If the Scriptures reveal that the nature and work of the Holy Spirit are not to speak of himself but rather of Jesus, it can also be concluded that any emphasis upon the ministry of the Holy Spirit that detracts from the person and work of Jesus Christ is not of God.28 Jesus told His disciples, “But when the Helper comes…He will bear witness about me”29 and that “He will guide you to all truth”30; illuminating believers to the truth of Christ’s birth, life, death, burial, resurrection, ascension and impending Return.

---

25 Ibid., 772.
26 John 16:4-15.
28 Ibid.
29 John 15:26, ESV.
30 John 16:13, ESV.
Theologian Wayne Grudem believes, “The work of the Holy Spirit is to manifest the active presence of God in the world, and especially in the church.”\(^{31}\) At the Inauguration of the Church Age on the Day of Pentecost, and continuing through the entire church age, the Holy Spirit is currently the “primary manifestation of the presence of the Trinity among us…He is the one who is most prominently present with us now”.\(^{32}\)

Unquestioningly, the Holy Spirit is alive and active in the world today, particularly restraining sin and reproving sin in the unbeliever.\(^{33}\) The moment a person is saved, several things take place in their lives; they are born again, indwelt by the Spirit, baptized into the body of Christ, sealed with the Spirit and regenerated by the power of the Holy Spirit.\(^{34}\) Dr. Elmer Towns has developed an interesting table that shows the various present ministries of the Holy Spirit:\(^{35}\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>THE HOLY SPIRIT AND YOU</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>PRECONVERSION</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reprove/Convict (Jn.16:7-10)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Restraint (2 Thess. 2:7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

\(^{31}\) Grudem, 634.

\(^{32}\) Ibid.


\(^{34}\) Ibid.

\(^{35}\) Ibid., 291.
While there is a unifying effect of the Spirit upon the corporate body of Christ, the Apostle Paul outlines the Fruits of the Spirit in the lives of individuals in his epistle to the Galatians. These spiritual fruits include “…love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control”36 These gifts are God-given and are for the edification of the body as a whole, not for individualistic self-realization and the abuses that accompany such attitudes.37

**Misunderstandings and Heretical Doctrine**

The study of the Holy Spirit, while important to the life of the believer, is a very difficult doctrine to grasp and is often neglected as a result of these difficulties. A reason for this may result from the lack of biblical revelation concerning the Holy Spirit, which is significantly absent with the possible exception of Jesus’ discourse in John 14-16.38 God the Father and Jesus the Son are not hard to imagine, as human beings can use anthropomorphic conceptualizations in understanding the role of the first two persons of the Trinity. It is due to the intangible nature of the Holy Spirit that human understanding falls short of a proper visualization; often left with the King James Version’s translation of “Holy Ghost” which conveys to many the idea of the Spirit as “…something in a white sheet”.39

The relationship that exists within the Holy Trinity is another obstacle that has historically led to difficulties, as well as outright heresy. While a large portion of the Holy Spirit’s work includes declaring and glorifying Jesus Christ as the Son of God (John 16:14), it should not be concluded that the Spirit is in some way inferior to either the Father or the Son.40 Erickson believes that just as the Son’s earthly ministry was subordinate to the Father, the

36 Galatians 5:22-23.
39 Ibid.
40 Ibid.
Spirit’s present earthly role is subordinate to the Son; these subordinations within the Trinity however, should not lead to the idea of inferiority.\(^41\) This line of thinking closely mirrors the Arian heresy; a belief that denied the eternality of Christ and relegated Him to the realm of created beings. Unfortunately, this “stair-step” approach to the Trinity continues with regard to the work and ministry of the Holy Spirit.

While Arius considered the Spirit as a hypostasis, he regarded His essence as unlike the Son’s, just as the Son’s is unlike the Father’s.\(^42\) Eusebius of Caesarea described the Spirit as “in the third rank,” “a third power” and “third from the Supreme Cause”.\(^43\) This falls in line with Origen’s exegesis of John 1:3, which he argued the interpretation of the Spirit as “one of the things which have come into existence through the Son”.\(^44\) A group known as the “Tropici” believed the Spirit was an “angel of the highest rank”, and heterousios (different in substance from the Father and Son).\(^45\) Athanasius vigorously defended the full divinity of the Spirit as consubstantial with the Father and the Son, arguing that the Scriptures clearly teach that the Spirit “belongs to and is one with the Godhead which is in the Triad”.\(^46\)

Still others, such as the Macedonians and the Pneumatomachians (“Spirit-fighters”) opposed the full divinity of the Holy Spirit. In De Spiritus Sancto in 375, Basil insisted that the same “glory, honor and worship given to the Father and the Son must also be given to the Spirit”.\(^47\) Basil viewed the “greatness of the Spirit’s action and the closeness of his relationship and working with the Father and the Son are major keys to understanding his status”.\(^48\)

---

\(^{41}\) Ibid., 864.
\(^{42}\) Ibid., 866.
\(^{43}\) Ibid.
\(^{44}\) Ibid.
\(^{45}\) Ibid.
\(^{46}\) Ibid.
\(^{47}\) Ibid.
\(^{48}\) Basil, Letters 159.2 in Millard J. Erickson, Christian Theology, 867.
During the early period of church history, charismatic groups began to emerge. Perhaps the most prominent were the Montanists, who arose in the late second century. Their ideology centered on the teachings of Montanus, who spoke in tongues and began to prophesy at his baptism, declaring that the “Paraclete, the Holy Spirit promised by Jesus, was giving utterance through him”. Early church father, Tertullian became the Montanists most famous convert; however their impact was short-lived and had little lasting consequence.

**Pentecostalism and Theological Extremism**

Just as the aforementioned Montanists were charismatic in nature, eventually a new denomination known as Pentecostalism was developed and has flourished since its inception. By the turn of the twentieth century, worship in many holiness churches included the “outpouring of the gifts of the Spirit” which culminated in speaking in tongues, miracles of healing and prophetic utterances. These practices, which were eventually abandoned by holiness churches altogether, reappeared with great fervor and excitement in 1906 at the Azusa Street Mission in Los Angeles, California.

This group of ecstatic worshippers was led by a former slave, Pastor William J. Seymour, a man influenced greatly by Pentecostal preacher Charles Parham, and consequently banned from the pulpit following his preaching on gifts of the tongues. At a house on Bonnie Brae Street, there were sudden manifestations of the “outpouring of the Holy Spirit”, particularly in the form of speaking in tongues. From that point, the “Pentecostal fire” has spread all over the world and is currently one of the fastest growing denominations worldwide, especially in Third

---

49 Ibid., 867.
51 Ibid.
52 Ibid.
World nations.\textsuperscript{53} However, the Pentecostal and Charismatic understanding of ecstatic utterances throws out proper exegesis of Scriptures. Paul’s first letter to the Corinthians, just as Luke’s account in Acts, describes tongues as real human languages, not babbling, rambling or ecstatic languages.

It was Parham who formulated the basic Pentecostal doctrine of “initial evidence” after a student in his Bethel Bible School, Agnes Ozman, experienced glossolalia in January 1901.\textsuperscript{54} Pentecostals believe that what occurred to the 120 on the Day of Pentecost, the “baptism of the Holy Spirit” should be the normal experience of every true believer; with the first “sign” of the “second baptism” as the use of tongues unknown to the speaker.\textsuperscript{55}

There are only seven biblical references to the “baptism of the Holy Spirit”; four which deal with John the Baptist predicting Christ’s promised baptism of the Spirit (Mt. 3:11; Mk. 1:8; Lk. 3:16; Jn. 1:33), two which deal directly with Pentecost (Acts 1:5; Acts 11:16) and one from Paul (1 Cor. 12:13).\textsuperscript{56} Five of these passages are prophetic in nature, as they look forward to the pouring out of God’s Spirit on all people. The distinguishing factor binding them together is that they describe Christ’s ministry. Acts 11:16 is historic in nature, as it “refers to the simultaneous gift of the Holy Spirit to the household of Cornelius and of the belief of these people in Jesus as a result of Peter’s preaching”.\textsuperscript{57}

Finally, 1 Corinthians 12:13 is meant to be didactic, as Paul says “For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and all were made to drink of one Spirit”. Paul is speaking here of both unity within the church and the universal nature of the “baptism of the Holy Spirit” for all believers.

\textsuperscript{53} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{55} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{56} Grudem, 766.
\textsuperscript{57} Boice, 396.
Theologian John Stott refutes the Pentecostal stance of a second blessing of the Spirit by saying:

“The ‘gift’ or ‘baptism’ of the Spirit, one of the distinctive blessings of the new covenant is a universal blessing for members of the new covenant, because it is an initial blessing. It is part and parcel of belonging to the new age. The Lord Jesus, the mediator of the new covenant and the bestower of its blessings, gives both the forgiveness of sins and the gift of the Spirit to all who enter his covenant. Further, baptism with water is the sign and seal of baptism with the Spirit, as much as it is of the forgiveness of sins. Water-baptism is the initiatory Christian rite, because Spirit-baptism is the initiatory Christian experience.”

It is therefore necessary to seriously suspect the ideology of the “second work of grace” and the “baptism of the Holy Spirit” outside of the initial act of God in a person’s conversion and regeneration experience. The baptism of the Holy Spirit is for all believers and may be equated to union with Christ, the “foundation and basis from which all other personalized spiritual blessings flow”. All baptized believers are given essential, foundational gifts of the Spirit. The Spirit frees baptized believers from the enslaving power of the law, sin and death (Rom.8:2)

**Conclusion**

According to Tim LaHaye and Ed Hindson, “It is almost universally agreed that the church was born on the Day of Pentecost”; as it is the line of demarcation between the end of the dispensation of the law and the beginning of the dispensation of grace. It is this age of grace in which the church presently operates, as a Spirit-filled community of believers who have been freed from the bondage of the law by faith in the “…crucified, resurrected and ascended Christ”. While Peter’s sermon showed God’s power in the promise of the Old Testament prophet Joel, it also opens our minds to the impending and imminent Day of the Lord. It is a

---

59 Boice, 398.
60 LaHaye and Hindson, 268.
61 Ibid.
commonly held view among adherents to dispensational theology that the church age which was initiated at Pentecost will continue until the Lord comes for His own.

As the power of God, the Spirit leads people to faith in Jesus Christ (1 Cor. 2:4-5),

enables confessions of Christ as Lord (1 Cor. 12:3), and sanctifies the believer (1 Cor. 6:11; Rom. 15:16)."Schnelle says, “The Spirit certifies the new status of adopted children of God (Gal 4:4ff), pours the love of God into the hearts of believers (Rom. 5:5), and finally effects the transformation into eschatological glory (cf. 1 Cor. 15:44-45; Rom. 8:18ff.)."

Of the present work of the Holy Spirit, the Apostle Paul reveals the gift of the Spirit in Galatians 5:22 that may be the most important; love. The power of love distinguishes the lives of Christians “because God’s love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us” (Rom. 5:5), and is the criterion for identifying the current work of the Spirit."
BIBLIOGRAPHY


