

The Book of Acts was written to describe how the new movement emerging from Judaism had come to incorporate the gentiles into the community of God (Bock, 24). The events described are the work of God through Christ and the coming of the Spirit as the sign that the new era of salvation has begun.

THE BEGINNING: JERUSALEM (Acts 1-7)

1:1 *The first account I composed, Theophilus, about all that Jesus began to do and teach, 1:2 until the day when He was taken up to heaven, after He had by the Holy Spirit given orders to the apostles whom He had chosen.*

Luke is the author of Acts as well as the gospel of Luke. Combined, Luke wrote more of the NT than anyone else, including Paul. Both Luke and Acts were written to a man named Theophilus though they obviously had a wider circulation. The “first account” (1:1) Luke composed refers to his gospel which told of the things that Jesus “began to do and teach until the day when He was taken up to heaven.”

A number of clues in Acts show the connection of this book to Luke.

- (1) The word “first” (1:1) means “former,” suggesting that Acts is “volume two” of a work that had been previously recorded.
- (2) The reference to Theophilus ties Acts 1:1 to Luke 1:3 where Theophilus is also mentioned.
- (3) Acts 1:4-5 brings up the ministry of John the Baptist who is the first figure mentioned in Luke’s gospel.
- (4) Luke 24 and Acts 1 have overlapping accounts of the ascension:
Luke 24:51-53: “While He was blessing them, *He parted from them and was carried up into heaven. And they, after worshiping Him, returned to Jerusalem with great joy, and were continually in the temple praising God.*”
Acts 1:9: “And after He had said these things, He was lifted up while they were looking on, and a cloud received Him out of their sight.”
- (5) Acts 1:2 makes a direct allusion back to Luke 24:49 where Jesus said, “I am sending forth the promise of My Father upon you; but you are to stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high.” Some even suggest that Luke 24 is a condensed version of Acts 1 (Bock, 52).

Theophilus: Theophilus’ identity is unknown though many suggestions have been made. Theophilus means “dear to God” so some say that Luke is using the name allegorically and is addressing Christians, that is, those “dear to God”. This is unlikely because in the Gospel of Luke (Lk. 1:3) he is called “*most excellent Theophilus,*” a title suggesting that he was a person of high social ranking. Other suggestions have been made linking Theophilus to other individuals in history. The only thing that is certain is that he was a man (probably even a believer) who had heard of the spread of Christianity; Luke hoped to give him more accurate information than he already had (Marshall, 60).

all that Jesus began to do and teach: If the Gospel of Luke records the things Jesus *began* to do and teach, the implication is that the Book of Acts is a *continuation* of Jesus’ teaching and work after the ascension. As we read the book we see Christ working through believers empowered by the Holy Spirit; the apostles witnessed about what they had seen and heard (Acts 2:21 ff.), they performed miracles in Jesus’ name (Acts 3:6; 4:10; 9:34), and some (Stephen; 7:35 and Paul; 9:5) experienced personal contact with the Lord. What the early church said and did was connected to the activity of the risen Lord. Luke’s Gospel records Jesus’ ministry on earth; Acts records His continued mediatorial ministry from heaven

through His people and the Holy Spirit. “Indeed, the point is that without Jesus and His work, one cannot make sense of the church’s existence and activity” (Bock, 53).

until the day when He was taken up to heaven: The Gospel of Luke ended with the ascension (Lk. 24:51), so now Luke takes up where he had left off (Acts 1:2). The ascension vindicates Jesus, and is the vehicle leading to His exaltation to the right hand of God (Ps. 110:1; Acts 2:32-35). Luke is the only NT writer who elaborates on the ascension.

Some see an analogy to Elijah in Luke’s terminology. The words “was taken up into heaven” provide a link to 2 Kings 2:11 where Elijah “went up by a whirlwind to heaven.” Elijah was taken up when his ministry was passed to his predecessor who then ministered in “the spirit of Elijah.” Jesus’ ascension was similar in that it was the occasion when Jesus passed on His ministry to His followers and gave them the promised Spirit. It is questionable how readily Luke’s readers would pick up such an allusion or if this parallel is intended at all, but it is interesting nonetheless.

Jesus ascended “***after He had . . . given orders to the apostles whom He had chosen.***” This is most likely a reference to Jesus’ words in Luke 24:47-48 where He said to the disciples, “. . . repentance for forgiveness of sins would be proclaimed in His name to all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things. And behold, I am sending forth the promise of My Father upon you; but you are to stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high.”

The term “apostle” in normal usage simply means “a commissioned, sent agent.” However, it also has a technical sense, used of a select group of gifted individuals who (1) had seen the resurrected Lord (the twelve - Acts 1:21-26; Paul - I Cor. 9:1; 15:8-9) and (2) had been commissioned specifically by Jesus for their mission (the twelve - Lk. 6:13; Acts 1:2; Paul - Ro. 1:1; Matthias, chosen by the Lord by lots – Acts 1:24-26). Apostles were foundational to the church (Eph. 2:20).

Although no specific verse states that the gift of apostleship would end, once Christ ascended into heaven the prerequisite of being an eyewitness of the resurrection could no longer be met. Furthermore, since these positions and functions cannot be duplicated after their demise, there is a prima facie case for saying at least one of the gifts passed away at the end of the first generation (D.A. Carson, *Showing the Spirit*, 88).

For more details on this topic see my notes on “apostle.”

I. The Final Instructions of the Disciples (1:3-8)

A. Presentation of many proofs (1:3)

1:3 To these (i.e. the apostles) ***He also presented Himself alive after His suffering*** (i.e. after His death), ***by many convincing proofs, appearing to them over a period of forty days and speaking of the things concerning the kingdom of God.***

After His resurrection, for a period of forty days, Jesus used the OT scriptures to teach the apostles in two primary areas; first, He taught them “concerning Himself” (Lk. 24:27, 44) and second, He taught them things about the Kingdom of God (Acts 1:3). He also presented himself alive to His followers with *many convincing proofs*; that is, the proof Jesus presented was not a single piece of evidence, but many

repeated pieces of evidence (Marshall, 62). A “proof” is “that which causes something to be known in a convincing and decisive manner” (BDAG, 994). In other words, Jesus appeared to the apostles convincing them beyond doubt that He had risen from the dead (I Cor. 15:5 ff.). Proof that He was alive took many forms; He talked to them (Lk. 24:13-32), ate with them (Lk. 24:41-43), and showed them the scars of His crucified body (Lk. 24:40). John adds the general comment that “many other signs Jesus also performed in the presence of the disciples” (Jn. 20:30).

God’s Kingdom is a prominent theme throughout the Bible. Though it is not as prominent in Acts (Acts 1:3, 6; 8:12; 14:22; 19:8; 20:25; 28:23, 31) as in Luke, it occurs forty times in both books.

B. Promise of the Spirit (1:4, 5)

1:4 Gathering them together, He commanded them not to leave Jerusalem, but to wait for what the Father had promised, "Which," He said, "you heard of from Me;

1:5 for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now."

Just before His crucifixion, Jesus told the disciples that they would not be left alone when He returned to the Father, but that the Holy Spirit would be given to them to take His place (Jn. 14:16, 26; 15:26; 16:7). John also tells us that the Spirit could not be given until Jesus was glorified (Jn. 7:39). Jesus’ return to heaven (Acts 1:9) was, therefore, for our benefit (Jn. 16:7). The disciples needed to be reminded that these things would come to pass. They needed assurance that they would not be left alone. So, in Acts 1 Jesus gathered the apostles together and told them that the promise of the Father spoken through John the Baptist would shortly be fulfilled (cf. Lk. 24:49); “you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.”

Gathering them together: The ESV’s “while staying with them” is probably more accurate, for this is a special word (*συνάλλω sunalizo*) indicating some sort of fellowship, *possibly* surrounding a meal (thus the NIV “while he was eating with them”). In other words, Jesus *may have* instructed the disciples during meals held by Him (Lk. 24:41-45; Bock, 59, n.4).

He commanded them not to leave Jerusalem. . . : The disciples were told not to leave Jerusalem until they received the promise of the Father – the Holy Spirit. The “for” in verse 5 explains why they had to wait in Jerusalem – they needed to be baptized with the Holy Spirit before they did anything.

"Which," He said, "you heard of from Me": Jesus said that the disciples heard about the promise of the Spirit *from Him*. The question is, when did Jesus tell the disciples this? No direct quote can be cited, but it may be recorded in different terminology. For example, after His resurrection Jesus told the disciples that they would be “clothed with power from on high” (Lk. 24:49). Others suggest that this could refer to John 20:21. When Jesus commissioned the apostles it says, “He breathed on them and said to them, ‘Receive the Holy Spirit.’” Jesus’ action *signified* the reception of the Holy Spirit that would take place. But it could be even more remote than that. In John 7:38-39 Jesus said, “He who believes in Me, as the Scripture said, ‘From his innermost being will flow rivers of living water.’ But this He spoke of the Spirit, whom those who believed in Him were to receive; for the Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.” Of course, the actual words that Jesus spoke may not be recorded at all.

you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit: Spirit baptism is not water baptism for it is contrasted to it. Jesus said, “John baptized with water, *but* (in contrast to John’s baptism) you will be baptized with the

Holy Spirit" (1:5). The baptism of John was a baptism of repentance. It was an eschatological, preparatory washing. Participation in it meant that one was repenting and readying himself for the coming Kingdom of God. By way of contrast, the baptism in the Spirit was the sign that the Messiah had come and the new era had begun (Luke 3:3–6, 16; Mark 1:8; Matthew 3:11; Acts 1:8; 2:4, 16–39).

In Luke's Gospel, John's comment about the baptism in the Spirit is in the context of John being asked if he is the Messiah (Lk. 3:15-17). In essence, John's answer was no; he only baptizes with water, but when the messianic era comes, it will be accompanied by the baptism in the Spirit. That is, "the bridge from the old era to the new is crossed when Jesus brings the Spirit" (Bock, 57).

The expression "baptism in the Spirit" is a metaphorical way of describing the outpouring of the Holy Spirit that was spoken of in the OT (Joel 2:28-32; Isa. 44:3; 32:15) and by Jesus (Jn. 16:7 ff.). The giving of the Spirit is one of the unique characteristics that God had promised in the New Covenant (Ezek. 36:25-27).¹

The role of the Holy Spirit is key in understanding the Book of Acts and how Jesus continues to do His work. "It is remarkable that with every stage of the advance of the gospel, and the incorporation of new groups of people into the church, reference is made to the extraordinary manifestation of the Spirit's presence: (1) The Jews in Jerusalem (Acts 2:4 33, 38); (2) the Samaritans (8:14–17); (3) Gentile proselytes of Judea (10:44–48 cf. 9:16); (4) Gentiles of Asia minor (19:1–6). Each event signals a new phase and scope in the breadth of the embrace of the new covenant instituted in Christ. Furthermore, when Paul speaks of being sealed with the Spirit (2 Cor. 1:22; Eph. 1:13; 4:30), he is speaking of the possession of the Holy Spirit as divine confirmation of the covenant. This alone is the basis of the believer's security" (Block, Ezekiel, NICOT, vol. 2, 493).

It was through this empowerment that the apostles would be able to carry on the ministry of Christ. And by extension, it is through His body, the church, that Christ now moves and works among men.

C. Problem of the Kingdom (1:6-8)

1:6 So when they had come together, they were asking Him, saying, "Lord, is it at this time You are restoring the kingdom to Israel?"

1:7 He said to them, "It is not for you to know times or epochs which the Father has fixed by His own authority;

1:8 but you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth."

"Lord, is it at this time You are restoring the kingdom to Israel?" Jesus had often taught about the Kingdom of God both during His ministry (Matt. 4:17) and after He had risen (Acts 1:3). Even so, the disciples were still perplexed as to when the kingdom would be restored to Israel (cf. Matt. 24:3). Their question reflects the fact that the OT had predicted the coming of a kingdom that had political, spiritual, and geographical associations over which Messiah would rule (Isa. 2:2-4; 9:6-7; 11:10-12; 49:6; Jer. 16:15; 23:8; 31:27-34; Ezek. 34-37; Amos 9:11-15). This hope is expressed vividly in Luke 1:69-74 and 2:25, 38.

Some approach this passage with the assumption that there is no future restoration of Israel since the New Covenant has been established. Therefore, they see the disciples' question as a demonstration of

their ignorance; they were still thinking in terms of an earthly kingdom when Jesus was speaking of a spiritual one (Bruce, 38). "In Stott's view, they should not have asked about the restoration, since that implied a political kingdom; nor should they have asked about Israel, since that anticipated a national kingdom; nor should they have asked about 'this time,' since that implied the kingdom's immediate establishment" (Bock, 62). But it is hard to believe that the disciples didn't understand what the kingdom was when Luke had just told us that for forty days after the resurrection Jesus had been speaking to them "of the things concerning the kingdom of God" (1:3). Furthermore, in a matter of days ("not many days from now" - 1:5) they would be called upon to be Christ's witnesses (1:8) and preach the "good news about the kingdom of God" (8:12); are we to assume that even at this late date they weren't sure what the content of their message was? But more significantly, there is no indication in Jesus' reply "that anything they asked was wrong except that they are excessively concerned about when all of this would take place" (Bock, 62). Jesus doesn't rebuke, correct, or clarify anything; He simply responds to their question with, "It is not for you to know times or epochs which the Father has fixed by His own authority." He leaves the reader with the impression that the restoration of the kingdom of Israel would come, but it isn't for them to know when.

The blessing that Jesus brings doesn't eliminate the Jewish anticipation, it emphasizes a greater scope of the blessing. "Acts will show that concern for Israel alone is not the point of the gospel. The message will go to all and is for all because Jesus is Lord of all. . . ." (Bock, 62).

To summarize, the Kingdom promised in the OT to Israel would come in its fullness when Jesus comes again, but the time of its establishment would not be revealed to the disciples (Matt. 24:36). That wasn't to be their concern. God had said through His prophet in Malachi 1:11, "My name will be great among the nations," and again in Malachi 1:14, "I am a great King," says the LORD of hosts, "and My name is feared among the nations." Jesus is Lord of Lords and King of Kings (Rev. 19:16). Shortly after Acts 1:8 He would be seated at the right hand of God in the heavenly places, far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come. All things would be put in subjection under His feet (Eph. 1:20-22). Someday, every knee will bow, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father (Phil. 2:10-11). For such a glorious Lord, the disciples needed to think beyond the boundaries of Israel. God would take care of Israel's future in His own timetable; the disciples needed to focus on being witnesses of the Lord to the entire world.

you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you: The disciples had denied, deserted, and failed Christ in all measure just weeks before. But Jesus doesn't send them out alone; He says they will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on them. This will be displayed in chapter 2 when Peter, the man who denied Christ with curses before a servant girl, stands up at Pentecost and preaches and 3000 people are converted.

Just as the Holy Spirit came upon Christ and empowered Him for His mission (Isa. 42:1; Matt. 3:16), so He is given to Christ's church to equip and empower us for Christ's mission through us. In Ephesians 1:19 Paul prays that we might know "the surpassing greatness of His power toward us who believe."

As a point of interest, Luke's comment that the Spirit will "*come upon you*" parallels ideas in the Book of Isaiah. In Isaiah 32:15 it says, "until the Spirit is poured out *upon us* from on high." In Isaiah the coming of the Spirit signals the coming of a new era, the transformation of the natural world and the inauguration of God's new era of justice and peace. In Isaiah 32:1 the new era speaks of a king who will reign righteously. In Luke 24:49 the words "until you are clothed with power from on high" are an even

closer parallel to Isaiah 32:15 (also see Isa. 44:3; Ezek. 39:29; Joel 2:28). Furthermore, the disciples are to be witnesses “to the remotest part of the earth.” The identical phrase occurs in Isaiah 49:6 which says, “I will also make You a light of the nations so that My salvation may reach *to the end of the earth.*” This verse is quoted in Acts 13:47.

If these parallels to Isaiah are deliberate, “you will be My witnesses” could be echoing the many passages in Isaiah where God’s people act as a witness for Him (Isa. 43:10, 12; 44:8). In Isaiah it is a witness of God; in Acts it is a witness of Jesus.

you shall be My witnesses: The apostles could bear testimony that others could not for they had been with Christ from the beginning (Jn. 15:26-27), they had seen the resurrection (Acts. 1:22), and had been promised that the Holy Spirit would cause them to recall what they had heard (cf. Jn. 14:26; 16:13-15). The Holy Spirit would empower them so that their witness would be effectual.

The idea of being a witness in a legal sense has its roots in the Old Testament (Numbers 35:30; Deuteronomy 17:6–7; Isaiah 43:10–12; 44:8–9), but Jesus also spoke of witnesses (Matthew 18:16). “A witness in this sense is someone who helps establish facts objectively through verifiable observation. As such, a witness is more than someone with merely subjective and personal impressions. This objectivity and fact-based quality of the witness are why the direct experience of Jesus’ ministry and resurrection are required of Judas’s replacement in Acts 1:21–22, a passage that shows what stands behind Luke’s use of this term. Thus, ‘witness’ is a key term in Acts for those who experienced Jesus and saw him in a resurrection appearance (1:22). This experience means that they can testify directly to what God did through Jesus (Luke 24:48)” (Bock, 64).

Although being an eyewitness qualifies the disciples to testify, the Holy Spirit empowers them to speak boldly and enables them to articulate clearly and accurately what they have heard and seen.

This message of bearing witness is a prominent theme throughout the book of Acts (2:32; 3:15; 5:32; 10:39; 13:31; 22:15, etc.). “The Christian church, according to Acts, is a missionary church that responds obediently to Jesus’ commission, acts on Jesus’ behalf in the extension of His ministry, and follows a program whose guidelines for outreach have been set by Jesus Himself” (Longenecker, 256).

in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth: The extent of their witness was to be in Jerusalem (to people in the same geographical area and of the same culture), Judea (to people in a different geographical area of the same culture), Samaria (to people in a different geographical area and of a different culture), and to the uttermost parts of the world (to a people remotely removed from the culture and geography they were familiar with). This witness of concentric circles outward becomes Luke’s outline of the book.

Jerusalem -- Acts 1-7

Judea -- Acts 8

Samaria -- Acts 8

The uttermost part of the earth -- Acts 9-28

Luke 24:46-48: “He said to them, ‘Thus it is written, that the Christ would suffer and rise again from the dead the third day, and that repentance for forgiveness of sins would be proclaimed in His name to all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem.’ You are witnesses of these things.”

II. The Ascension of Christ (1:9-11)

After His resurrection Jesus appeared many times to the apostles and there was no reason for them to believe that His appearances would end any time soon. However, now they had been commissioned. Soon they would be empowered. Jesus' power, help, and comfort would be given through the Spirit. His physical presence was no longer needed, but more importantly, the Spirit would not come until He departed (Jn. 7:39).

1:9 And after He had said these things, He was lifted up while they were looking on, and a cloud received Him out of their sight.

1:10 And as they were gazing intently into the sky while He was going, behold, two men in white clothing stood beside them.

1:11 They also said, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into the sky? This Jesus, who has been taken up from you into heaven, will come in just the same way as you have watched Him go into heaven."

He was lifted up: The verb "taken up" (lifted up – NAS) (ἐπαίρω *epairo*) has the idea of "taking up in support;" as Bock says, when combined with "cloud" it suggests that the cloud developed from underneath Him and took Him away (Dan. 7:13; Bock, 67). It is also a passive verb – Jesus was taken up by God.

The ascension points to Christ's exaltation to the right hand of the Father.

a cloud received Him: The mention of a cloud recalls Matthew 17:5; ". . . a bright cloud overshadowed them, and behold, a voice out of the cloud said, "This is My beloved Son, with whom I am well-pleased; listen to Him!" It is also reminiscent of Matthew 24:30: "and they will see the Son of man coming on the clouds of the sky with power and great glory." The cloud at the transfiguration and at the return of Christ are manifestations of the glory of God (Exo. 40:34; Marshall, 61); this is most likely what the cloud is here as well, for it is hard to imagine how Jesus could still be visible with the naked eye if the cloud was a normal cloud at atmospheric heights.

behold, two men in white clothing stood beside them: As the disciples stood awestruck, gazing at the sky, two men (angels, cf. Lk. 24:4) appeared. The word "behold" shows that they appeared suddenly. Jesus was gone, they said, but He would come again in the same way that He left (Matt. 24:30; Jn. 14:3; Dan. 7:9-14; Mk. 13:26; 14:62; Lk. 21:27; Rev. 1:7).

This Jesus, who has been taken up from you into heaven, will come in just the same way as you have watched Him go into heaven: Christ is ascended but His abiding presence and energy fills the whole book of Acts and the whole succeeding story of His people on earth. His presence at God's right hand means that He is more effectually present with His people on earth "all the days, even to the consummation of the age" (Matt. 28:20). "He ascended far above the heavens that He might fill all things" (Eph. 4:10; Bruce, 41-42). Thus, although the disciples never get an answer as to when He will return to restore Israel, they are promised that He will return to complete His task and all that was predicted of Him. Peter affirms this in Acts 3:19-21: "Therefore repent and return, so that your sins may be wiped away, in order that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord; and that He may send Jesus, the Christ appointed for you, whom heaven must receive *until the period of restoration of all things* about which God spoke by the mouth of His holy prophets from ancient time."

- Matthew 24:30: "And then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of the sky with power and great glory."
- Revelation 1:7: "Behold, He is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see Him, even those who pierced Him; and all the tribes of the earth will mourn over Him."

End Notes:

What is the Baptism in the Spirit?

Mention of the "baptism with the Holy Spirit" occurs 7 times in the NT; once in each of the gospels, twice in Acts, and once in the writings of Paul. Each time it appears, the Greek construction "in the Holy Spirit" (ἐν πνεύματι ἁγίῳ) is the same. Though the Greek word *en* (ἐν) can be translated as "in," "with," or "by," when it is used with the word "baptism" it always refers to the element (or sphere) into which something is immersed (whether fire, water, cloud, etc.); therefore, "by" would not be appropriate. In other words, the Holy Spirit isn't the baptizer; He is the element into which we are submerged.

The Baptism in the Spirit in the Gospels

The first time the expression "the baptism in the Holy Spirit" comes up is when John the Baptist is preaching and he contrasts it to his own water baptism (Matt. 3:11; Mk. 1:8; Lk. 3:16; Jn. 1:33). In these passages the baptism in the Spirit is still future; it is an event that will not take place until after Jesus' glorification (Jn. 7:39).

In Matthew 3:11 the NAS says,

I	baptize you with (ἐν)	water	for repentance . . .
He will	baptize you with (ἐν)	the Holy Spirit	

The parallel lines form both a comparison and a contrast. They show that the baptism in the Spirit isn't the same thing as water baptism; but they also show that believers are immersed in the Spirit by Christ in a similar way that the repentant were immersed in water by John.

In the historical context of the Gospels, the baptism in the Spirit is closely connected to the OT promises of the coming Kingdom. In Matthew 3:2 John was proclaiming that the Kingdom of God was near. In the Gospel of Luke (Lk. 3:15-17) the baptism in the Spirit is part of John's response to the people when they wondered if he was the Christ. Luke 3:15 says, "the people were in a state of expectation and all were wondering in their hearts about John, as to whether he was the Christ." John responded in the next verse which says, "John answered and said to them all, 'As for me, I baptize you with water; but One is coming . . . He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit . . .'" John's answer shows that the baptism in the Spirit was a work of Messiah and would be a means of identifying the messianic age.

The OT predicted that the Spirit would both (1) come upon Messiah (Isa 11:2; cf. 42:1; 61:1 cf. Matt. 3:16; Lk. 4:18-19) and (2) be poured out on others (Isa. 32:15; 44:3; Ezek. 36:27 [36:24-29]; 37:14; 39:29; Joel 2:28; Zech. 12:10). Though both are related to the promised coming Kingdom, the obvious connection is to the latter.

Though the outpouring of the Spirit in the OT is said to come from God, it's an easy jump to see Christ as the dispenser of the Holy Spirit since the Spirit rests upon Him (Jn. 1:32-33 cf. Jn. 3:34).

CONCLUSION:

The baptism with the Holy Spirit is connected to the events foretold by the OT prophets and the messianic age.

Though the words "baptism in the Holy Spirit" don't appear in the OT, the idea of the pouring out (or, inundation) of the Spirit does (Isa. 32:15; Joel 2:28-29; Zech. 12:10); it is easy to see how John the Baptist would draw an analogy from his own baptism as he immersed people with water to the inundation in the Spirit predicted in the OT. This connection becomes even clearer in the Book of Acts.

The Baptism in the Spirit in Acts

"Baptism with the Spirit" is used twice in Acts. In Acts 1:5 Jesus speaks of the disciples being baptized with the Holy Spirit and in Acts 11:16 Peter refers to the gentiles receiving the baptism with the Holy Spirit (Acts 11:15).

Acts 1 makes it clear that the baptism in the Spirit spoken of by Jesus is the same as that spoken about in the gospels by John the Baptist. Acts 1:5 says, "for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now."

Jesus' prediction comes to pass in Acts 2 when the Spirit is poured out on those in the upper room. Acts 2:1 and 4 say, "When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place . . . and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit was giving them utterance." When people observed the phenomena of speaking in tongues they asked, "What does this mean?" (Acts 2:12) Peter answered, "this is what was spoken of through the prophet Joel 'and it shall be in the last days,' God says, 'that *I will pour forth of my Spirit on all mankind*'" (Joel 2:28-32; Acts 2:16-21). In other words, according to Peter, the phenomena they were seeing (tongues) was the evidence of the outpouring of the Spirit that was predicted in the OT, and demonstrated that the eschatological time (the "last days") had arrived. Peter follows up on this in Acts 2:33 where after preaching the gospel he says, "Therefore *having been exalted to the right hand of God*, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, *He has poured forth* this which you *both see and hear*." This is also a direct fulfillment of John 7:38 when Jesus said, "He who believes in Me, as the Scripture said, 'From his innermost being will flow rivers of living water.'" John interprets this as "But this He spoke of the Spirit, whom those who believed in Him were to receive; *for the Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified*" (Jn. 7:39).

Later, in Acts 10:45, Peter used similar terminology in relation to the gentiles. He said, "the gift of the Holy Spirit had been *poured out* on the gentiles *also*" and concluded that they received the Holy Spirit "*just as we did*" (Acts 10:47). It is clear that the gentiles had the same experience that the apostles had in Acts 2:4. This is further substantiated in Acts 11 when Peter reiterated to the church what happened to the gentiles in Acts 10:47. He said, "the Holy Spirit fell upon them *just as He did upon us at the beginning*. Then I thought of the Lord's words when he said, '*John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit*'" (Acts 11:15-16). "The beginning" refers to the events in Acts 2.

CONCLUSION:

All seven uses of “baptism in the Holy Spirit” show they have the same meaning. The “gift” of the Spirit is the fulfillment of the “promise” of OT prophecy (Acts 2:38-39), and is part of the New Covenant. It is the outpouring of the Spirit. ***This means that the baptism in the Spirit is a metaphor that describes the New Covenant experience of the Spirit at salvation: We are immersed and submerged in Him, and forever enjoy His presence and power. It is at the heart of messianic salvation; both Jew and Gentile share in this common identity (1 Cor. 12:13).*** Specifically to the Book of Acts, it demonstrated that the gentiles were part of the church which was then primarily comprised of Jewish believers. The experiences recorded in Acts show that Christ gives the Spirit to all who believe. This is why Paul had no problems saying in Romans 8:9, “if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Him.” Or in 1 Corinthians 12:13, “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.”

The Significance of Baptism with the Spirit in the Historical Development of the Church

One of the problems we face in reading Acts is in distinguishing between what we should consider to be normal Christian experience and what is unique to the historical setting in which the book was written. For example, in Acts 1:26 the replacement of Judas by Matthias was determined by drawing lots. Is this intended to be the method of selecting leaders today as well? Are we to expect tongues to be evidence of the baptism in the Spirit? Is the baptism in the Spirit a subsequent experience to faith? The early church met in houses. Are we to do the same?

Whenever we interpret Scripture we need to be sensitive to the type of material we are reading. Poetry is not to be read as narrative (a story), nor is prophecy to be read as a didactic passage (a passage that is specifically intended to instruct).

Books like Romans are clearly written to teach us doctrine. Historical books (like Acts or the Gospels) are intended to be instructive, but they are primarily recording history. Thus, due to their historical nature, many of the events are not repeatable nor should we expect the same things to happen today. When it comes to conversions in Acts, several details conflict: While the gift of the Spirit and baptism accompany salvation, they can occur in reverse order; salvation can be received with or without the laying on of hands; it occurs with or without tongues; sometimes people are told to repent, sometimes repentance isn't mentioned. What then is Luke's intent? Is he prescribing what he expects to be typical in the church, or simply describing what took place?

A basic principle of interpretation is that didactic passages take precedence over narrative in determining Christian belief and behavior. That is, we should look for practices and doctrine in the teaching of Jesus, and in the sermons and writings of the apostles, not in the purely narrative portions of Acts. Secondly, what is clear takes place over what is unclear. What is explicit takes precedence over what is implicit.

Some questions we should ask: Are the events observed in Acts taught as doctrine elsewhere? Are these patterns anywhere commanded to be practiced? Does Scripture explicitly tell us we must do something? For example, the Samaritan believers did not receive the Holy Spirit in Acts 8 when they believed in Jesus, but had to wait for Peter and John to get there. Are there any places where God commands us to

lay hands on people so that they might receive the Spirit (Acts 8:17; 19:6)? Answers to these questions and others like them will help us determine what is normative and what is descriptive.

Using Acts as a basis for doctrine is precarious for a variety of reasons. For one thing, it fails to allow for the transitional nature of Acts. The historical setting of Acts cannot be brushed aside. With the establishment of the New Covenant in Christ's blood, the early church was faced with some practical issues. What was the relationship of the gentiles to it? Were they equal partakers with the Jews or not? In fact, there were four distinct groups of people whose status was at issue: the Jews, the Samaritans, God-fearers, and gentiles.

The four Pentecostal-type outpourings of the Spirit recorded in Acts match these groups exactly. The Jews received the outpouring on Pentecost (Acts 2). The Samaritans had a similar experience during the ministry of Philip, Peter, and John in Acts 8. The God-fearers (gentiles who embraced Judaism but opted to remain uncircumcised) are represented in those of the household of Cornelius in Acts 10. And the outpouring of the Spirit fell on gentiles in Acts 19.

What is the significance of these events? How should these events be interpreted? The Bible itself gives us the key.

In Acts 11 Peter is explaining what he concluded from the conversion of Cornelius and his family (all gentiles). He says:

11:15 "And as I began to speak, the Holy Spirit fell upon them just as He did upon us at the beginning (Acts 2).

This is the outpouring of the Spirit spoken of in Acts 2. When Peter saw this happening, he immediately remembered what Jesus had said in Acts 1:4-5.

11:16 "And I remembered the word of the Lord, how He used to say, 'John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.'

11:17 "Therefore if God gave to them the same gift (*the Holy Spirit*) as He gave to us also after believing in the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I that I could stand in God's way?"

He concluded that if the gentiles received the same gift that the apostles had, they must be co-heirs of the promises of salvation. The Jews were stunned to hear that the gentiles had received the Spirit in the full measure that they had at Pentecost. In verse 18 their response is recorded.

11:18 When they heard this, they quieted down and glorified God, saying, "*Well then, God has granted to the gentiles also the repentance that leads to life.*"

The events and phenomena surrounding the baptism in the Spirit in Acts are NOT intended to be a typical pattern for all times, but in the redemptive-historical context of the beginnings of the church, these were necessary to demonstrate the equality of all who believed in Christ. Through the baptism in the Spirit, Jews and gentiles alike were incorporated into the church (I Cor. 12:13).

Since the outpouring of the Holy Spirit is an unseen, spiritual act of God, it became necessary for the different groups of people to manifest the same gifts (tongues); if this had not happened there would have no way of knowing that the gentiles had received the Spirit. In each case, the events were

witnessed by an apostle, the authoritative teachers of doctrine to the young church (Acts 2:42; Eph. 2:20).

During Paul's third missionary journey (Acts 18:24-21:16), after it had been established that the gentiles were fellow heirs with the Jews, he penned the Book of I Corinthians. This is the only didactic book in the Bible where mention of the baptism in the Holy Spirit appears. In I Corinthians 12:12 Paul states that we are all members of one body. Then he 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's conclusion is the same that we have drawn from the study of Acts; the baptism in the Spirit is the evidence that Jews and gentiles are co-heirs in the kingdom. Paul also says we were all made to drink of one Spirit. Though the verb *ποτίζω* (potizo) most often reads "drink", in Isaiah 29:10 it has the meaning of "pour out" or "flood" as in irrigation. The sense of the passive verb would be "we were all drenched" in one Spirit (Carson, *Showing the Spirit*, 46). This fits beautifully with the imagery of the outpouring of the Spirit in Joel 2 (Acts 2). The Holy Spirit is said to be poured out, and those whom He is poured out upon are said to be baptized (Hodge, 254). Paul's point is that everyone who believes, whether a Jew or a Greek, a slave or a free man - all who enter the New Covenant - have the indwelling Spirit.

Some believe that the baptism in the Spirit is a type of second blessing after salvation which, if sought and received, will empower them for ministry. They also believe that it is evidenced by speaking in tongues. But notice that Paul says that the baptism in the Spirit includes all who believe; it is the work of Christ which places us in the body of Christ, not empowers for ministry. Lastly, in the same book Paul makes it clear that not all who are in the body of Christ speak in tongues (I Cor. 12:30).