

Revivalist dogma and the book of Acts

An exegetical and theological evaluation

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Introduction

The aim of this essay is to review, grammatically and theologically, several blocks of text from the book of Acts frequently cited by Revivalistsⁱ in support of their belief that salvation and speaking in tongues go hand-in-handⁱⁱ. Consequently, the essay is an *intentionally selective* treatment of Acts. The *Revised Standard Version* (RSV)ⁱⁱⁱ forms the basis of the commentary. However, the “original” Greek readings^{iv} comprise the textual base when weighing the evidence underpinning all the exegetical decisions made. For this reason considerable reference to Greek constructions appears in the body of the paper when establishing crucial points of grammatical, syntactical and theological importance. Theologically, the direct work of the biblical authors should form the basis of doctrine, not interpretations of the same as mediated through English translation.

The analytical method used throughout the essay is *grammatical-historical* exegesis. The application of such a method minimizes the potential intrusion of personal subjectivity and bias, by providing established criteria and guidelines to support the close reading of the various Greek traditions^v of the book of Acts. Consequently we deal transparently and responsibly with the grammar, the syntax and the range of contexts considered, noting the book’s intentionally historical and Christian perspective. The principle aim of *grammatical-historical* exegesis is to establish what the various biblical passages meant to the *original* audience as intended by the author. *Theological exegesis* is subsequent to exegesis, and is undertaken to bridge the gulf between the first and twenty-first centuries, to translate *meant* into *means*, and *sense* into *significance*^{vi}.

The body of the paper itself consists of a series of very closely argued conclusions drawn *directly* from the passages of Acts as we have them, and from the theological inferences that result. They demonstrate decisively, that Revivalist *assumptions* concerning salvation and the sign of “unknown” tongues have no basis in or support from the book of Acts itself. Put plainly, Lloyd Longfield’s doctrinal legacy owes more to his thoroughly biased and tendentious “re-imagining” of Luke’s writings than to a strictly “literal” reading of the same: Longfield’s understanding of Acts is considerably different to how the original audience would have perceived the book. Consequently the thesis of this paper is that the Revivalist “salvation message” is completely illegitimate^{vii}.

Background data

Scholarship almost universally attributes the book of Acts to the author of the Gospel of Luke. The received position within the Christian Church is that the author was Luke^{viii}, a man who was most likely a Gentile physician^{ix} converted to the Christian faith, and who accompanied the apostle Paul on several of his missionary and pastoral journeys. The recipient^x of Acts is introduced in the prologue to the gospel of Luke (1:3), and in Acts (1:1) as Theophilus, a common Greek name during the first century, one which had as its basic meaning, “*loved by God (or the gods)*”. Luke accords to him the honorific “most excellent” at the commencement of his Gospel, which translates the Greek κράτιστε, a title generally reserved for Romans of Equestrian rank^{xi}. The use of the title, the fact that Luke wrote in very polished Greek, and that he “published” a lengthy (and therefore costly) writing in Theophilus’ honour, indicates that Theophilus should be viewed as someone noteworthy, as a person who was quite possibly serving (or Luke was hoping that he *would* serve) as a “patron” for the beleaguered Christians in Rome. That Luke writes in an outwardly deferential fashion—both the gospel and his Acts demonstrating considerable respect towards Roman figures and Roman authority in general—infers that Luke-Acts was intended to function as a sophisticated apologetic for the Christian faith and its leaders, principally the apostles Peter and Paul. Whether Theophilus was himself a Christian is less certain, although it seems at the very least possible given that Luke-Acts was written, “...*That you may know the truth concerning the things of which you have been informed*” (Luke 1:4). That κατηχήθης (“to be instructed”) was the term chosen by Luke is interesting, as its basic meaning is a *second-hand* report^{xii}. In other words, a report intended to shed light on facts that would *not* otherwise have been known. Given that Luke-Acts gives every appearance of having been written in the early 60’s,^{xiii} that Paul was then imprisoned in Rome, and that the situation under the Emperor Nero was moving against the best interests of the Christian community, is itself suggestive. The inference is that Luke published his narrative to defend the message of Jesus, and the ministers who proclaimed it, against those who would ordinarily view it as threatening to the *Pax Romana*^{xiv}. Our assessment is that Luke approached Theophilus as “client” to “patron” appealing to him to mediate between the Roman Christians and the Roman ruling elite^{xv}.

In summary, then, it seems probable that *neither* the gospel of Luke, nor the Acts of the Apostles were “published” either to, or *for*, a strictly Christian audience.^{xvi} Both writings display deliberate rhetorical features indicating that they were intended for use as sophisticated Christian apologetic to a *non-Christian* audience, specifically with respect to the life and teaching of Jesus as the Son of God, and subsequently of his ministers (principally the imprisoned Peter—by early Christian

tradition—and Paul). Importantly, Luke-Acts goes to lengths to establish that Christianity was *not* a threat to proper Roman social, legal or political order. None of this would have been necessary were the writing intended for an “internal”, Christian audience.

The structure of Acts

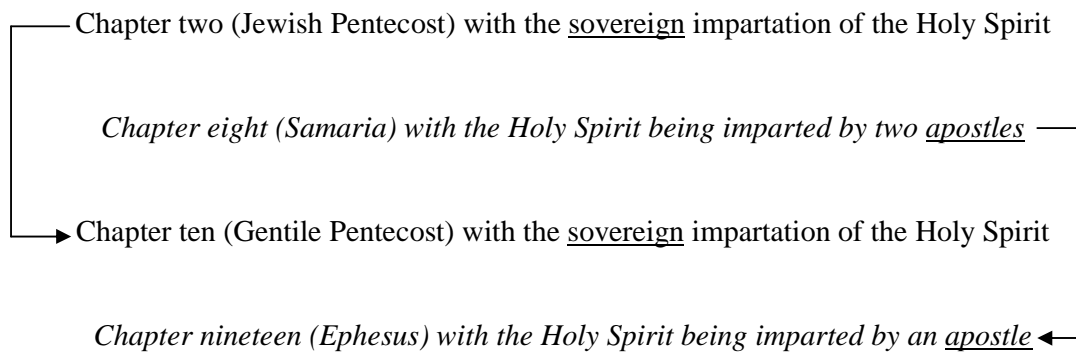
Fundamental to gaining a proper insight into the purposes Luke had in mind when writing his Acts, is a solid understanding of the structure of the work itself. As we have already intimated, Acts forms the second part of a two-stage work: the first, the gospel, deals with the earth-bound ministry of Jesus as the Christ of God. With Acts the resurrected Jesus is soon removed from earth to heaven (in chapter one); however, his ministry continues through the agency of the Holy Spirit as he works through the lives of his chosen followers—the apostles (from chapter two onwards). It is the ministry of the apostles, or more specifically of Peter (from chapter one through twelve) and then of Paul (chapters thirteen through twenty-eight), preaching the universal message of Christ, in the power of God’s Spirit, to the ever-expanding world (from chapter eight onwards), which stands as the book-ends to the Acts narrative.

The pivot around which the premise of the entire narrative hinges is verse eight of chapter one. There we read of Jesus’ commission to his chosen representatives, the apostles, “*but you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and to the end of the earth.*” Necessary to correctly understanding what Jesus intended; however, is the acknowledgement that the context of the commission is restricted in scope to the core group of ministers called *apostles*, more specifically, to the group that was widely known as the “Twelve”.^{xvii} Theologically, in the Old Testament the nations were numbered at *seventy* (or seventy-two depending on which textual variant one takes as authoritative), as were the Elders of Israel. Similarly Jesus appointed *seventy* disciples of his own (or seventy-two, again depending on which textual variant one considers authoritative). And just as in the Old Testament God called to himself a core group of *twelve* tribes to function as his Israel before the nations, so too did Jesus call to himself a core group of *twelve* men to function as the representative *new* Israel^{xviii}. We consider this theological motif later in the essay.

The essay will focus on four key events drawn from Acts, given that Revivalists believe them to present irrefutable proof that “unknown tongues” always accompanies Christian salvation^{xix}. First to be addressed will be the outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost (Acts 1 and 2), which will

receive the most substantial discussion given the crucial importance the text plays in establishing a correct understanding of the theology of Acts. Addressed second will be the conversion of the Samaritans (Acts 8), which stands apart from the other three accounts in being unique in its particulars. Third is the so-called “Gentile Pentecost” (Acts 10), which will be followed by the fourth and last account: the conversion of former disciples of John the Baptist at Ephesus (Acts 19). This selective reading of Acts is not meant to imply that it is unnecessary to undertake a close reading of (and reflection upon) the entire Luke-Acts narrative. Far from it as such is *crucial* to properly grasping the wide ranging themes that Luke crafted into his history^{xx}. Put another way, Acts functions as much *more* than simply as a source for selectively mining “proof-texts” to support the Revivalist doctrine of “tongues”!

An important structural feature of the book of Acts deserves immediate mention: the “ring composition” rhetorical feature (also known as *chiasmus*) around which the four principle “Holy Spirit” sections are structured. We note that chapter two parallels chapter ten, with chapter eight paralleling chapter nineteen. We can represent the relationship graphically:



This intentional rhetorical feature indicates that Luke planned to demonstrate both *comparison* and *contrast* between the four “Holy Spirit” passages that he chose to record; further detail concerning the significance of this feature occurs within the body of the essay, when reviewing the appropriate passages.

Pentecost and the coming of the Holy Spirit (Acts 1 & 2)

¹ *In the first book, O Theophilus, I have dealt with all that Jesus began to do and teach, ² until the day when he was taken up, after he had given commandment through the Holy Spirit **to the apostles***

whom he had chosen. ³ **To them** he presented himself alive after his passion by many proofs, appearing **to them** during forty days, and speaking of the kingdom of God. ⁴ And while staying **with them** he **charged them** not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Father, which, he said, “**you heard** from me, ⁵ for John baptized with water, but before many days **you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit.**”

And so commences the Book of Acts. From the very outset it is important to note several features that shape the events that follow. First, the setting is Jerusalem, the city of Christ's passion and resurrection. Second, the immediate actors that we are introduced to are the resurrected Jesus and his apostles (τοῖς ἀποστόλοις is the grammatical antecedent^{xxi} in verse two to the οἷς, translated “them”, that is introduced in verse three). Carefully note that Luke *nowhere* mentions Jesus teaching the much broader group of his disciples after his resurrection! The first five verses of chapter one clearly demonstrates that he limited this sort of interaction to just his apostles. Importantly the twice mentioned “them” in the English translation of verse four corresponds to the single occurrence of the Greek pronoun αὐτοῖς, which also has τοῖς ἀποστόλοις (“the apostles”) as its referent. So too the implied “you”^{xxii} in the second person aorist verb ἠκούσατέ (“you heard”); and the implied “you” in the second person future verb βαπτισθήσεσθε (“you shall be baptised”) that is introduced in verse five. These very important promises, all of them forming the basis of the Revivalist’s “Pentecost experience” teaching, are clearly and explicitly *limited* to the apostles alone!

By way of a brief summary thus far: (1) Jesus gave a very specific command (“not to depart from Jerusalem”), to (2) a very specific group (“to the apostles whom he had chosen”), tempered as it was by, (3) a very specific promise (that “you shall be baptised with the Holy Spirit”). Consequently, nothing relating to either the commission or the promise itself can be construed to be any more broadly intended. To the contrary, Luke was intentionally and prescriptively *specific* in what he chose to pen.

⁶So when **they** had come together, they asked him, “Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?” ⁷He said to **them**, “It is not for **you** to know the times or seasons which the Father has fixed by his own authority. ⁸But **you** shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon **you**; and **you** shall be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and to the end of the earth.” ⁹And when he had said this, **as they** were looking on, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of **their** sight.

Οἱ μὲν οὖν (“so they”) presents as something of a favorite formula in Acts^{xxiii}; it frequently appears to open a new section of narrative, yet in such a way as to connect it with the preceding section or sections. The current connection is clear, as the grammatical antecedent to the plural οἱ (“they”) of verse six *remains* the τοῖς ἀποστόλοις (“the apostles”) of verse two. At this juncture in the narrative, Jesus amplified the nature of his promise concerning the baptism with the Spirit, which the apostles would receive, by stating in verse eight (once again using an implied second person future verb) that, λήμψεσθε δύναμιν (“you shall receive power”) when the Holy Spirit has come upon ὑμᾶς (“you”), and that ἔσεσθέ (“you will be”) my witnesses in Jerusalem, and so forth. In each and every case the promise is *restricted* to the apostles: the grammatical antecedent remains the τοῖς ἀποστόλοις (“the apostles”) of verse two. From a theological perspective it is necessary to note that Jesus said *nothing* about the apostles becoming *saved* as a result of being baptized in the Spirit. To the contrary, according to the text the baptism was strictly for *empowerment*.

We read in verses 13 and 14 that the apostles were residing in an “upper room”^{xxiv} in Jerusalem with “the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brothers^{xxv}”. The apostles are noted as being, “of one accord” with this small and select group, with whom they (that is the apostles) “devoted themselves to prayer”. This is the first instance in the book of Acts where a group is in connection to the apostles; however, it is not until verse fifteen that the *emphasis* of the action shifts from *strictly* the apostolic group, to a much broader number of Jesus’ followers.

¹⁵ In those days **Peter stood up among the brethren** (the company of persons was in all about a hundred and twenty), and said, ¹⁶ “Brethren, the scripture had to be fulfilled, which the Holy Spirit spoke beforehand by the mouth of David, **concerning Judas** who was guide to those who arrested Jesus. ¹⁷ **For he was numbered among us, and was allotted his share in this ministry** ... ²⁰ For it is written in the book of Psalms, ‘**Let his habitation become desolate, and let there be no one to live in it**’; and ‘**his office let another take**.’ ²¹ **So one of the men who have accompanied us during all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us,** ²² **beginning from the baptism of John until the day when he was taken up from us—one of these men must become with us a witness to his resurrection.**”

In verse 15 Peter, for the very first time, inclusively numbers the small apostolic group with the wider group of disciples, to arrive at the approximate total of *one hundred and twenty* of Jesus’ followers remaining in the environs of Jerusalem. He refers to the group, which included himself and his fellow apostles, as τῶν ἀδελφῶν (“the brethren”)^{xxvi}. However, note that the text very

clearly infers that the much larger number of disciples (that is, exclusive of the apostles, the women, and the family of the Lord), were *not* staying in the previously mentioned “upper room”. By employing the clause ἐν ταῖς ἡμέραις ταύταις (“in those days”) to introduce verse 15, Luke temporally distinguishes what follows from what immediately preceded, thereby dislocating the focus of subsequent events from former. Consequently, the clause marks the beginning of a *new* division in the narrative in the first half of Acts^{xxvii} (grammatically it indicates a more definite break than the previously discussed [οἱ] μὲν οὖν does^{xxviii}). The result is such that there remain no grounds provided within the text itself, for the widespread belief that the *entire* “one hundred and twenty” were in the habit of meeting in the “upper room”. Such *may* have been so, unlikely though it is, but there is no emphatic statement that such *was* so^{xxix}.

In the following verse Peter introduces the requirement to replace the fallen Judas Iscariot, thereby restoring the apostles to the theologically significant number of twelve. The context, as indicated by the grammar of the passage, suggests that Luke had by then reverted to identifying the select group of apostles as the subject of the discussion until verse 26. At verse 16 Peter specifically addressed the group: Ἄνδρες ἀδελφοί (“*men, brothers*”), which automatically excluded *any* women from consideration^{xxx}. Further, verse 17 specifically identified by way of a causal clause, that Judas was, ὅτι κατηριθμημένος ἦν ἐν ἡμῖν (“*numbered among us*”), and further, that he was ἔλαχεν τὸν κλῆρον τῆς διακονίας ταύτης (“*allotted his share in this ministry*”): the apostolic ministry. Equally important from the perspective of cultural context is that the term ἀποστόλος (“*apostle*”) was the first century Greek equivalent of the Hebrew שְׁלִיחַ (“*shaliach/shaluach*”), which signifies “*a sent one*” in both languages. In contemporary Jewish custom, a person's שְׁלִיחַ was fully able to represent his master in all matters (note again, the implications of 1:8). According to the *Mishna*, “*A man's שְׁלִיחַ is like himself*”^{xxxi}.

But for the moment we need to trace the flow of thought in verses 21 and 22(b): “*So one of **the men** who have accompanied **us** during all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among **us** ... one of **these men** must become **with us** a witness to his resurrection.*” The distinction is plain: ἀνδρῶν (“*the men*”) is distinguished from the first person pronoun ἡμῖν (“*us*”) given in verse 21, and “*these men*” (the object is inferred from the context as it is redundant to repeat it in Greek) from σὺν ἡμῖν (“*with us*”) of verse 22(b). Therefore it remains clear that the referent has once again reverted to being the smaller number of Jesus’ disciples, those whom he specifically called and appointed to be apostles.

²³ *And they put forward two, Joseph called Barsabbas, who was surnamed Justus, and Matthias.* ²⁴ *And they prayed and said, “Lord, who knowest the hearts of all men, show which one of these two thou hast chosen* ²⁵ *to take the place in this ministry and apostleship from which Judas turned aside, to go to his own place.”* ²⁶ *And they cast lots for them, and the lot fell on Matthias; and he was enrolled with the eleven apostles.*

Having clearly established that the discussion no longer centered on the “one hundred and twenty”, but just the apostles, we can approach the final pericope^{xxxii} introduced before the events of Pentecost took place. Perhaps the first significant point is that we have established that it was the surviving apostles who put forward the two candidates for the vacant apostolate, and *not* the “one hundred and twenty”. The ἔστησαν (“they put forward”) finds as its grammatical referent the σὺν ἡμῖν of verse 22(b). So too does the προσευξάμενοι (“they prayed”) of verse 24, and the ἔδωκαν κλήρους (“they cast lots”) of verse 26. By contrast, the referent for τούτων (“these”) in verse 24 is the Ἰωσήφ τὸν καλούμενον Βαρσαββάν and Μαθθίαν (“Joseph called Barsabbas” and “Matthias”) of verse 23. It was the apostles who decided upon the elevation of Matthias to the apostolate having cast lots, and *not* the broader fledgling Christian community!

Having successfully traced in detail the “who-was-talking-about-whom-and-when” aspects of Acts chapter one, we find ourselves concluding the narrative to this point with τῶν ἑνδεκα ἀποστόλων (“the eleven apostles”).

A brief word on chapters and verses

It should be obvious to all that the division of Scripture into chapters and verses, whilst extraordinarily helpful in locating particular biblical passages and events, does not owe its origin to the biblical authors. Versification resulted from the need for printers to keep control of the location of the text, when print was set by hand rather than by computer. Consequently, by-and-large it dates from shortly after the time of the invention of the printing press^{xxxiii}. And in spite of the help that the versification of Scripture provides, it equally promotes the unfortunate process of fragmenting the text, and often with it, the reader’s ability to trace the flow of the narrative. This particular failing is particularly obvious in (indeed it is compounded by) the Revivalist’s preferred translation, the King James Version, where each verse appears as a separate paragraph!^{xxxiv} The reader is therefore left to struggle to determine logical “sense units” for him or herself. Naïve assumptions concerning what the text “means” then frequently occurs, for example, that the closing of one chapter and the

opening of another must *automatically* signal a change in the author's thought or subject matter. Such is generally *not* the case, and is certainly not so when considering the progression of Acts chapter one into chapter two.

The coming of the Spirit

¹ When the day of Pentecost had come, **they** were all together in one place. ² And suddenly a sound came from heaven like the rush of a mighty wind, and it filled all the house **where they** were sitting. ³ And there appeared to **them** tongues as of fire, distributed and **resting on each one of them**. ⁴ And **they** were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues, **as the Spirit gave them utterance**.

With the opening four verses of chapter two, Luke signals what was the beginning of the fulfillment of the promised commission entrusted by the resurrected Jesus to his small band of apostles (see vv. 1:4, 5 and 8). The timing, itself, was significant; the feast of Pentecost occurred on the fiftieth day from the holy day of Passover. The original Passover took place in Egypt when God covenanted with the descendants of Abraham, to spare their lives from his angel of death, and to release them from bondage under Pharaoh. For their part, "Israel" was to be God's special possession, a people of his own choosing and one of his own making. So fifty days after fleeing Egypt the Hebrews found themselves at the foot of Mount Sinai, awaiting Moses' return from communing with God, and the confirmation of the covenant that took place with the delivery of the Ten Commandments.

Philo Judaeus, a devout Jewish Elder living at Alexandria in North Africa, recounted the Jewish tradition that surrounded the giving of the Law in his treatise, *De Decalogo* ("On the Ten Commandments"). Written sometime around 25 AD^{xxxv}, in it he had this to say:

*This, then, might be sufficient discussion on these subjects; but it is necessary now to connect these previous things with that I am about to say, namely, that it was the Father of the universe who delivered these ten maxims, or oracles, or laws and enactments ... to the whole assembled nation of men and women all together. Did he do so, by uttering himself with some kind of voice? Of course not! Do not let such a thought to even enter your mind; for God is not like a man, he has no need of a mouth, and a tongue, and a windpipe, but it seems to me he did, at that time, perform a striking and evidently holy miracle, by **commanding an invisible sound to be formed in the air**, one more marvelous than all the musical instruments that ever existed ... **but it was a rational voice both***

clear and distinct, which fashioned the air and stretched it out and changed it into a sort of flaming fire, and what sounded forth was so articulate a voice as breath when passing through a trumpet, that even those who were at a great distance appeared to hear it equally as well as those who were much nearer it ... but the power of God, breathing forth vigorously, aroused and caused a completely new kind of miraculous voice, and spreading its sound in every direction, made the end of it even more striking than the beginning^{xxxvi}.

Whilst the above account is *not* contained within the biblical record, and as such is *not* binding upon the believer as is Scripture, it is noteworthy that we are immediately confronted with several striking parallels in the *pre*-Christian Jewish tradition to what we find recorded canonically in the second chapter of Acts! To begin with both events took place at what was to become the “Feast of Weeks”, called Pentecost. Second, both events drew their significance from a Passover experience, each one occurring 40 days previously: the slaying of the lambs and the sparing of the first-born in Egypt in the Old Testament; the slaying of the Lamb of God, which was the sacrifice of his first born, in Judea in the New Testament. Third, “all Israel” was represented as standing before God’s presence at both events, with the mediator of the former covenant (Moses) giving the law; the mediator of the latter covenant (Jesus) giving the “new” law. Fourth, it was God who announced the fulfillment of the covenant at both events, and he chose the same supernatural signs to do so: the forming of a miraculous sound in the air, which then transformed into a flaming fire, and which became a rational and articulate voice understood by all. It is clear that God expected his Israel of AD 30 to sit up and take notice of what was happening, and to draw a logical conclusion concerning its significance, given their detailed understanding of their earlier Jewish tradition.

Returning to the biblical text, the first order of business is to determine who the “they” corresponds to in verse one of chapter two, given that it was “they” who were “... *all together in one place*”. We previously established that according to the basic law of grammar known as the Rule of Concord, the antecedent/referent to a pronoun will be the last noun mentioned that shares the same *case*, *person*, *gender* and *number* as the pronoun itself. In this instance, however, the pronoun is implicit, as it is contained within a verb. Consequently, two factors come into play in properly establishing the referent: context and syntax. Contextually, the last plural noun mentioned was τῶν ἑνδεκά ἀποστόλων (“the eleven apostles”), with whom was numbered Matthias. Syntactically, the clause αὐτὸ ὡσεὶ ἑκατὸν εἴκοσι (“about one hundred and twenty”) is separated from the clause ἦσαν πάντες ὁμοῦ ἐπὶ τὸ αὐτό (“they, who were all together in one place”) by more than *fifteen* subsequent Greek clauses, and each and every one of these has the apostles as its referent! One simply cannot avoid the outcome: Luke very clearly referred to the recently re-formed “Twelve” as

the focus around which the miraculous events of Pentecost occurred. It was they who were identified earlier as being constantly together, and it was they upon whom the baptism with the Holy Spirit was originally promised by Jesus (see again vv. 1:5 and 8). The “one hundred and twenty” of verse 15 is far too dislocated syntactically to be grammatically plausible^{xxxvii}.

The second order of business is to establish *where* the apostles gathered at this time, as it was at that location that the Pentecostal phenomena occurred. Verse two provides the referent τὸν οἶκον (“the house”), but *which* house is implied? Only two logical options present from the text itself: the house in which the “upper room” was located (so chapter one, verses 13 and 14), or the figurative “house of God—the Temple” (so chapter two, verse 46). Sound arguments exist in support of both locations. With respect to the former, Luke himself tells us that the apostles, the women, and Jesus’ immediate family were in the habit of meeting together there, being of “one mind”, devoting themselves to prayer. Further, it is telling that Luke nowhere else uses the word οἶκος (“house”) to refer to the Temple; instead we universally find τὸν ἱερόν (“the Temple”) in all the undisputed references. In favor of the Temple; however, we might note the following: Pentecost was a high feast day; consequently the expectation was that *all* devout male Jews gathered in the Temple precincts, worshipping God. Second, verse 15 has Peter mentioning to the crowd that it was the “third hour of the day”, or nine o'clock in the morning. This was one of the three prescribed hours of prayer for the Jewish faithful, with the apostles numbered among the wider Jewish assembly^{xxxviii}. In short the combination of one of the most important days on the Jewish calendar, and the first of the three prescribed hours of prayer, remains telling. Given the tradition outlined by Philo earlier, a location where “all Israel” was gathered becomes necessary. Having reflected at length on the implications of the data, my own judgment favors the location as being somewhere within the general courts of the Jewish Temple, rather than at a private house.

At this point it becomes necessary to consider the *actual* Pentecostal phenomena as recorded by Luke, and the theological implications of the same. To begin with we cannot escape the fact that Luke expressly identified three inter-linked and miraculous manifestations: a roaring sound, being similar to the hearing to that of a violent windstorm. The sound then “fell” and rushed into the place where the apostles were sitting, filling it with noise (so verse two). The very fact that Luke records the apostles as *sitting* is important. Jews prayed to and worshipped God in one of three primary postures: either standing with the hands outstretched, kneeling with the forehead on the floor and the hands outstretched, or lying fully prostrate on the floor, again with the hands outstretched. Sitting only took place *in between* the prayers and the singing of the psalms, that is, during the interludes. That God arrived as he did, when he did, indicates that the apostles were caught

completely unawares: they were not, at the time, *praying!*^{xxxix} The subsequent miraculous manifestation was the visible, hovering sheet-like flame, having an outward appearance of fire, which then parted to rest on each apostle individually (verse three). The manifestation ὤφθησαν αὐτοῖς (“appeared to *them*”), the referent to αὐτοῖς (“them”) being yet again τῶν ἑνδεκά ἀποστόλων (“the eleven apostles”) plus Matthias of 1:26. And finally we must consider ἐπλήσθησαν πάντες πνεύματος ἁγίου (“*they* were filled with the Holy Spirit”) and ἤρξαντο λαλεῖν ἑτέραις γλώσσαις (“*they* began to speak in other languages”). The third person plural pronouns implicit in the verbs “*they* were filled” and “*they* began to speak” are grammatically dependant on τῶν ἑνδεκά ἀποστόλων (“the eleven apostles”) plus Matthias of 1:26 functioning as the antecedent!

There were *three* supernatural “signs” that concentrated around the recently reconstituted “Twelve” as a group: the *sound* of a violent windstorm; the *visible* manifestation of a hovering sheet of flame, which then divided and rested over each apostle individually; and the manifestation of unlearned (albeit recognizable) human languages, which began to be *spoken* by each apostle, individually. Should we reflect on the Old Testament witness, we would discover that it is replete with examples of God’s Spirit being likened to both fire and wind, which was sometimes accompanied by a voice.^{xl} We note that what occurred at the Christian Pentecost bore a very striking resemblance to the events that Jewish tradition understood took place at the giving of the Law at Sinai: a miracle of *hearing*, followed by a miracle of *seeing*, followed by a miracle of *speaking*. But what parallels do we find when we compare all of this to what is claimed by Revivalists for themselves? The short answer is simple: none! To begin with, the purpose for the historical baptism with the Spirit was to focus attention on the baptizer: Jesus Christ as the “new” Law Giver, and on the baptized, the reformed Twelve Apostles as representatives of the “new” Israel re-constituted by God through the Son. The “baptism” itself served to separate and distinguish the *apostles* as specially commissioned representatives of the ascended Messiah, “empowered” for service to perform his work. By contrast Revivalists believe the “personal Pentecost” to herald the entry point to salvation, a point completely at odds with the situation facing the apostles! The focus, therefore, has altogether shifted away from Jesus Christ, and towards the individual Revivalist. The focus has altogether shifted away from the special commission given to the apostles, and towards the general entry of a “believer” into “Christian” service. And the three corporate audio-visual miracles of Pentecost are completely absent from the individual “Pentecost” of the Revivalist. There is no sound of a violent wind that “falls” and fills the Revivalist meeting place. There is no visible sheet-like flame that divides and rests on the Revivalist. And the miracle of unlearned, authenticated human languages is substituted for an incomprehensible, syllabified gibberish that is claimed, and then without a shred

of proof, to comprise authentic languages.^{xli} There is *no* miracle of *hearing*, there is *no* miracle of *seeing*, and there is *no* miracle of *speaking*. But perhaps most telling of all is that the Revivalist is usually “frantically” engaged in activities that were completely absent when the Spirit was given at the historic Pentecost: “prayer” and “seeking” (actually, the repetition of a very few words in the hope that the individual’s language changes. In other words the Revivalist’s is often a *learned* and *practiced* behavior, more than it is a strictly supernatural experience). In complete contrast to the situation faced by the original apostles, modern Revivalists specifically seek after a sign^{xlii} and they do so with considerable “muttering”. Put plainly, the Revivalist “experience” parts company at *each* and *every* point from the biblical record under review.

The effect of the miracles

⁵ Now there were dwelling in Jerusalem Jews, devout men from every nation under heaven. ⁶ And at this sound the multitude came together, and they were bewildered, because each one heard them speaking in his own language. ⁷ And they were amazed and wondered, saying, “Are not all these who are speaking Galileans?” ⁸ And how is it that we hear, each of us in his own native language? ⁹ Parthians and Medes and Elamites and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, ¹⁰ Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya belonging to Cyrene, and visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, ¹¹ Cretans and Arabians, we hear them telling in our own tongues the mighty works of God.” ¹² And all were amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, “What does this mean?” ¹³ But others mocking said, “They are filled with new wine.”

The crowds that formed at the Jerusalem Temple and witnessed the events of that morning divided into two distinct and specific groups. First were the Judean Jews, those who were natives of Palestine; second were those from the Diaspora^{xliii} (the forced ‘Dispersion’), men and women who had traveled from elsewhere in order to celebrate the feasts of Passover and Pentecost. The native Jews spoke Aramaic and Greek. The foreigners had Greek and the various languages of their respective homelands. Luke records the effect upon the Jewish visitors of them identifying the *substance* of the apostle’s inspired speech. That is, of it representing the range of languages and dialects spoken by Jews scattered throughout the known world. In effect God had representatively re-gathered the “Twelve Tribes” of Israel to Jerusalem, so that “all Israel” would witness the confirmation of the “new Law” under Jesus Christ. It is for this very reason that the language of *Judea*^{xliv} numbered among the “foreign tongues” miraculously spoken, a point very often overlooked by many when the passage is read. Theologically, God brought together Old Covenant

Israel (the former “Twelve”) in the City of Promise, to bear witness to the forming of New Covenant Israel, representatively constituted under (the latter “Twelve”) Apostles of Christ.

Naturally, the events that had just occurred caused quite a stir! All present likely as not knew the tradition as recorded by Philo of the events that accompanied the giving of the Law by God to Moses to Israel at Sinai. But, in spite of this, certain of the locals saw fit to challenge the work of God by accusing the apostles of public drunkenness!^{xlv}

¹⁴ *But Peter, standing with the eleven, lifted up his voice and addressed them, “Men of Judea and all who dwell in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and give ear to my words. ¹⁵ For these men are not drunk, as you suppose, since it is only the third hour of the day; ¹⁶ but this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel: ¹⁷ ‘And in the last days it shall be, God declares,*

that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh,

and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy,

and your young men shall see visions,

and your old men shall dream dreams; ¹⁸ yea, and on my menservants and my maidservants in those days

I will pour out my Spirit; and they shall prophesy. ¹⁹ And I will show wonders in the heaven above and signs on the earth beneath,

blood, and fire, and vapor of smoke; ²⁰ the sun shall be turned into darkness

and the moon into blood,

before the day of the Lord comes,

the great and manifest day. ²¹ And it shall be that whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.’

Peter stood up, Luke again emphasizing the “Twelve”, and began to reason with his fellow Jews. He did so by appealing to their Jewish Scriptures, and their Jewish Messianic expectations. And Luke in recording the events that took place, again very carefully reinforced the fact of the signs surrounding the apostles alone. Consider, first of all the Jews had identified that the men who were speaking the “tongues” were *all Galileans* (see 2:7). Given that Jesus’ wider number of believers included Judeans and other *non-Galileans*, clearly the reference cannot be to them. By contrast, *all* of the surviving apostles *were* Galilean. Second, the plural demonstrative pronoun οὗτοι (translated, “these men” in verse 15), has as its antecedent τοῖς ἑνδεκά (“the eleven” of verse 14): an *explicit* reference to the apostles!

But what are we to take of Peter’s very “loose” quotation from Joel? To begin with, it is important

to realize that Peter was quoting from the *Greek* version (the so-called *Septuagint*) of the book rather than from the Hebrew. This was no doubt intentional, as it was the Greek Old Testament that served as the Scriptures for Jews of the Diaspora given they could no longer understand Hebrew. Second, Peter explained the phenomena as being the fulfillment of Joel 2:28-32 as it appears in the Septuagint, which corresponds to 3:1-5 in the received Hebrew text. The discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls (DSS) in the mid twentieth century brought to light a form of biblical interpretation common among Jews during the first century: *peshet* (from פִּשְׁטָה, “to interpret”). Two aspects to *peshet* are important to grasp: first, that such attempted to explain the *fulfillment* of biblical passages in *contemporary* events, and second, that *peshet* placed emphasis on fulfillment *without* attempting to exegete the *details* of the biblical prophecy that it sought to “interpret”. In other words, we should think of *peshet* as being “big-picture” interpretation. And we know that Peter *was* engaging in *peshet* given that he used the standard *peshetic* formula, “*this is that*”, to preface what followed.

Peter’s quoting the prophet Joel seems, at first blush, to be a little odd. The context of the passage related to the closing of the age that would usher in the long-anticipated “Day of Yahweh”. The Jews believed that this apocalyptic event would see Israel vindicated before the nations, whilst the gentiles were to be cast-down and humbled. Importantly, the very same theme formed the basis for Jesus’ message, as it related to the dawning of the apocalyptic “Kingdom of God” (or the corresponding “Kingdom of Heaven” of Matthew’s gospel). The two perspectives, however, were considerably different. To the Jews, the apocalypse was to be a time of foreboding, of gloom, darkness and judgment. But to Jesus it signified the extended grace and mercy of God towards humanity. To Jesus the time expressed yet a further opportunity for repentance *prior* to the eventual Consummation. And received Jewish prophesy had indicated that Israel, the nation, would play a significant role in this coming to pass.

The great prophet Moses had prayed that Covenant Israel would become a “*nation of prophets*”^{xlvi}. God had destined Israel to be a “*light to the Gentiles*”^{xlvii}. Joel simply developed this theme, and prophesied of the time when God’s Spirit would rest on *all* of the covenant people. Therefore, from a Jewish perspective Pentecost AD30 was the fulfillment of a long-standing covenant promise made by God to his chosen people, Israel. And it was for this reason that representatives from *all* the tribes, both Judean and Dispersion, were present at the feast.

Peter's proclamation

²² *“Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested to you by God with mighty works and wonders and signs which God did through him in your midst, as you yourselves know—²³ this Jesus, delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men.²⁴ But God raised him up, having loosed the pangs of death, because it was not possible for him to be held by it.²⁵ For David says concerning him,*

‘I saw the Lord always before me, for he is at my right hand that I may not be shaken;²⁶ therefore my heart was glad, and my tongue rejoiced; moreover my flesh will dwell in hope.²⁷ For thou wilt not abandon my soul to Hades, nor let thy Holy One see corruption.²⁸ Thou hast made known to me the ways of life; thou wilt make me full of gladness with thy presence.’

²⁹ *“Brethren, I may say to you confidently of the patriarch David that he both died and was buried, and his tomb is with us to this day.³⁰ Being therefore a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him that he would set one of his descendants upon his throne,³¹ he foresaw and spoke of the resurrection of the Christ, that he was not abandoned to Hades, nor did his flesh see corruption.³² This Jesus God raised up, and of that we all are witnesses.³³ Being therefore exalted at the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, he has poured out this which you see and hear.³⁴ For David did not ascend into the heavens; but he himself says,*

‘The Lord said to my Lord, Sit at my right hand,³⁵ till I make thy enemies a stool for thy feet.’³⁶ Let all the house of Israel therefore know assuredly that God has made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified.”

Having explained to the assembled crowd the prophetic significance of the various manifestations via reference to the well-known apocalyptic passage in the prophecy of Joel, Peter directed the attention of his audience squarely towards Jesus—God’s appointed Messiah, the one who was both the cause of, and agent for, the fulfillment of the promises that had unfolded before their eyes! Peter quoted Psalm 16:8-11 and 110:1 in the Greek Old Testament, to establish the superiority of Jesus, one who many had thought very poorly of, over King David, who was highly esteemed by all. Further, Peter asserted that David was simply a man, and as a man he died, he was buried, and yet he too awaits the eventual resurrection to life with all men. But Jesus, whilst being in every respect also a man, was at the same time so much more. As a man he lived, and died, but as God’s Messiah he was not destined for physical decay. As God’s Messiah he rose again to life, and what they had just witnessed was the external vindication of this claim!

The effect of Peter's proclamation

To note that Peter's audience was in a state of agitation and psychological turmoil would almost be redundant. Everyone had heard of Jesus of Nazareth, and many had no doubt witnessed both his triumphal entry into Jerusalem and his debased execution on a Roman cross a week later. However most had considered him at the time to be, at best, a misguided fool; at worst, a demonized deceiver. The visiting Jews no doubt also knew of the various rumors that were circulating about his body not being in its tomb. But now these same men had become *eyewitnesses* to an event that bore too many striking parallels to the giving of the Law at Mount Sinai to be simple coincidence. And as eyewitnesses they were obligated under Jewish Law to render something of a verdict as to its cause. Suddenly they had received an explanation from their own Scriptures that made perfect sense in light of the events of the past seven weeks.

³⁷ *Now when they heard this they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Brethren, what shall we do?"* ³⁸ *And Peter said to them, "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. ³⁹ For the promise is to you and to your children and to all that are far off, every one whom the Lord our God calls to him."*

Acts chapter two verses 37 and 38 forms the theological and doctrinal fulcrum around which *all* Revivalist belief pivots. Revivalism claims that verse 38 provides sure and ample evidence that one must (a) repent, (b) be baptized [...*by full immersion in water*], and (c) receive the Holy Spirit [...*with the Bible evidence of speaking in tongues*] in order to be "saved"^{xlviii}. Of course, in claiming this Revivalists are expanding upon what Acts 2:38 *actually states*, by including elements of interpretative commentary, commentary that then is credited with the authority of Scripture itself! However, a reading of the passage immediately demonstrates that *nothing* presents of baptism as mandated *exclusively* by "full immersion"^{xlix}, or that "speaking in tongues" is the supposed "Bible evidence" of having received the Holy Spirit. On these issues the text itself is completely silent. The overall result, somewhat curiously, is that the entire matter becomes framed in such a way as to make it a "one-two-three step process", one that is thoroughly dependant upon human effort to achieve what is clearly intended to be a spiritual outcome. In short, the Revivalist reading of Acts 2:38 inescapably leads to a theology of *salvation by human works*, rather than the biblical model of humans as the passive recipients of God's active grace¹.

Given the importance of the above two verses to Revivalist dogma, it becomes necessary to consider in some detail what is presented both exegetically and theologically.

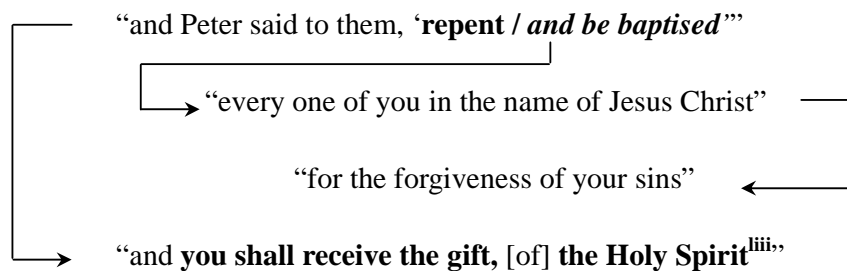
To begin with, Peter's proclamation concerning the person of Christ within the acts of God had been effective. His fellow Jews had begun to realize the enormity of the Passover-Pentecost chain of events, and what they signified—both for Israel nationally, and for them spiritually. And it is necessary at this point to understand that Jews believed themselves to be in a right relationship with God by virtue of them being born Jews, or by becoming Jewish through following the path of the proselyte and converting to Judaism with all that such entailed^{li}. Consequently, and contrary to the Revivalist misunderstanding, Acts 2:37 was *not* the response of Jewish men desiring to “convert”. After all, they were *already* Jewish and, therefore, had no *need* to “convert”. What we witness recorded in verse thirty-seven is the cry of men who were in fear for their *lives* and for their *nation*. Spiritual salvation was the furthest thought from the minds of men who believed themselves already saved by virtue of their Jewish-ness. To the contrary, they were in mortal fear of God's immediate judgment falling upon them and Israel. And such a fear was well-founded, their history being a testament to the overwhelming of the Jewish nation and State when it departed from God's Law^{lii}.

Although it is probably unnecessary at this point, we will again demonstrate from the text that the supernatural effects of Pentecost were *limited* to the “Twelve”. Verse 37 clearly distinguishes between the Jews who gathered for Pentecost, and the smaller apostolic group. In point of fact, the former group very clearly enquired of the latter as to what was necessary—there being *no mention* at all of a larger group of Jesus' followers being present at the time. Consider, had the “signs” involved the entire 120 Christian disciples, in other words, had all of Jesus' followers enjoyed the manifestations of Pentecost rather than simply the effects, then it is quite reasonable to infer that the question, “what shall we do” would have been posed to *other* members of the Christian band besides the “Twelve”. But as the passage clearly indicates, such was *not* the case (see verse 37).

And what was Peter's response? He no doubt paused for a moment to survey the frantic crowd, and pastorally his heart moved. Peter's passionate and expressive command was simple: “*repent!*” The inflected Greek word μετανοήσατε invokes the concept of turning *from* something *to* something (in this instance, to *someone*); it speaks to the theological concept that we associate with the word “conversion”. Peter had commanded—he used an imperative—the assembled masses to convert from their national sin of racial pride and superiority, and from the stubbornness that resulted, to turn towards Jesus so as to embrace the One who *was* Israel's anticipated Messiah, consequently their Lord, and their all-too willing Savior. Peter then spoke a further command: the imperative, “*be baptized!*” (βαπτισθήτω in Greek). The rhetorical effect of the subsequent command—baptism—would have been very keenly felt by his audience. In simple terms Peter was declaring that they,

although being Jews, were as far from God as were the Gentiles; consequently, they needed to humble themselves after a *similar* fashion as the Gentile proselyte to Judaism in order to enter into God's New Covenant promises. Being a Jew simply wasn't enough!

Grammatically, the *principle clauses* in the construction that we find in verse 38 are two: "...*and Peter said to them, 'repent and be baptized!'*", and, "...*and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit*". Importantly, principle clauses serve to distinguish "main ideas" from "related or subordinate ideas", which are then expressed via the device of *subordinate clauses*. The principle and subordinate clauses of verse 38, graphically represented, are thus:



The above distinction becomes more apparent when one considers the shift from second person plural to third person singular forms, then back to second person plural in the Greek text. The shift serves to place emphasis on the fact that the receiving of the Holy Spirit is dependant *only* upon repentance; but further, that repentance remains the *sole* trigger for baptism. The two are intimately tied, but in a “cause-effect” relationship. That baptism extends to *everyone* who repents, undertaken in the *name* of Jesus Christ, indicates that what is in view is the public transferal of “ownership” from self to Jesus^{liv}. One consequence of this transferal is the forgiveness of sins. Accordingly, it is not the physical action of baptism that leads to the forgiveness of sins, so much as the transferal of ownership that the action describes. In simple terms, the “main ideas” of verse 38 are: that upon repenting (and submitting to baptism in *consequence* of repentance), the promised gift of the Holy Spirit occurs. The “related ideas” involve the “who” and “why” statements. When we review the Greek text according to the canons of that language’s grammar, we note a far greater level of clarity is present than generally occurs when working in translation. As has already been identified, the inflected form of the Greek word “repent” occurring in verse thirty-eight is μετανοήσατε. When we conjugate this verb, we discover that it appears in the 2nd person, aorist aspect, active voice, imperative mood, and plural number. The 2nd person simply relates to the fact of the audience whom Peter addresses, and from his perspective. That the verb is *aorist* expresses that the action

(i.e. the *repentance*) occurs without further limitation or implication as to its completion. And because “repent” is in the *active voice*, the subjects Peter addressed—the Jews—are in mind. Of course, that the verb appears as a Greek *imperative* identifies it as a *command* rather than as simply a request. The subsequent verb, “be baptized”, is βαπτισθήτω, which is the 3rd person, aorist, passive and imperative singular inflection of the standard verb “to baptize”. The 3rd *person* element again identifies that Peter is the speaker, again distinguishing him from the subjects of his address. Peter was telling his audience that *he* didn’t require baptism; however, they *did*. And again we note that the verb is *aorist* and again that the mood is *imperative*. The important difference, the crucial distinction in this instance, is that the verb appears in the *passive voice*. This indicates two things. First that the Jews are *to submit* to the action of being baptized by others. Jewish proselyte baptism, by contrast, was an action that one undertook oneself. There was no “baptist”; the proselyte functioned as both “baptizer” and “candidate”. Second, that Peter did *not* use the anticipated *active voice* form: “baptize yourselves”, demonstrates that from his perspective baptism was *not* coordinate with repentance as being *fundamentally necessary* in order to receive the gift of God’s Holy Spirit. To Peter’s thinking, being baptized is and remains *subordinate* to repentance, and this fact presents yet *another* dilemma to Revivalist doctrine and practice. According to Peter’s teaching, one *cannot* submit to baptism unless one was *already* repentant, and therefore, had *already* received the effectual ministry of God’s Spirit in the mystery of conversion! According to Peter, baptism remains the prerogative *of* believers; it is *not* part of a “process” that somehow turns one *into* a believer^{lv}.

But what of the all-important gift of God’s Holy Spirit? The conjugation of the verb “you shall receive”, or λήμψεσθε, appears in the 2nd person, future aspect, middle voice, and indicative mood. The *future aspect* points to the action or state, in this case the *actual receiving* of God’s Holy Spirit, as taking place at an undetermined point in the future from the perspective of Peter as he was speaking to his audience. In other words, his hearers would receive the Spirit at some point *after* Peter had explained the “ground-rules” to them. That the verb is in the *middle voice* identifies that the repentant Jews *could* act for their own benefit by *receiving* the Holy Spirit as God and Jesus offers him. However they could *not* coerce or in any way *pre-empt* the giving of the Spirit. In other words according to Luke’s record of Peter’s speech, there is absolutely *no* possibility that the Jews could somehow “seek” for the Holy Spirit. Let us be clear on this point: the universal Revivalist practice of “seeking” for the Holy Spirit is simply *not* biblical! And finally, the *indicative mood* clinches the point, qualifying the *future* aspect of receiving the Holy Spirit by indicating that receiving him is an *actual fact* when one repents (and is baptized), and not an *un-realized* condition, a *possibility* or simply a *wish*^{lvi}. The Jews that heard Peter preach and who *acted* appropriately thorough repenting (and through being baptized) could be *assured* that they *had* received the

promised Holy Spirit, because they *had* repented, and they *had* submitted to being baptized!

In summary, the biblical relationship between repentance/belief, baptism and the Spirit might *appear* at first glance to be a little more complex than the simplistic “one-two-three” of Revivalism. We should expect this to be the case, given the complex of issues that combines to form Christian salvation. However, what we can affirm very simply is this: a person who *has* repented, and *has* been baptized, *has* received the gift that is God’s Holy Spirit. On this issue Peter is perfectly clear.

The localized results of Peter’s Pentecost sermon

⁴¹ *So those who received his word were baptized, and there were added that day about three thousand souls.* ⁴² *And they devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.* ⁴³ *And fear came upon every soul; and many wonders and signs were done through the apostles.* ⁴⁴ *And all who believed were together and had all things in common;* ⁴⁵ *and they sold their possessions and goods and distributed them to all, as any had need.* ⁴⁶ *And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they partook of food with glad and generous hearts,* ⁴⁷ *praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved.*

The immediate effect of Peter’s Pentecost sermon was impressive—approximately three thousand Jews responded positively to the message that Jesus was the Christ. In other words, they *accepted* (or “*received*”) Peter’s testimony concerning Christ: they “*believed*” in Jesus^{lvii}. As a consequence of their believing, the three thousand then submitted to the outward rite of Christian identification—baptism—and so were numbered inclusively with Jesus Christ’s *original* followers. It is important to acknowledge that Luke provides *no* record of a replication of the previously described “Pentecostal” phenomena taking place. The much vaunted (and supposed) “Pentecostal experience” was *completely lacking* with respect to the 3000 Christian converts. Clearly the significance of the supposed “experience” differed between Luke and Revivalism^{lviii}.

To conclude this, the first of the four “Holy Spirit” blocks within Acts, and in keeping with Luke’s general theme regarding the centrality of the apostles within the Acts narrative, we note verse 42: “...*they devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and fellowship.*” The position of

representative authority, entrusted by Jesus to his small band of twelve apostles, remains clearly in focus.

Philip and Samaria (Acts 8)

⁵ Philip went down to a city of Samaria, and proclaimed to them the Christ. ⁶ And the multitudes with one accord gave heed to what was said by Philip, when they heard him and saw the signs which he did. ⁷ For unclean spirits came out of many who were possessed, crying with a loud voice; and many who were paralyzed or lame were healed. ⁸ So there was much joy in that city.

For the first five years of the Christian Church's existence, mission with the preaching of the gospel had been limited only to those who were *fully* Jewish; those who shared in the covenant promises made by God to Abraham. This, of course, was in keeping with the Jewish understanding of the significance of Pentecost—it being the fulfillment of Jewish covenant promises made by God to Jews. However, the martyrdom of Stephen at the hands of a religious mob set in train a chain of events that catapulted both Christian and message outwards from Jerusalem. Acts chapters seven and eight record these events, and in doing so they introduce us to one of the primary figures around whom Luke crafted his narrative: Saul, later Paul, of Tarsus.

Philip, a Hellenic Jewish Christian introduced to us in chapter six as one of the original “proto-Deacons” of the Jerusalem church, was among those who left Jerusalem after the death of Stephen^{lix}. For reasons known only to him and God, he chose to visit a city in Samaria^{lx}. Although the city is not named in Luke's account, Church tradition indicates that it was probably either Sebaste or Gitta^{lxi}.

Verse five makes clear that the content of Philip's preaching centered solely on the person and ministry of Jesus Christ. In this respect, it was no different to the content of Peter's preaching to the Jewish faithful at Pentecost; albeit that Philip's audience consisted of racially and religiously suspect “half-Jews”. And, as was the case with Peter five years earlier, Philip's proclamation that Jesus was the much anticipated Christ struck a chord with his audience. Luke advises us that the Samaritans paid heed to Philip's message about Christ, as it was being confirmed by the σημεῖα (“signs”) that they βλέπειν (“saw”) Philip perform. These two Greek words are quite suggestive. First, σημεῖα, the standard Greek term used to describe portents of “miraculous” significance, appears 13 times in Acts. Eleven of these occurrences appear up to 8:13^{lxii}. Second, the present tense infinitive, βλέπειν, clearly marks out the “signs” as perceived by strictly *visual* means. They

were clearly and concretely *observable*. The question that begs asking is this: what was the *nature* of the “signs” that Philip performed to validate his preaching of Jesus as the Christ? According to Luke, they were (1) the casting of demons out of many, and (2) the healing of the paralyzed and lame. With respect to the former, Revivalists as a rule do not brook much faith in the existence of malevolent, supernatural, spiritual beings called *demons*^{lxiii}. Consequently, they dismiss out-of-hand a subject about which considerable mention occurs in the New Testament witness, including testimony from the very lips of Jesus Christ himself. Interestingly, the Greek πνεύματα ἀκάθαρτα (“unclean spirits”) occurs 23 times in the Christian New Testament, six times *more* than does λαλεῖν γλώσσαις (“speaking in tongues”)^{lxiv}. But in addition to him casting out demons (really and truly), Philip *healed* many who were either paralyzed or lame. So we note in Philip’s actions at Samaria, the outworking of Jesus’ *original* commission to the “Twelve”^{lxv}. What was the end result? Considerable joy!

⁹ *But there was a man named Simon who had previously practiced magic in the city and amazed the nation of Samaria, saying that he himself was somebody great.* ¹⁰ *They all gave heed to him, from the least to the greatest, saying, “This man is that power of God which is called Great.”* ¹¹ *And they gave heed to him, because for a long time he had amazed them with his magic.* ¹² *But when they believed Philip as he preached good news about the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women.* ¹³ *Even Simon himself believed, and after being baptized he continued with Philip. And seeing signs and great miracles performed, he was amazed.*

Almost immediately, Luke introduces us to Simon—a Jewish man whom he describes as being *formerly* a practitioner of the magic arts—and by virtue of which, Simon had successfully deceived the population of the city. The Greek προὔπηρχεν μαγεύων, (“had been practicing magic”) clearly identifies that Simon was, *previous* to coming into contact with Philip, something of a well-known sorcerer. That Philip so influenced such a local “celebrity” as Simon must surely have added to his reputation, throughout Samaria, of being a powerful Christian preacher.

Verse 12 is fundamental to Luke’s purposes in Acts. There we read, “...*but when they believed Philip as he preached good news about the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women.*” The message about Jesus as the Christ, the “good news” as Luke records it, is εὐαγγελίζω in Greek, and means to make known God’s message of salvation with *authority* and *power*. It is something of a rare expression in the Greek New Testament; Luke used it only once, elsewhere^{lxvi}. Importantly, εὐαγγελίζω is also a cognate to the Greek word from which we derive the English term “gospel”, which adds to its theological significance in our present

context. In any respect, Luke then calls this message about Jesus as the Christ the message about the *Kingdom of God* itself, thereby identifying the relationship between the two ideas. Previously, some Jews had largely viewed Jesus as the “messenger”; now Luke presents him as being, effectively and fundamentally, part and parcel of the very substance of the “message” itself! Of note, the expression, “believing in the name of Jesus”, given the context already exposed via the underlying Greek idiom, refers to responding appropriately to his *power* and *authority*, and occurs as such several times in the book of Acts^{lxvii}. And that Philip was successful in his efforts at preaching the gospel—the message about Jesus as the Christ, ushering in the irrupting Kingdom of God—had tangible results. A large number of people placed their *faith* in Jesus, consequently, they submitted to baptism, including Simon^{lxviii}. It seems clear that Luke intended for his readers to note the obvious parallel to the results of Peter’s preaching in Acts 2: Christian preaching leading to repentance and baptism, leading to conversion and salvation.

Towards the beginning of this essay the statement was made, “*This rhetorical feature indicates that Luke intended to demonstrate both comparison and contrast between the four ‘Holy Spirit’ passages...*” We have considered a comparison between the accounts of Acts 2 and Acts 8; we must now honestly tackle a significant contrast: the suspension by God in giving the Holy Spirit to the Samaritans.

¹⁴ *Now when the apostles at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent to them Peter and John,* ¹⁵ *who came down and prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit;* ¹⁶ *for it had not yet fallen on any of them, but they had only been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.* ¹⁷ *Then they laid their hands on them and they received the Holy Spirit.* ¹⁸

Luke is very clear that *although* the Samaritans *had* believed the message about Jesus, *although* Philip *had* baptized them as a consequence of their believing, and *although* they *had* experienced great joy, they *had not* yet received the Holy Spirit! This is, of itself quite remarkable, given that Luke uses precisely the same language elsewhere in Acts to present very clear demonstrations of salvation taking place! The situation with respect to Philip and the Samaritans simply does not seem to fit the “normal” pattern, and this provides us with something of a *hint* concerning Luke’s purposes.

In order to make sense of the exceptional circumstances that took place at Samaria, we must seriously reflect upon Luke’s stated and implied purposes and emphases in writing Acts. We will then remember that Luke recorded Christ’s commissioning of his apostles in 1:8, “...*but you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be my witnesses in*

Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and to the end of the earth.” Noting this, we will also recall how clearly Luke’s unfolding history demonstrated these *very same* apostles discharging their commission with unique *power* and *authority*. With chapter eight, the record has moved beyond the racially and religiously “safe” confines of Jerusalem and Judea, to the very heart of Samaria itself. Philip was in “questionable” territory, and due to his preaching, that is to say due to God calling *him* to function along similar lines to the *original apostles* when commissioned by Jesus originally, it became necessary for *the apostles* to demonstrate *their* unique *power*, to assert their unique *authority* as the unique *witnesses* of Jesus Christ. But this should not prompt us to view the situation in Samaria as being a rejection of the apostle’s authority, or as a challenge to them. To the contrary, Philip realized that God had *not* given the Spirit (Luke does not tell us *how* Philip knew this); consequently he sought the apostles’ help. For their part the apostolic group dispatched two of the “pillar” apostles, Peter and John, their presence and response providing a concrete endorsement of Philip’s work, confirming that he, *too*, was an instrument of God.

It was when Peter and John laid their hands on the Samaritan Christians that they, at last, received the promised seal of God’s Holy Spirit. That God imparted his Spirit, and then via the *hands* of the two apostles, is significant. In this instance something unique had occurred: the Lord graciously extended his Word to a people who warmly received it, but who were a people that existed *outside* of the immediate and recognized boundaries of ethnic Israel. In chapter two we read how the Holy Spirit descended in power on the “Twelve” as *eschatological* representatives of the original tribes of Israel. And that after this, a further 3000 members of the Jewish nation were converted. On that day God gave the Holy Spirit in a wholly *sovereign* fashion, in accordance with his intended purposes. In Samaria, however, Philip had delivered the Word of the Lord to “half-Jews”, to those who’s *right* to enjoy the Jewish covenant promises was doubtful. Jesus Christ had formerly delegated the authority to ratify the inclusion of diverse and distinct people groups into the New Covenant community to his apostles^{lxix}. Consequently, it required them to confirm the inclusion of the Samaritans—God imparting the Holy Spirit *to* the Samaritans *through* the apostles—at such a pivotal time in Church history. This done, no *Jewish* Christian could ever again reject or deny Samaritan believers full and unfettered Christian fellowship.

That what took place at Samaria was *unusual* is clear. Consequently, we *cannot* approach chapter eight as if it described the supposedly “normal” chain-of-events with respect to salvation. Consider, from Luke’s perspective the Samaritans were “saved” *prior* to the arrival of Peter and John. Luke’s chosen expressions and style makes this plain. However, the overall witness of Scripture assures us that it is the reception of God’s promised Spirit which “guarantees” salvation as an eternal fact. There remains a tension between these two paradoxical factors that cannot be reconciled, it is

simply another aspect of the overall “mystery” that is salvation.

¹⁸ Now when Simon saw that the Spirit was given through the laying on of the apostles’ hands, he offered them money, ¹⁹ saying, “Give me also this power, that any one on whom I lay my hands may receive the Holy Spirit.” ²⁰ But Peter said to him, “Your silver perish with you, because you thought you could obtain the gift of God with money! ²¹ You have neither part nor lot in this matter, for your heart is not right before God. ²² Repent therefore of this wickedness of yours, and pray to the Lord that, if possible, the intent of your heart may be forgiven you. ²³ For I see that you are in the gall of bitterness and in the bond of iniquity.” ²⁴ And Simon answered, “Pray for me to the Lord, that nothing of what you have said may come upon me.”

Luke records that Simon Magus was a person who clamored after supernatural power. Prior to meeting Philip, he had attempted to gain as much for himself through the practice of magic arts. Later he had witnessed the evangelist casting out demons and healing people of physical afflictions. Finally, he had seen two of Christ’s apostles impart something altogether marvelous, something that *not even* the miracle-worker Philip had the authority to give. The obvious question is this: what did Simon see?

The truth is that we really do *not* know given that Luke does *not* say. In many respects, the answer itself is *not* that important. Luke purposefully structured his account specifically intending for his readers to comprehend that: (1) Jesus of Nazareth was the promised Messiah. And, (2) that Jesus commissioned, and empowered, his apostles to represent him post his ascension. Luke’s readers could fully affirm that, (3) the apostles enjoyed a *unique* authority and role within the Church. Similarly, his readers could take comfort in the knowledge that (4) what Jesus said *would* come to pass *did*—the Holy Spirit descended at Pentecost, and the gospel spread in accordance with Jesus’ prophecy in chapter one, verse eight. If Luke had intended his readers to attribute a *particular* “manifestation” with the infilling of God’s Holy Spirit, then it is probable he would have been more forthcoming on the matter. Further, that he would have been more consistent in both his descriptions and his choice of language between the various “power” accounts. Rather than consistently telling his readers *what* took place, Luke opted to tell them *why*. In short, Luke’s emphases were *not* the same as are the Revivalist’s emphases; consequently, the latter should not arrogantly superimpose his pet views upon the former.

In summary, a question: did the Samaritans manifest the Revivalist’s much vaunted “unknown tongues”? The clear response is that it doesn’t seem at all likely. First, of course, there remains the fact that the Revivalist’s so-called “salvation-experience” departs at *every* point from Luke’s records

of both the original Christian Pentecost, and of the Samaritan mission. Second is the reality that manifestations remarkably similar to the Revivalist's (perhaps "Corinthian^{lxx}") "unknown tongue" were *well-known* throughout the contemporary Greco-Roman world^{lxxi}. What set apart the Corinthian Christians was not the *fact* of their "tongues" gift, rather, its *origin* and its *purpose*. Given his background, Simon Magus was not likely to have been "amazed^{lxxii}" or impressed by so pedestrian a "sign", and certainly not when one considers that he had previously witnessed the casting out of demons and the healing of the crippled. We need to reflect that all this took place at a time and in a culture that literally *exploded* with supernatural religious "signs"; something far more provocative must have been in view than the Revivalist's "*unknown tongue*". The end of the matter is this: whilst one might surmise at *this*, and another guess at *that*, the fact remains that Luke was completely silent on the matter. One thing, though, is clear. According to Luke, Simon Magus' *principle* error was a preoccupation with "signs" and with "power". This preoccupation distracted him from giving sufficient attention to what was most important, the *Savior*. With Revivalists one might ask: what, then, has changed?

The so-called Gentile Pentecost (Acts 10)

¹ At Caesarea there was a man named Cornelius, a centurion of what was known as the Italian Cohort, ² a devout man who feared God with all his household, gave alms liberally to the people, and prayed constantly to God. ³ About the ninth hour of the day he saw clearly in a vision an angel of God coming in and saying to him, "Cornelius." ⁴ And he stared at him in terror, and said, "What is it, Lord?" And he said to him, "Your prayers and your alms have ascended as a memorial before God." ⁵ And now send men to Joppa, and bring one Simon who is called Peter; ⁶ he is lodging with Simon, a tanner, whose house is by the seaside." ⁷ When the angel who spoke to him had departed, he called two of his servants and a devout soldier from among those that waited on him, ⁸ and having related everything to them, he sent them to Joppa.

The Christian Church, a community established and populated through the supernatural guiding of the risen Jesus Christ, was in many respects, formed at Jerusalem during the Feast of Pentecost in AD30^{lxxiii}. For the first five years the Church's mission was limited to those of fully Jewish identity. The New Covenant was perceived in terms of the Old Covenant promises made to the descendants of Abraham; consequently, the gospel message itself was understood, largely, in racial terms. However, God ignited a spark through the preaching of Stephen. The result was that Hellenist Jewish Christians endured an "exodus" from Jerusalem, and in the person of Philip, from Judea

altogether. In AD35, by God’s grace, the Christian gospel was communicated through Philip to a racially and religiously suspect group—the Samaritans. The apostle Peter, the one whom Jesus had previously called the “rock” around which he would build his Church^{lxxiv}, was instrumental along with John, in confirming the inclusion of the Samaritan believers into the Christian community. To this point, however, only Jews (albeit by the “broadest” definition) comprised Body of Christ.

The setting is Caesarea, the administrative capital of the Roman province of Judea; the year is sometime around AD40. With Acts chapter 10 Luke introduces his readers to an important Roman citizen—a Gentile—an officer in the Roman army known as Cornelius. We discover immediately that Cornelius was: (1) a Roman, (2) a Centurion^{lxxv}, and surprisingly, (3) that he was εὐσεβῆς καὶ φοβούμενος τὸν θεὸν (“a devoutly religious man, one who feared the Jewish God”). Cornelius was something of a living contradiction: he was a battle-hardened soldier—a member of the occupying Roman force—and as such he represented *everything* that Jews living in Palestine during the first century despised and detested! But in spite of this, he was a man many Jews *respected*, as a he was one who devoutly feared and worshipped their God. Luke presents Cornelius as a man of integrity, as one who supported the Jewish community in very practical terms.

In verse three Luke tells us that, being devout, Cornelius kept the Jewish hours of prayer. And it was while he was engaged in worship that God sent to him an angel with a message^{lxxvi}. Having received the message, Cornelius *immediately* dispatches emissaries to seek our Simon Peter. God spoke and Cornelius acted.

Verses nine through 17 shift events to Peter at Joppa, the interlude providing us with a description of how God set about preparing him for the arrival of Cornelius’ servants. Via an angelic visitation and vision of his own, the Lord spoke to Peter concerning the true status of spiritual purity, contrasted as it was with the outward observances that were part of the so-called “boundary-markers” of Judaism. Through the vision, Peter came to realize that purity was an inward, or spiritual matter, rather than strictly an outward or religious one. Consequently, by the time Cornelius’ Gentile servants approached where he was staying, Peter, impulsive as ever, was prepared to do something rather unexpected.

¹⁹ *And while Peter was pondering the vision, the Spirit said to him, “Behold, three men are looking for you.”* ²⁰ *Rise and go down, and accompany them without hesitation; for I have sent them.”* ²¹ *And Peter went down to the men and said, “I am the one you are looking for; what is the reason for your coming?”* ²² *And they said, “Cornelius, a centurion, an upright and God-fearing man, who is well spoken of by the whole Jewish nation, was directed by a holy angel to send for you to come to his house, and to hear what you have to say.”* ²³ *So he called them in to be his guests.*

The Holy Spirit prompted Peter to hospitality; he immediately invited them to stay as his guests, under his friend's roof. Although Jewish tradition allowed for a degree of interaction with ritually impure Gentiles, it *expressly forbade* them from co-habiting or sharing in meals^{lxxvii}. In other words, by inviting the men into his friend's house, Peter rendered himself, his friend Simon, and Simon's house ritually unclean! Given that all Christians were also Jews, and given that they continued to observe Jewish customs at this time, Peter's actions were particularly remarkable. God spoke, Peter acted.

^{23(b)} The next day he rose and went off with them, and some of the brethren from Joppa accompanied him. ²⁴ And on the following day they entered Caesarea. Cornelius was expecting them and had called together his kinsmen and close friends. ²⁵ When Peter entered, Cornelius met him and fell down at his feet and worshiped him. ²⁶ But Peter lifted him up, saying, "Stand up; I too am a man." ²⁷ And as he talked with him, he went in and found many persons gathered; ²⁸ and he said to them, "You yourselves know how unlawful it is for a Jew to associate with or to visit any one of another nation; but God has shown me that I should not call any man common or unclean. ²⁹ So when I was sent for, I came without objection. I ask then why you sent for me."

Accompanied by an undisclosed number of local Jewish-Christians, Peter journeyed from Joppa to Caesarea to meet with Cornelius. Obviously Peter had managed to placate his traveling companions, as they would have been horrified that Peter had rendered himself unclean, and further, that he intended to visit with a Roman officer. It is probable that Peter shared with them the substance of his vision, and his changing thinking on the matter: the traveling party, although dubious, would have deferred to Peter due to his status as the "senior" apostle.

Cornelius, for his part, showed the Christians a considerable honor by gathering his family and close friends to hear them. Given that he had not fully converted to Judaism—he was still a Gentile—Cornelius' close friends would have comprised other military men and members of the City's ruling and social elite. It is probable that many of them might possibly have shared his respect towards the Jewish God, and by extension, the local Jewish institutions. For their part, the local Jewish leaders would have been *mortified* at the prospect of Cornelius receiving representatives of the Christian schism to meet with him. The very last thing that they would have wanted was a shift in local (and powerful) favor away from "orthodox" Judaism to the "unorthodox" Jesus sect. However, given the Jewish preoccupation with ritual purity, the local Synagogue leaders would have absented themselves from any intermingling taking place in Cornelius' house.

Revivalists generally misunderstand the impact intended by verses 25 and 26, frequently applying these verses as polemic against the sort of respect afforded to religious leaders including the Roman Catholic pope^{lxxviii}. In actuality, Cornelius' deferential actions were standard fare for the time and culture. The term προσεκύνησεν can mean "to offer worship to", but it can also mean "to pay homage to someone of whom a favor is asked"^{lxxix}. Luke used the term in a dual sense: Cornelius intended to show great *respect* towards Peter; Peter, however, was mindful that his host not consider him to be *too* "angelic" a messenger. However, the actions (and the reactions) of both men were completely counter-cultural! A Roman Centurion *debasing* himself before a Jewish fisherman; the latter stooping to *raise* the former back to his feet! And upon fully entering into Cornelius' house, Peter placed his host and his host's guests at ease by remarking, that although it was not the "done" thing for a Jew to comport with Gentiles, no-one less than *God* had shown him that there was no "purity" barrier between Jews and non-Jews that *either* party need be mindful of. Having done as much, Peter then asked Cornelius why he had summoned him. Cornelius responded by explaining the substance of his vision, ending with the statement, "...now therefore we are all here present in the sight of God, to hear all that you have been commanded by the Lord".

Peter and his Jewish-Christian traveling companions faced a very significant dilemma. It was obvious that God had brought about the events leading up to the meeting in Cornelius' house. In spite of this Cornelius was a Gentile. Peter, his companions, and indeed *all* who were part of the Christian community traced their heritage back to a particular ethnic group—Jews—one that understood the New Covenant to be the fulfillment of the Old Covenant promises. And the Old Covenant promises were for Jews! But Cornelius had *invited* Peter to share his beliefs concerning Jesus with him, a Roman! What else could Peter do? He shared the gospel:

³⁴ And Peter opened his mouth and said: "Truly I perceive that God shows no partiality, ³⁵ but in every nation any one who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him. ³⁶ You know the word which he sent to Israel, preaching good news of peace by Jesus Christ (he is Lord of all), ³⁷ the word which was proclaimed throughout all Judea, beginning from Galilee after the baptism which John preached: ³⁸ how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power; how he went about doing good and healing all that were oppressed by the devil, for God was with him. ³⁹ And we are witnesses to all that he did both in the country of the Jews and in Jerusalem. They put him to death by hanging him on a tree; ⁴⁰ but God raised him on the third day and made him manifest; ⁴¹ not to all the people but to us who were chosen by God as witnesses, who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead. ⁴² And he commanded us to preach to the people, and to testify that he is the one ordained by God to be judge of the living and the dead. ⁴³ To him all the prophets bear witness that every one who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his

name.”

The entire content of Peter’s message dwelled on *Jesus*. *Jesus* was the anticipated Christ. *He* was the one whom God anointed with his eschatological Spirit to proclaim salvation *to all people*. And *he* was the one crucified—and then by a Roman official—but who later rose from the dead. In Cornelius’ house we find the gospel, the *biblical* “salvation-message” presented. And, in reviewing Peter’s *second* recorded “gospel sermon”, the first being at Pentecost, we are struck by the fact that the substance has *not* changed, nor has the emphasis during the course of the intervening ten years. The audience had *radically* changed; the message had remained *exactly* the same. From a Revivalist perspective, what Peter did *not* mention is equally as challenging as what he did. Consider, Peter said *nothing* about repentance. Peter said *nothing* about baptism [... *by full immersion in water*]. And Peter said *nothing* about receiving the Holy Spirit [... *with the “evidence” of speaking in tongues*]. Peter’s message *did not touch at a single point*, with what Revivalist’s dogmatically proclaim as being necessary in order to secure salvation. And in spite of Peter not preaching a “proper” gospel (from a revivalist perspective), the results were staggering.

⁴⁴ *While Peter was still saying this, the Holy Spirit fell on all who heard the word.* ⁴⁵ *And the believers from among the circumcised who came with Peter were amazed, because the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out even on the Gentiles.* ⁴⁶ *For they heard them speaking in tongues and extolling God. Then Peter declared,* ⁴⁷ *“Can any one forbid water for baptizing these people who have received the Holy Spirit just as we have?”* ⁴⁸ *And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ.*

Verse 44 clearly describes that Peter was *still* “preaching” when something completely *unexpected* took place. Peter’s audience was *still* listening to him preach when something completely *unexpected* occurred. Not carefully: *none* of Peter’s audience was “seeking”. *None* of Peter’s audience was praying. *None* of Peter’s audience was sitting in a “baptism” tank. But every one of them was intently paying heed to the apostle when God poured out his Spirit upon a Gentile audience. *God* was active, the *Gentiles* were *passive recipients of the Spirit*, and the *Christians* stood around open-mouthed! In Cornelius’ household we see a repeat of what took place at Pentecost a decade earlier. Then *God* was active, the “*Twelve*” *apostles* were *passive recipients of the Spirit*, and it was the *Jews* who stood around open-mouthed!

The Jewish Christians who were present in Cornelius’ house recognized that Peter was preaching a “gospel sermon”. However, in spite of this, the record specifically states that they were ἐξέστησαν (“amazed”) that God had poured out his Spirit. There are several Greek terms that Luke might have

chosen to express the notion of “amazement” at this point. But he opted for a word that mingled the concepts of “astonishment” and “fear”, one specifically used in religious language to denote the outcome of miraculous events^{lxxx}. That the Jewish Christians anticipated that the Gentiles would be “saved” is clear: why else would Peter be preaching Jesus to them? But it is equally clear that they did *not* anticipate them being recipients of the eschatological Holy Spirit! “*God ‘saves’ whomsoever he wills, but his Spirit remains with Israel!*” was an historic creed defining the Chosen People throughout their history. Luke’s record provides the reason that Peter’s associates knew that God had given the Spirit: ἤκουον γὰρ αὐτῶν λαλούντων γλώσσαις καὶ μεγαλυνόντων τὸν θεόν (“for they heard them speaking in foreign languages and praising God!”). The two clauses are co-ordinate in the Greek, and so comprise a single activity. The nominative feminine plural form of the Greek word “language”, coupled with the standard form of the verb “to speak” (in the current example it is a participle), occurs in Mark 16:17; Acts 2:4, 11; 10:46 and 19:6. This construction describes the action of vocalizing in a structured, organized and *authentic* language, and it is *precisely* this that links the four Acts accounts with Mark 16:17! In choosing this form of Greek construction, Luke identified that what took place in Cornelius’ house with respect to the miraculous omen of “spoken languages” was of the *same substance* as what transpired at Pentecost with the “Twelve”. Peter, too, identified the connection. He confirmed: “*these people ... have received the Holy Spirit just as we have*”. Peter makes the clear association between “these” and “we”, and links it to the reception of God’s Spirit in an outwardly and inescapably *obvious* manner^{lxxxii}. That the “these” refers to Cornelius, his household and his guests, is clear from the context. However, the identification of the “we” is not immediately clear, contextually. The conjunction ὡς, linked with the first person plural pronoun ἡμεῖς, requires investigation in order to identify the intended referent. This is necessary, because Peter *had not* linked himself inclusively (grammatically) to his Jewish-Christian companions up to this point. In effect, the “we” is “hanging”. In reality, however, there exist only two potential options. The first, the one accepted by Revivalists, and that likely inferred by careless readers of the English translation, is that Peter *was* linking himself to his immediate companions. However, the inference itself could take one of two forms: generic or specific. If generic, then Peter considered himself to be something of an *exemplar* for what occurred at Pentecost a decade earlier. If specific, then Peter intended his companions to be *included* in what took place at Pentecost. The alternative position, the one that I believe has the greater textual, grammatical and theological support, is that Peter was using a device referred to as the “apostolic plural”. In effect, Peter’s use of the first person plural pronoun “we” encapsulates and incorporates the experience of his eleven fellow apostles. We find this construction in use, for example, by the author of First John^{lxxxiii}. That this form is what was intended by Peter is supported by his earlier statement in verses 38 and 39, “...*how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy*

Spirit and with power; how he went about doing good and healing all that were oppressed by the devil, for God was with him. And we are witnesses to all that he did both in the country of the Jews and in Jerusalem”: a direct reference to the subjects identified in chapter one, verse eight. We know from what Luke wrote earlier, that it was the apostles, and they alone, who Jesus commissioned to function as eyewitnesses to his ministry in Jerusalem and Judea. Further, Luke himself specifically constructed his Acts narrative around a “theology of apostleship”. And further still, that Luke went to pains to identify the “Twelve” as being the focus around which the Pentecostal phenomena revolved. In short, grammar, context and theology are decisive in identifying precisely “who” Peter had in mind.

Peter preached, God acted and the result was *perfectly clear* to the Jewish-Christians who found themselves in the position of eyewitnesses to the divine event. However, up to this point, that is to say, up to the point at which God *saved* a group of Gentiles; nothing whatsoever was mentioned about the *particular* rite of initiation into the Christian community—baptism. It is only *after* the event of Christian conversion that Peter commanded that this aspect of Christian discipleship be undertaken. Interestingly, he did so in the form of a *challenge* to his associates: “‘*can anyone forbid water for baptizing these people who have received the Holy Spirit just as we have?*’ And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Then they asked him to remain for some days.” Baptism functioned in a dual sense: first, as the outward expression of the inward change that had taken place in the life of a believer. In other words, it served a *theological* function. Second, and more importantly, however, was the *social* function. Baptism was the rite that extended the benefits of *full table fellowship* with the Christian community. It served to identify the recipient with his Lord and with his Lord’s “Body” as a member “in common”. In this respect it formed part of Christian discipleship. Consequently, Peter’s challenging of his Jewish-Christian associates was intentional: he was, representatively, daring them to prohibit full fellowship and association with Gentiles, given that their God had acted *decisively* and *openly* in breaking down the walls of social and racial separation. All of this significance is lost on Revivalists, given that their practice is to mine Scripture with the intent of forcing the “part” to fit their “whole”.

In summary, a close reading of the events recorded by Luke, with respect to Cornelius and his household, *yet again* conclusively demonstrates that Revivalist dogma and practice *parts company completely* with what Scripture presents. In Acts 10 we do *not* find the Revivalist’s “one-two-three” “gospel” presented. We do *not* find *anyone* “seeking” for God’s Holy Spirit. We do *not* find *anyone* praying for God’s Holy Spirit. We do *not*, in fact, find *any* mention of the Holy Spirit being available to *anyone* excepting for Jesus Christ; or of baptism being mentioned *anywhere* at all, prior to the conversion of Peter’s audience! Quite plainly, Acts 10 is *not* the “this is that” of Revivalism.

Paul and the Baptist's disciples at Ephesus (Acts 19)

The final passage that we will consider in the essay is also the shortest of Luke's four "Holy Spirit" accounts. It comprises a scant seven verses in the English Bible, and in contrast to the previous accounts, focuses on Paul rather than on Peter. To begin with it, it would be quite the understatement to suggest that Paul's call to be an apostle, which Luke records for us in Acts chapter nine, was challenged by many within the Church for the greater part of Paul's life. In fact, the apostle himself contrasts his appointment to that of the prior "Twelve", by referring to his call in terms of a birth delivered "*out of season*"^{lxxxiii}. And, although he may have thought of himself, in some respects at least, as being the "least of all apostles", he was, in many respects, truly the greatest. In terms of missionary fervor, suffering, pastoral concern, and literary output, Paul had few close equals. And, of course, Luke was a personal attendant to Paul later in his life and ministry. An appreciation of this important feature goes a long way to properly discerning the meaning of several key passages in the book—not the least of which is our current chapter.

We learn in Acts 18:24-26, that Apollos, a converted Alexandrian Jew, someone well versed in the Jewish Scriptures and in Greek rhetoric, had ministered briefly in Ephesus prior to Paul's arriving there. As verse 25 indicates, however, whilst Apollos' message was certainly orthodox, his understanding was in some respects somewhat deficient. Most notably, this was so as concerned the doctrine of baptisms.

²⁴Now a Jew named Apollos, a native of Alexandria, came to Ephesus. He was an eloquent man, well versed in the scriptures. ²⁵He had been instructed in the way of the Lord; and being fervent in spirit, he spoke and taught accurately the things concerning Jesus, though he knew only the baptism of John.

It was the result of Apollos' teaching, and specifically his less than adequate understanding of *baptism*, which Paul encountered when he arrived in the City. This factor is necessary to properly grasping the context of Paul's meeting with the "twelve" former disciples of John the Baptist.

¹While Apollos was at Corinth, Paul passed through the upper country and came to Ephesus. There he found some disciples. ²And he said to them, "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?" And they said, "No, we have never even heard that there is a Holy Spirit." ³And he said, "Into what then were you baptized?" They said, "Into John's baptism." ⁴And Paul said, "John baptized with the baptism of repentance, telling the people to believe in the one who was to come after him, that is, Jesus." ⁵On hearing this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.

⁶And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Spirit came on them; and they spoke with tongues and prophesied. ⁷There were about twelve of them in all.

Revivalists reckon this account to be an example that fully supports their positions on baptism and on speaking in tongues as the universal *sign* of having received the Spirit of God. Clearly the essay thus far has challenged such a misunderstanding, and as will become apparent shortly, the *particulars* of Acts 19 similarly neither reflect the Revivalist *doctrine* nor the Revivalist *experience*.

Upon arriving at Ephesus Paul encountered a number of men who were styled as “disciples”. Luke generally uses the common Greek plural μαθητὰς (“disciples”) to describe followers of Jesus Christ. In this instance, however, the expression is somewhat ambiguous. Does it refer to followers of Jesus? Or does Luke have in mind former disciples of John the Baptist? That the author was being *intentionally* ambiguous is clear from the context: Paul himself was unsure, and so needed to ask key questions. To this end, Paul questioned them as to whether they had received the *Holy Spirit* when (not “since”) they believed. To Paul, possession of the eschatological Spirit was the *clear* determiner in salvation. However, when viewed from a Revivalist perspective, the *way* in which Paul framed his question was curious. Consider: the context makes plain that Paul believed the “disciples” *may* have been converted Christians. That they were previously followers of the Baptist indicates that they *were* Jewish, itself a good sign. That Apollos had visited Ephesus and preached there *was* also suggestive to the apostle, and was another positive. But in spite of these clear features, Paul did *not* ask them what “sign” or “signs” had accompanied them having received the Spirit, if *such* was indeed the case. If speaking in tongues were the *universal*, clear and irrefutable “sign” of having received God’s Spirit, then why did Paul not ask them to either assent to it, or to demonstrate the same for him? In fact, had *any* “sign” been indicative to Paul, we could rightly assume that he would have couched his question in terms that would have made the same extraordinarily plain. But he didn’t.

The response of the “disciples” is equally suggestive. The clause, ἄλλ’ οὐδ’ εἰ πνεῦμα ἅγιον ἔστιν ἠκούσαμεν, can be understood as implying that the men did not know that there was such a “thing” *as* the “Holy Spirit” in the first place, a position that I once personally subscribed to^{lxxxiv}. However, further reflection has led me to the conclusion that all the contexts speak *against* this view. That the men were Jewish, and then former disciples of John the Baptist, would discount the possibility of them not knowing of the Holy Spirit in the first place.^{lxxxv} That, and that the verb for “hear” appears in the indicative mood, and that it is an active voice aorist, would suggest to me that the men had not heard that, “*the Holy Spirit had been given*” as a preferable translation.

Upon learning that these disciples were *ignorant* of the very fact that God had *given* the Holy Spirit,

Paul, who himself understood there to be a close connection between the Spirit and baptism^{lxxxvi}, asked the men “what” baptism they had experienced. He did this because the apostolic gospel had centered on the understanding that once a person had *turned to Christ* (that is, *repented*), which then led to such a one being *baptized into Christ*, the sealing of God’s Spirit was *automatic*^{lxxxvii}. Obviously then, to Paul, it was the *baptism* which the “disciples” had received which was somehow *deficient*. This was so because such indicated a deficient understanding of the Person and work of Jesus Christ—the very precursor and pre-condition to Christian baptism! As it transpired, this proved to be the precisely the case; Paul established that the twelve men had *not* received a Christian baptism at all. Their understanding of the “who”, “what” and “why” of Jesus was not up to “par”; consequently they had not been baptized into him. They were, to this point, not his. They were, to put matters bluntly, *unconverted*.

Paul then explained to these men the significance of Christian baptism functioning as Christian *discipleship*^{lxxxviii}. Having learned this, the men willingly transferred self-ownership to Jesus *as the Christ*, and they did this by consenting to baptism into his *name*: a Hebraism that indicates the *power* and *authority* that lies behind the name itself. It was then incumbent on Paul as an apostle, to fulfill his obligation *as an apostle*, by performing the signs *of an apostle*^{lxxxix}. Paul *caused* the Holy Spirit to be “poured” upon the twelve men through the laying on of his hands. And in this instance we read that they “...*began to speak in languages and they began to prophesy*”. The RSV is less than perfectly clear on this point, given that the Greek imperfect verbs “speaking” and “prophesying” are actually inceptive, which indicates an action that *began* and then *continued*. The important and singular feature of Acts 19, however, is that not only did the converts miraculously speak in *true* languages they had not learned (again, *contra* Revivalism), but that they also evidenced prophesy as well. The context of the Greek passage is that both miraculous outgrowths of the Spirit’s presence occurred in equal measure, rather than simply one or the other.

In summary, it is clear that Acts 19 supports neither the common Revivalist *doctrine* nor the common Revivalist *experience* of “salvation” and/or speaking in tongues. The passage *does*, however, admirably affirm Luke’s principle aims in writing his Acts account. These include the continuing post-Resurrection ministry of Jesus the Christ; the unique authority of his apostles as his chosen and empowered representatives; and equally as important, that Paul’s apostolic ministry was in every respect equal to that of the “foundation” apostles.

Conclusion

I trust that the essay has demonstrated, and then conclusively from the passages reviewed, that the Revivalist dogma regarding salvation as *universally* accompanied by the “sign” of speaking in “unknown” tongues is *false*, and further, that it *cannot* be supported by an honest reading of *any* of the four principle Acts “Holy Spirit” passages frequently appealed to by them as “proof-texts”. I trust that the essay has demonstrated that Revivalists are prone to being remarkably selective in their reading of the various Acts accounts, and in their “picking-and-choosing” from them. We discover the *actual* points of contact between Revivalist teaching and experience, and the biblical witnesses that we have before us, to be *completely* absent! We do *not* find a Peter, a Philip or a Paul presenting *anything* remotely resembling the Revivalist’s “salvation message” at any point. Furthermore, we fail to find even a *single* example of anyone “seeking” after, or praying for, God’s Holy Spirit. Baptism occurs biblically as a rite of social initiation that takes place only *after* conversion, never before; and *every* instance that “tongues” appears in Acts refers to *authentic human languages*, and then occurring within *corporate* settings, not individual ones. I might suggest that the Revivalist’s confidence in his or her “experience” is admirable. However, the *place* where the “experience” properly fits within the context of Scripture is poles removed from where the Revivalist *assumes* it fits.

It concerns me greatly that the average Revivalist experiences his or her “tongues” event in a contrived, “coached” setting—the so-called “seeker’s meeting”. This predisposes me towards the opinion that “normal” Revivalist “tongues” is simply a *learned behavior* rather than a supernaturally endowed ability. However, as there are those who came upon “tongues” in non-contrived ways, their experience is more representative of the simple “gift of tongues” that Paul discusses at length in his first letter to the church at Corinth. But the biblical gift of “tongues” known to Paul is *not* the same as the gift of the Holy Spirit discussed in Acts: the former is something the Spirit *gives*, the latter is the Spirit *given* as the gift itself. Again, Revivalists have completely failed to appreciate this very significant distinction, and the theological and practical consequences that result.

In conclusion let me reinforce that neither the Revivalist doctrine concerning “tongues” and the Holy Spirit, nor the experience that is subsequent to it, is biblical. The record left to posterity by Luke in his Acts of the Apostles conclusively proves that salvation remains a free gift offered by God, received and embraced by the willing, and which is not dependant upon *any* human effort, worth or work. One cannot “seek” for the gift that is God’s Spirit, one need only *ask*. Further, in the

accounts that we have considered, baptism plays *no* part in making one more acceptable before God; it remains simply an act of post-conversion Christian initiation and discipleship. And finally, that in *each* and *every* occurrence of the Greek λαλεῖν γλώσσαις (“speaking in tongues”) that we find in the *Acts of the Apostles*, is a direct reference to intelligible human languages miraculously spoken (albeit not understood) by *groups* of people. Not once in the whole of Acts do we encounter a single *individual* “speaking in tongues” after having “received” the Holy Spirit.

The Revivalist stands perilously close to the presumption of Simon Magus: an unhealthy (and unholy) preoccupation with “signs” and “power”. Scripture presents that salvation results from a relationship with a Savior; Revivalism presents that salvation results from a relationship with a sign. Only the *One*^{xc} saves, however.

Postscript

Author’s background

Given the nature of this paper, I believe it fair that I provide a brief summary of my qualifications to undertake research of this sort, on this subject.

To begin with, I am a former member of the *Revival Centres International* (RCI) who fellowshiped in both the Brisbane and Toowoomba assemblies during the mid to late 1980s (February 1986 through July 1989). Consequently, I gained my formative exposure to the philosophies and teachings of L.R. Longfield first-hand.

When I left the RCI it was through *my* choosing rather than as a result of assembly discipline: I simply ceased attending. Consequently, I am not encumbered by latent feelings of hostility that derive from perceived psychological or social injustices towards me. My decision to leave centered on several issues, both practical and doctrinal.

I am the holder of bachelor and research master degrees in biblical studies and theology; my undergraduate major was in New Testament Greek language and literature, and my postgraduate degree awarded on the strength of scholarship involving my handling of the Greek texts of Acts, Romans, Galatians and Hebrews. I am certainly qualified to comment on the meaning of the book of Acts in Greek. I am now, and have been for several years, a member of the faculty of a Protestant theological college; consequently my research and analytical skills sufficiently developed for this project.

It has been an interest of mine to undertake sustained and critical research in the field of Revivalist doctrine for approaching ten years, with a special interest in the movement’s *hermeneutics* (philosophy and methods of Bible interpretation) and *soteriology* (doctrine of salvation). During the course of my studies, I have established cordial and lasting relationships with a number of former and current Revivalist pastors. Ongoing dialogue with them has kept me up-to-date on doctrinal issues, which has also provided me with valuable “insider’s perspectives” on a range of topical subjects.

Finally, above all else I am a committed Christian believer. I do not approach the subject matter of this essay from a disinterested, ambivalent or detached perspective. I believe the issues to be of eternal importance, having eternal consequences. My motivation, then, is pastoral and not simply polemical.

Endnotes

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- i The term “Revivalist” describes a member of the *Revival Centres International* (RCI), the *Revival Fellowship* (TRF), the fellowship of assemblies under the lead of the *Geelong Revival Centre* (GRC), and the *Christian Assemblies International* (CAI). Whilst it is accepted that each group is a religious denomination in its own right, all stem from, and have their doctrinal basis in, the idiosyncratic teachings of Lloyd R. Longfield.
- ii The issue of what is intended by the term “tongues”, from both Revivalist and biblical perspectives, will be explored within the essay.
- iii The RSV was selected as it is a *better* translation than the KJV (with a different manuscript base), but is one that stands squarely within the same tradition.
- iv The text used is that of the *Nestle Aland Greek New Testament, 27th edition*, which is the established scholarly and critical Greek text for the New Testament.
- v The plural “texts” is intentional. Luke’s *Acts of the Apostles* circulated within the early church in *two* quite distinct forms: the *Alexandrian* and the *Western*. The two differ in both character and length. The Western text form is nearly one-tenth longer than the Alexandrian, and is generally more picturesque and circumstantial. The shorter text is generally more colorless, and in places, more obscure.
- vi Theological exegesis is the tool used to provide the modern-day appropriation and “application” of the original author’s message. In this respect, it concludes the “hermeneutical circle”: spirituality-exegesis-exposition-application-spirituality.
- vii Although targeting Revivalism specifically, a small number of groups, notable among them being the *United Pentecostal Church* (UPC), preach a similar “salvation message”.
- viii His Roman name was probably Lucianus, which was often shortened to Lucius.
- ix See Colossians 4:14.
- x Although letters were addressed principally to individuals, the convention of the day was that they were “published” by the recipient among his or her friends, “clients” and so forth. Consequently, the contents of letters such as Luke’s could be guaranteed of a very wide audience.
- xi In the Roman class system, the Equestrian rank was second only to the Senatorial class, from the latter was drawn the Emperor and Senators.
- xii So J.H. Moulton and G. Milligan, *Vocabulary of the Greek Testament*, s.v. *κατηχέω*
- xiii Scholarly consensus dates Luke-Acts two to three decades later; however, such is open to considerable challenge.
- xiv The so-called “Peace of Rome”: the social, legal and political order established, and defended, by Roman military force.
- xv Patronage, the relationship between “clients” and their “patrons”, was an established and significant fact of life within Roman society at this time.
- xvi This reality does some damage to the Revivalist assertion that the entire New Testament is strictly “Christian mail”, and therefore, is not to be appropriated by non-Christians, nor that it could properly be understood by non-Christians.
- xvii Less, obviously, Judas Iscariot.
- xviii The Old Testament is replete with references and allusions to the numbers “twelve” and “seventy” (see, e.g. Exodus 15:27).
- xix Drew Dixon has produced a summary essay on the various salvation accounts in Acts, which can be accessed at www.pleaseconsider.info
- xx Which is clearly beyond the scope of this essay.
- xxi According to the rules of both English and Greek grammar, a *pronoun* must refer to its *antecedent* (also “referent”), which will be the closest *noun* in proximity sharing the same *case*, *person*, *gender* and *number*.
- xxii Being an inflected language, Greek does not always require an explicitly stated noun. Quite often the subject is subsumed within a verb, the suffix to which clearly identifies the identity of the referent.
- xxiii Cf. 1:18, 2:41, 5:41, 8:4 and 25, 9:31, 11:19, 12:5, 13:4, 15:3 and 30, and 16:5.
- xxiv Possibly the site of the Last Supper.
- xxv Matthew 13:55 (Mark 6:3) names them as James, Joses (or Joseph), Simon and Judas. Very early Church tradition names his sisters Salome and Mary (so, for example, Epiphanius, *Pan.* 78.8.1; 78.9.6)
- xxvi In other words, the group numbered about 109 less the surviving apostles.
- xxvii Cf. 6:1 and 11:27 in the Greek.
- xxviii E.g. in 1:6.
- xxix There were very, very few dwellings in Jerusalem that could accommodate so large a number of people within a single room (the term ‘upper room’ describes the entire second level of the building in question). It is very unlikely, therefore, that we are to assume that the rag-tag followers of a recently vilified and crucified outcast would have either the means, or the opportunity, to rent such magnificent accommodations.
- xxx Ἄνδρες is not an inclusive reference in Greek, but a specifically gendered one. It refers to males, alone.
- xxxi *Berakoth* 5:5.
- xxxii A *pericope* is a self-contained unit of biblical material.

xxxiii One popular legend has the “creator” of such things establishing the location of chapter and verse divisions whilst on horseback, journeying to Canterbury on religious pilgrimage!

xxxiv Another reason why the KJV is *not* a suitable translation for Bible study.

xxxv Scholarship dates this writing to between AD 20 and AD 30. We know that he wrote *De Decalogo* before his visit to the Roman Emperor Gaius Caligula, which took place in AD 38, and that he “published” all of his works *before* his death in AD 50. In short, his recording of the “Pentecostal” phenomena that accompanied the giving of the Law took place, at best, 10 years *before* the events of the Christian Pentecost, and at the very latest, 10 years *before* Luke wrote Acts! Philo was *not* a Christian, nor was he sympathetic to the Christian cause; there is no reason to presume, therefore, that he would “borrow” a Christian tradition so as to “back-cast” it into a Jewish mould. What would be the purpose, other than to present the Jews of his time in a *negative* light? Further, there is no evidence whatsoever to presume that Philo’s description of the giving of the Law at Mount Sinai was a *later* Christian interpolation, inserted to give credence to the NT description of the Christian Pentecost. Philo was a devout Jew, writing as a Jew, recording Jewish tradition. This fact is borne out by *later* references to the *same* tradition in the *Talmud*, a Jewish work including decidedly *anti-Christian* sentiments!

xxxvi Philo Judaeus, *De Decalogo*: 32-35. The English translation is my own, and is based on the standard critical Greek text in the Loeb Classical Library edition, published by Harvard University Press.

xxxvii Of the various commentaries which state (or infer) that the 120 were intended, *not one* that I consulted provides *any* sort of grammatical evidence to support the contention. Of the commentaries that I consulted and which indicate that the “Twelve” were intended, *all* demonstrate very clearly that the referent derived directly from the syntax and grammar of the Greek text itself.

xxxviii Especially given that they were very keen to identify themselves with gathered Israel, and their Teacher as Israel’s anticipated Messiah.

xxxix Contrast this with the universal Revivalist “practice” of seeking after, or praying for, the Holy Spirit. The apostles were “seeking” nothing, and they were not even praying at the time the promised baptism with the Spirit took place!

xl See, for example, Exodus 3:2.

xli Numerous controlled studies into “Pentecostalist” “tongues-speaking” have been undertaken by linguists during the past forty years. In spite of “popularist” claims to the contrary, *not a single example* of xenolalia (unlearned foreign speech) has yet been identified. Neither have the preconditions for “authentic” speech yet been observed: that is, recognizable syntactical patterning, substantial vocabulary, etc. In each and every case what has been evident was simply the repetition of vocables that correspond *fully* with the range expected in the “tongues”-speaker’s normal language. This is *not* to suggest that the “modern” form of “tongues” is illegitimate, simply that it bears more in common with the gift described in 1 Corinthians than it does what we read of in Acts.

xlii Note Matthew 16:4 and 1 Corinthians 1:22.

xliii The Diaspora was the result of the forced dispersion of Israel by the Assyrians and Babylonians. It is from this “dispersion” that Revivalists presume there to be the ten “Lost Tribes” of Israel, whom they mistakenly identify with the Anglo-Saxon peoples.

xliv The language being post-Exilic Aramaic, and not pre-Exilic Hebrew.

xlv The charge of public drunkenness in the Temple, on a high feast day no less, and then during a prescribed hour of prayer, ought not to be downplayed. The twelve apostles faced the very real prospect of being dragged outside the city walls and stoned had the charge been publicly supported!

xlvi Numbers 11:29.

xlvii Isaiah 49:6.

xlviii “Salvation” in Revivalist dogma is a somewhat hazy and imprecise condition. It is rarely if ever defined, with the effects (and benefits) of “salvation” being grossly misunderstood. In effect, to Revivalists “salvation” equates to little more than the *opportunity* of *potentially* receiving eternal life.

lix Incidentally, there is *nothing* intrinsic to the words “baptism” or “baptize” which lexically requires an action of “immersion”, “dipping” or “plunging”. The only Greek word that so requires such an action is *bapto*, a word that is *nowhere* used to describe “baptism” in the entire New Testament! Revivalists, however, claim that both “baptism” and “baptize” derive, etymologically, from *bapto*, which is true enough. But the English word “pineapple” derives etymologically from the words “pine” and “apple”. However, I wonder if *anyone* would protest based on etymology, that a pineapple **must** be a kind of apple that grows on pine trees?!

¹ See Ephesians 2:8,9.

li In the first century, a non-Jew became a Jew by, first, associating with a Synagogue as a proselyte. He then received instruction in the obligations of the Law. Once such had taken place, a prospective convert was circumcised, offered sacrifice, and baptized himself once the circumcision wound had sufficiently healed. From that point forwards, he was considered to be completely Jewish.

lii The Abrahamic Covenant was itself established on the provision by God of land, numerical growth and blessing. Each of the three pillars weakened through continued national disobedience, which led, eventually, to judgment.

liii In Greek the construction is a genitive of apposition, also known as an epexegetical genitive: the “gift” **is** the Holy Spirit, himself.

liiv Baptism served precisely the same function as the religious manumission of slaves in Greco-Roman society during the 1st century: a slave was “freed” by the God through the payment of a price in a temple; consequently s/he no

- longer belonged to the former owner, but to the God (and by extension, the temple).
- ^{lv} Contrast this with the all too common (and biblically unsupportable) Revivalist practice of “baptizing” unbelievers. Revivalists do not accept that a person is “saved” unless such a one can provide evidence for “tongues”, yet they *very willingly* will baptize people who clearly *cannot* do so. From a biblical position Revivalist baptism is without warrant and so is ineffectual.
- ^{lvi} The result of this construction is discussed at length in Dr D.B. Wallace’s excellent, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics: an Exegetical Syntax of the New Testament*, pp. 369-371.
- ^{lvii} See Acts 16:30 and 31
- ^{lviii} Which is, of course, the very point of this essay.
- ^{lix} It is likely that the Jewish persecution of the Jerusalem church was directed primarily against the Hellenist believers whom Stephen represented. Given that the apostles did not belong to this group, they remained. So Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History*, 5.18.4
- ^{lx} The Samaritans, of course, were despised by the Jews for being both “half-caste” (a mix of Jewish and Canaanite heritages), and for establishing an alternative priesthood and Temple with which to worship the Jewish God. However, the Samaritans viewed themselves as being the “true” Israel.
- ^{lxi} If the article before the word “city” in one half of the manuscript tradition is authoritative, then it would indicate that “the” prominent city of Samaria was in view, and that would be Sebaste. However, if the absence of the article in the other half of the manuscript tradition is authoritative, then it is likely that Gitta was in view. A very prominent early Church Father and apologist, Justin Martyr, wrote that Gitta was Simon Magus’ home town.
- ^{lxii} Those being 14:3 and 15:12.
- ^{lxiii} The obvious exception being the CAI.
- ^{lxiv} Perhaps an indication of the relative importance between the two?!
- ^{lxv} See Matthew 10:1; Mark 6:7 and Luke 9:1, 2.
- ^{lxvi} That single occasion was Luke 1:19.
- ^{lxvii} See Acts 2:38; 3:6; 4:8-10; 8:12; 10:48; 16:18.
- ^{lxviii} An interesting aside with respect to the mode of baptism can be made at this point. We know from early, post-canonical Christian writings, and also from archaeological finds, that Christians did *not* use “fonts” of any sort to conduct baptisms during the first two centuries. This is significant. Archaeology has clearly demonstrated that neither Gitta nor Sebaste had any naturally occurring bodies of water available during the first three centuries that were capable of accommodating the immersing even *one* person, never-mind the large numbers inferred from Acts 8! The inference is plain, “immersion” was clearly not the mode practiced by Philip upon the Samaritans. More likely is the probability that Philip drew water from a well, and baptized by *pouring*.
- ^{lxix} See Matthew 16:13-19.
- ^{lxx} The modern “tongues” phenomena has close parallels to the “gift of tongues” that Paul describes at length in 1 Corinthians 12-14, including the misplaced spiritual pride that all too frequently occurs.
- ^{lxxi} For example, the various regional oracles, the Mythrian rites and similar.
- ^{lxxii} The indicative and imperfective verb, ἐξίστατο, describes the “wonderment”, an amazement mingled with fear, which Simon felt at seeing the miracles that Philip performed.
- ^{lxxiii} It can be offered that the Christian Church existed before Pentecost, given that Jesus formed a community of believers in him, and to whom he ministered for three years.
- ^{lxxiv} Contrary to the position adopted by Revivalists, Jesus clearly referred to Peter as the “rock”.
- ^{lxxv} A Centurion was a Roman officer who commanded one of the six, hundred-man units that comprised a cohort. This is the second occasion that Luke portrayed a Centurion favorably, the first being Luke 7:1-10.
- ^{lxxvi} The fact of the angelic visitation marks Cornelius for special favor. Scripture identifies that God is not in the general habit of dispatching angels to humans, “willy-nilly”. So when such a thing happens, the person to whom the angel appears invariably becomes the centre around a significant shift in the purposes of God (and humanity).
- ^{lxxvii} For example, *Mishna*, ’Ohol. 18.7, “*The places where Gentiles dwell are unclean*”, so too *Jubilees* 22.16, “*Separate yourself from the nations, and eat not with them ... and become not associated with them, for their works are unclean, and all their ways are a pollution and an abomination.*”
- ^{lxxviii} So, “if Peter, the ‘first’ pope refused to be worshipped, then why should other popes?!”
- ^{lxxix} So Matthew 8:2; 9:18; 15:25; 18:26, etc.
- ^{lxxx} So Bauer, Danker, *et al*, *A Greek English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, s.v. ἐξίσταται 2.b.
- ^{lxxxi} It is the outward and obvious manner that distinguishes the incorporation of *people groups*, as opposed to *individuals*, into the Christian community in Acts.
- ^{lxxxii} See, for example, 1 John 1:1-5.
- ^{lxxxiii} See 1 Corinthians 5:10.
- ^{lxxxiv} So, for example, my earlier article, *Effusion in Ephesus*, <http://www.pleaseconsider.info>
- ^{lxxxv} See Luke 3:15-16.
- ^{lxxxvi} Paul understood the physical rite of baptism to be the outward demonstration of the inward work of the Spirit upon the life of the believer at conversion. In other words, baptism functioned as an “object lesson” with respect to spiritual conversion.

^{lxxxvii} As per the *proper* meaning of Acts 2:38 discussed earlier.

^{lxxxviii} Central to Christian discipleship is an understanding of the Person and work of Jesus—the one whom John the Baptist longed to see, and to whom he taught his own work as being preliminary.

^{lxxxix} See Acts 8:17.

^{xc} The One being Jesus Christ.