

Spirit Baptism: Continuity with a Discontinuous Interlude

Robert L. Thomas

Continuity of Israel's Covenants, Including Spirit-Baptism¹

It is without controversy that a benefit promised to Israel in the OT under its promised new covenant is a new heart:²

JER 31:33 “But this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days,” declares the LORD, “I will put My law within them and on their heart I will write it; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people.

God's promise to write His law upon their heart in Jer 31:33 is looked upon by Ezekiel as giving them a new heart created by the promised Spirit:

EZE 36:26 “Moreover, I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; and I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh.

¹Various expressions and terms related to the baptism of the Spirit must be recognized: “pour out” (ἵδρω in the OT and ἐκχέω and ἐκχύνω in the NT), “falling upon,” “coming upon,” “promise of the Father,” “the promise of the Holy Spirit,” “the gift of the Holy Spirit,” “the promise of the Holy Spirit,” “Helper,” “Spirit of truth.”

²The broader context reads,
 JER 31:31 “Behold, days are coming,” declares the LORD, “when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah,

JER 31:32 not like the covenant which I made with their fathers in the day I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, although I was a husband to them,” declares the LORD.

JER 31:33 “But this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days,” declares the LORD, “I will put My law within them and on their heart I will write it; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people.

JER 31:34 “They will not teach again, each man his neighbor and each man his brother, saying, ‘Know the LORD,’ for they will all know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them,” declares the LORD, “for I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more.”

EZE 36:27 “I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will be careful to observe My ordinances. . . .

.....

EZE 39:29 “I will not hide My face from them any longer, for I will have poured out My Spirit on the house of Israel,” declares the Lord GOD.

As I proposed in last year’s presentation to this Council, application of some benefits of the New Covenant to Israel alone, was expanded to non-Israelites by the Lord Jesus during His incarnation as a response to His rejection by His nation during His first advent. Huey in his comments on Jeremiah 31 concurs with that general conclusion based on Paul’s elaboration in Romans 11:

The substitution would not come immediately, however (note “the time is coming” in v. 31). The Mosaic covenant would remain in effect, governing the lives of the people until the inauguration of the new one, which the incarnate Lord of the covenant declared would be at his crucifixion (Luke 22:20; 1 Cor 11:25; cf. Heb 10:1–8). Nevertheless, even though this passage is quoted in the NT and applied to the church (2 Cor 3:5–18; Heb 8:8–12; 10:16–17), the statement in v. 31 should not be missed that it was with Israel and Judah that the Lord intended to establish the new covenant.

According to the apostle Paul, it was because the chosen people in general temporarily rejected the new covenant in the NT era that it was then offered to the Gentiles (Rom 9:30–33; 11:11–32; cf. Matt 28:19–20; John 1:11–13; Acts 10:9–47). A premillennial

interpretation of these verses concludes that although the blessings of the new covenant are now being experienced in a partial way by the church, a time is yet coming when a reunited ethnic Israel is converted and blessed (Zech 12:10–13:1), together with believing Gentiles, with the fulness of the new covenant promises.³

Huey summarizes the OT new-covenant teaching about the Spirit as follows:

Rather than on tables of stone (Exod 31:18; Deut 4:13), God promised to write the law on “minds” (*qereb*, better “inmost being,” a more general term than “heart”) and “hearts” (cf. 17:1–2; Rom 7:4–6; 2 Cor 3:3, 6–16). The radical nature of this change is emphasized elsewhere by speaking of a “new heart” and a “new spirit” (Ezek 18:31; 36:26; cf. Ezek 11:19; Jer 24:7; 32:39). It is to be performed by God’s Spirit (Ezek 36:27; 37:14) and can be called in NT terms “regeneration” or “rebirth” (see John 1:10–13; 3:1–10; Titus 3:5; 1 Pet 1:3, 23; 1 John 4:7; 5:18). External law is burdensome and irritates. Fallen human nature rebels against bowing to external demands or threats to obey. Those under the new covenant will obey God not out of duty or fear but out of a God-given desire and ability to do so (cf. Rom 8:1–4; 2 Cor 5:14). Thus, there would be no more need to modify the covenant, since Israel would no longer be breaking it (3:17); it is to be everlasting (32:40). As Brueggemann writes, “Obeying will be as normal and as readily accepted as breathing and eating.... All inclination to resist, refuse, or disobey

³F. B. Huey, Jr., *Jeremiah, Lamentations*, NAC, ed. E. Ray Clendenen (Nashville: B&H, 1993), 282-83.

will have evaporated.”⁴

Not until one turns to the NT, however, does he find the word “baptism” used to describe the bestowal of the Spirit. The NT uses the word “baptism” and its cognates frequently, but not always in connection with Spirit baptism. When a delegation of Pharisees and Sadducees, apparently from the Sanhedrin,⁵ came to him, John the Baptist was apparently the first to apply a cognate of the word “baptism” to the OT New Covenant promises of a future outpouring of the Spirit on Israel:⁶

MT 3:10 “The axe is already laid at the root of the trees; therefore every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.

MT 3:11 “As for me, I baptize you with water for repentance, but He who is coming after me is mightier than I, and I am not fit to remove His sandals; He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.

⁴Ibid., 284-85.

⁵Osborne suggests that this was probably an official delegation from the Sanhedrin. Otherwise, the Pharisees and Sadducees did not have enough in common to join forces in approaching John (Grant R. Osborne, *Matthew*, Zondervan Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament, ed. Clinton E. Arnold [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2010], 113).

⁶The larger context reads,

MT 3:7 But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming for baptism, he said to them, “You brood of vipers, who warned you to flee from the wrath to come?” MT 3:8 “Therefore bear fruit in keeping with repentance;

MT 3:9 and do not suppose that you can say to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham for our father’; for I say to you that from these stones God is able to raise up children to Abraham.

MT 3:10 “The axe is already laid at the root of the trees; therefore every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.

MT 3:11 “As for me, I baptize you with water for repentance, but He who is coming after me is mightier than I, and I am not fit to remove His sandals; He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.

MT 3:12 “His winnowing fork is in His hand, and He will thoroughly clear His threshing floor; and He will gather His wheat into the barn, but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.”

MT 3:12 “His winnowing fork is in His hand, and He will thoroughly clear His threshing floor; and He will gather His wheat into the barn, but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.”

Unquestionably, John was referring to what God had promised the nation, because the existence of the body of Christ had not yet been announced by Jesus while John was baptizing. Joel 2:28 and other OT passages speak specifically concerning this promise:⁷

JOEL 2:28 “ It will come about after this That I will pour out My Spirit on all mankind; And your sons and daughters will prophesy, Your old men will dream dreams, Your young men will see visions.”

JOEL 2:29 “Even on the male and female servants I will pour out My Spirit in those days.

John could speak of judgment to come on Israelites who were not among the faithful remnant in the same context with the promised coming of the Spirit, because the context of the promised Spirit in Joel also spoke of coming judgment on non-Israelites:

JOEL 3:1 “ For behold, in those days and at that time, When I restore the fortunes of Judah

⁷Osborne suggests that the mention of the baptism in the Holy Spirit refers to the Spirit’s coming to the faithful and “and fire” refers to the fire of judgment on the unfaithful, the latter of which fits the context well. But he notes that some have taken the two to be a hendiadys: “spirit-fire.” The question is whether “Spirit-fire” refers to judgment or to the refining fire of the Spirit. Osborne sees both nuances in this passage (Osborne, *Matthew*, 115-16), but that violates the hermeneutical principle of single meaning for a given passage. It is best to opt for a reference to a fire of judgment administered by the Spirit in the Matthew context. With one preposition governing both parts, it is inadmissible to have the whole expression having two meanings in a context specifically dealing with judgment.

and Jerusalem,

JOEL 3:2 I will gather all the nations And bring them down to the valley of Jehoshaphat.

Then I will enter into judgment with them there On behalf of My people and My inheritance, Israel, Whom they have scattered among the nations; And they have divided up My land.

Jesus eventually joined with John in using baptism-type terminology in speaking of the promised coming of the Spirit on repentant Israel:⁸

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

.....
AC 11:15 “And as I [i.e., Peter] began to speak, the Holy Spirit fell upon them just as *He did* upon us [i.e., Peter and others] at the beginning.

AC 11:16 “And I remembered the word of the Lord, how He used to say, ‘John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.’”

Connecting the blessing of the Spirit with water baptism as did John and Jesus, Peter was the

⁸If Jesus’ disciples had been baptized by John, Scripture does not specify when. That it would be Jesus who would baptize with the Spirit is not stated specifically, but is implied by the passive voice in Acts 1:5; 11:16. The apostles were the nucleus of the church which was to be born in Acts 2 so they needed this once-for-all baptism of the Spirit. Only on special occasions in Acts was there a delay between initial faith in Christ and the giving of the Spirit, delay occasioned by the historical occasion in the life of the early church (Everett F. Harrison, *Acts: The Expanding Church* (Chicago: Moody, 1975) 38-39).

next to join in using similar terminology for the coming of the promised Spirit:⁹

AC 2:38 Peter *said* to them, “ Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

.....
 AC 10:47 “ Surely no one can refuse the water for these to be baptized who have received the Holy Spirit just as we *did*, can he?”

.....
 AC 11:15 “And as I began to speak, the Holy Spirit fell upon them just as *He did* upon us at the beginning. AC 11:16 “And I remembered the word of the Lord, how He used to say, ‘John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.’”

Notably, those of the circumcision recognized that Israel had been promised the baptism of the Spirit and were surprised at what Peter reported about the Gentiles in the house of Cornelius:¹⁰

AC 10:45 All the circumcised believers who came with Peter were amazed, because the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out on the Gentiles also.

⁹In Acts 2:38 Peter mentions “the gift of the Holy Spirit” as the sign and seal of the listeners’ forgiveness of sin by God (cf. Eph 1:13-14). At this point nothing is said about the “gifts” of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit Himself is the great gift by whom all lesser gifts are administered (Harrison, *Acts* 63).

¹⁰The granting of the gift of the Spirit to uncircumcised Gentiles who had not yet been baptized with water was “a powerful demonstration to the church of the acceptability of Gentiles on the basis of faith alone, anticipating the decision of the Jerusalem Council (chap. 15)” (Harrison, *Acts* 175-76). Peter and others learned that Jews and Gentiles in the body of Christ were to be equal (*ibid.*).

It is difficult to question that the baptism of the Spirit spoken about in the early stages of John's and Christ's ministries referred to the New Covenant promises of the Spirit made to Israel. The question arises, however, how soon did this promise take a prominent place in the minds of the apostles.

The Beginning of Discontinuity

In last year's paper, I proposed that the point of change from continuity to discontinuity began during Jesus' Galilean Ministry when He encountered opposition from the scribes and Pharisees after the healing of a blind and mute man. Their opposition and accusations prompted Jesus' pronouncement that they had committed the unpardonable, eternal sin (Matt 12:32; Mark 3:29). The blasphemy of His opponents necessitated an interlude of discontinuity for Israel's covenants that would not end until the rapture of the church at Christ's second advent.

On the same day as this encounter, Jesus proceeded to give eight parables regarding the kingdom,¹¹ parables that presented a picture of a kingdom entirely different from the kingdom promised to David in the OT. For example, the parables spoke of two kingdoms, not one, the second of which would follow the first. The second kingdom best represents the OT Davidic kingdom (Matt 13:41-43).¹²

¹¹Gibbs concurs that the two episodes occurred on the same day: "The phrase 'on that day' [in Matt 13:1] connects Matthew's parables discourse closely to the preceding context, in which the crowds have been distinguished from Jesus' disciples, who are doing the will of Jesus' heavenly Father (12:50)" (Jeffrey A. Gibbs, *Matthew 11:2–20:34*, Concordia Commentary [Saint Louis: Concordia, 20:10], 675). The unity of the parabolic chapter in Matthew with the continuity of events dealing with opposition to Christ in earlier portions of Matthew 12 is clear.

¹²The explanation in question comes in Matt 13:41-43 where the adverb τότε, which in Matthew's Gospel indicates sequence, introduces the appearance of the second kingdom:

MT 13:41 "The Son of Man will send forth His angels, and they will gather out of His kingdom all stumbling blocks, and those who commit lawlessness,

MT 13:42 and will throw them into the furnace of fire; in that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

It was long after the breach with the scribes and Pharisees that John, in his account of Jesus' interaction at the Feast of Tabernacles, recalled Jesus' words in anticipating the future coming of the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost:¹³

JN 7:39 “But this He spoke of the Spirit, whom those who believed in Him were to receive; for the Spirit was not yet *given*, because Jesus was not yet glorified.”

Also, a little later in the same period of Jesus' Later Judean Ministry, as part of the parable of the importunate friend, Jesus again spoke about the future coming of the Spirit:

LK 11:13 “ If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will *your* heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him?”

Such references to the coming of the Spirit must have triggered memories of the writers, John and Luke, about what they remembered as occurring on the day of Pentecost, prior to writing their Gospels. John was present with the disciples on that day, but did not write his Gospel until the decade of the eighties, A.D. In A.D. 30, he may not have been perfectly clear in realizing that this New Covenant benefit had been extended to Gentile believers along with Jewish believers.

MT 13:43 “ Then (τότε) THE RIGHTEOUS WILL SHINE FORTH AS THE SUN in the kingdom of their Father” (cf. Dan 12:3).

¹³Jesus spoke the words of John 7:39 at the Feast of Tabernacles, well-known for the pouring of water as part of the ritual. According to Brown, the water was a symbol of the Spirit whom the resurrected Jesus would give. The OT background of the Feast spoke of the future coming of the Spirit to repentant Israel (e.g., Isa 44:3; Raymond E. Brown, *The Gospel According to John (i-xii)*, in the AB [Garden City, N.Y.; Doubleday, 1966] 328-29), but Jesus' use in this instance referred rather to the future coming of the Spirit on the day of Pentecost.

Luke apparently was not present with the disciples on the Day of Pentecost, but surely, by the time he wrote his Gospel in the sixties, A.D., he had come to realize that Christ had extended the New Covenant benefit of Spirit-baptism to a new group of believers who were not necessarily physical descendants of Abraham. The baptism of the Spirit promised to Israel was indelibly impressed on their memories in fulfillment of the New Covenant. At earlier points, however, they were perhaps did not fully comprehend that the promise had been extended to include “other sheep I have which are not of this fold” (John 10:16), of whom Jesus had spoken.

With the same delayed understanding of the discontinuity involving the extension of the Spirit-baptism benefit, John¹⁴ and Luke¹⁵ recalled (with the enablement of the Spirit¹⁶) and wrote freely about Jesus’ words regarding the future coming of the Spirit. Also, by the time they wrote their Gospels, Peter had reported to his fellow-Jews how the Gentiles in the household of

¹⁴Again, John wrote with the Spirit’s enablement, recalling the words of Jesus
 JN 14:16 “I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may be with you forever;
 JN 14:17 *that is* the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it does not see Him or know Him, *but* you know Him because He abides with you and will be in you.

.....
 JN 15:26 “When the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, *that is* the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, He will testify about Me,
 JN 15:27 and you *will* testify also, because you have been with Me from the beginning.

.....
 JN 16:13 “But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all the truth; for He will not speak on His own initiative, but whatever He hears, He will speak; and He will disclose to you what is to come.

.....
 JN 20:22 And when He had said this, He breathed on them and *said to them, “Receive the Holy Spirit.”

¹⁵Writing early in the A.D. sixties, Luke too was dependent on the Spirit’s enablement in recalling Jesus’ specific words during His post-resurrection ministry:

LK 24:49 “And behold, I am sending forth the promise of My Father upon you; but you are to stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high.”

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

¹⁶John probably wrote these words in the eighties, but with the Spirit’s enablement, he recalled Jesus’ words from A.D. 30, shortly before the crucifixion:

JN 14:26 “But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said to you.” Note that Jesus promised John and the other disciples that the Spirit would grant them this kind of recollection of all that He had said.

Cornelius had received the baptism of the Spirit (Acts 10:47; 11:15-16)¹⁷ and Paul had reported to the church in Antioch that God had opened the door of faith to the Gentiles (Acts 14:27).¹⁸

Continuity of Israel's Covenants Simultaneous with Discontinuity

Through the period of Jesus' post-resurrection ministry, He encouraged the disciples in their understanding that God's covenants with Israel were still valid. When asked by them about the timing of the restoration of Israel's kingdom, He did not correct their expectation. Rather, He pointed out that only the Father knows when that will happen (Acts 1:6).¹⁹ By their question the

¹⁷As recorded in Acts 10, Peter apparently realized while still in the house of Cornelius the significance of what he was witnessing:

AC 10:45 All the circumcised believers who came with Peter were amazed, because the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out on the Gentiles also.

AC 10:46 For they were hearing them speaking with tongues and exalting God. Then Peter answered,

AC 10:47 "Surely no one can refuse the water for these to be baptized who have received the Holy Spirit just as we *did*, can he?"

Peter then reported his experience to those of the circumcision in Jerusalem:

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

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

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

Peter apparently received a positive response from those who heard his report:

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

Surely, by the time that Peter gave his report, the apostles and the writers of Scripture had realized that certain benefits of the New Covenant, including Spirit baptism, had been extended to Gentile believers.

¹⁸Paul's first missionary journey came in the late forties, just before the Jerusalem council of Acts 15:

AC 14:27 "When they had arrived and gathered the church together, they *began* to report all things that God had done with them and how He had opened a door of faith to the Gentiles." The conclusion of Paul's first missionary journey came long before John and Luke wrote the Gospels of John and Luke and the Book of Acts.

¹⁹In light of their immediate responsibility to be worldwide witness, the Lord could easily have dismissed the idea of a coming kingdom for Israel. But He did not. Rather, He encouraged them in their continuing expectation of the coming kingdom of Israel that had been promised under the Davidic Covenant and corrected them in regard to "the timeliness" of their hope for a restored Davidic kingdom for the chosen people (Harrison, *Acts* 39). "Jesus simply dismisses speculation about timing, not the thought itself. In other words, the idea that the kingdom of God is related to the restoration of Israel is in effect reaffirmed" (James D. G. Dunn, *The Acts of the Apostles* [Valley Forge, Penn.: Trinity Press International, 1996] 10).

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

disciples obviously were thinking continuity, but Jesus corrected them so that they would begin to think discontinuity.²⁰

In the meantime, they were to become worldwide witnesses for the gospel (Acts 1:7-8).²¹ From Jesus' response they may have sensed an inkling that covenant promises might go to those outside Israel, but that understanding came only gradually to Jesus' closest followers in the years following Pentecost, and it did not come at the cost of revoking Israel's covenants.

Perhaps Peter showed his awareness of the continuing validity of God's covenants with Israel in his Pentecostal sermon more specifically when he said that God would make Christ's

²⁰“The setting of the disciples' question is rather vague, ‘when they met together’ (v. 6). The verses that follow clarify that this was the last time Jesus appeared to them, just prior to his ascension (v. 9), and that the location was the Mount of Olives (v. 12). It is not surprising from Jesus' prior remarks about the coming of the Spirit and the fulfillment of God's promises (v. 5) that the disciples concluded the final coming of God's kingdom might have been imminent. In Jewish thought God's promises often referred to the coming of Israel's final salvation, and this concept is reflected elsewhere in Acts (cf. 2:39; 13:23, 32; 26:6). Likewise, the outpouring of the Spirit had strong eschatological associations. Such passages as Joel 2:28–32 were interpreted in nationalistic terms that saw a general outpouring of the Spirit on Israel as a mark of the final great messianic Day of the Lord when Israel would be ‘restored’ to the former glory of the days of David and Solomon.

“Jesus corrected the disciples by directing them away from the question about ‘times or dates’ (v. 7). These are matters wholly within God's own purposes and authority. During his earthly life Jesus had denied such knowledge even for himself (Mark 13:32). In denying such knowledge to the disciples, the hope in the Parousia is not abandoned. If anything, it is intensified by the vivid picture of Jesus returning on the clouds of heaven in the same mode as his ascension (Acts 1:11). Neither did Jesus reject the concept of the ‘restoration of Israel.’ Instead, he ‘depoliticized it’ with the call to a worldwide mission. The disciples were to be the true, ‘restored’ Israel, fulfilling its mission to be a ‘light for the Gentiles’ so that God's salvation might reach ‘to the ends of the earth’ (Isa 49:6). In short, to speculate on times and dates is useless. The Lord's return does not revolve around such speculation but around God's own purposes, and those purposes embrace the salvation of the world. The surest route to the Parousia is the evangelization of the world” (John B. Polhill, *Acts*, vol. 26 of NAC, ed. David S. Dockery [Nashville: B&H, 1992] 84-86). Cf. J. Munck, *The Acts of the Apostles*, rev. W. F. Albright and C. S. Mann, AB (Garden City: Doubleday, 1967), 4.

²¹Rather than waiting for Israel's anticipated kingdom, Jesus stressed their immediate responsibility in the interim until that kingdom comes. The four areas stipulated for their mission were not so inviting: Jerusalem (with the blood of Jesus and the prophets on their hands), Judea (the home of Judas Iscariot, the betrayer), Samaria (with its traditional hostility toward Jews), and the remotest part of the earth (the home of Gentiles whose spiritual and moral uncleanness earned for them the epithet *dogs*) (Harrison, *Acts* 40).

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

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

enemies “the footstool for His feet.”²² In fact, in Acts 2:39 he told his Jewish audience, “The promise is for you and your children.”

Peter is more specific in his second sermon (Acts 3) in speaking of God’s future fulfillment of His promise to Israel as “times of refreshing,” a promise conditioned upon Israel’s repentance. He points to Christ “whom heaven must receive until the period of restoration of all things about which God spoke by the mouth of His holy prophets from ancient time.”²³ The “times of refreshing” of which Peter spoke in this sermon will bring to fruition “the covenant which God made with your fathers, saying to Abraham, ‘AND IN YOUR SEED ALL THE FAMILIES OF THE EARTH SHALL BE BLESSED.’”

As indicated through Peter’s experience in Cornelius’ house, the apostle eventually came

²²Note the hint of Christ’s return to implement God’s promises to David in the word “until.” “The word points forward the return in glory. . . . There is a work of Judgment reserved for that future day” (Harrison, *Acts* 61).
AC 2:34 “For it was not David who ascended into heaven, but he himself says: ‘THE LORD SAID TO MY LORD, “SIT AT MY RIGHT HAND,

AC 2:35 UNTIL I MAKE YOUR ENEMIES A FOOTSTOOL FOR YOUR FEET.”

AC 2:36 “Therefore let all the house of Israel know for certain that God has made Him both Lord and Christ—this Jesus whom you crucified.”

²³Notice the anticipation of Israel’s repentance as a prerequisite for the return of Christ to implement God’s promises to Israel “through the mouth of His holy prophets” (3:21). In Acts 3:21 Peter again used the word “until” as another “reminder of the promise of His [i.e., Christ’s] return (cf. 1:11)” (Harrison, *Acts* 76).

AC 3:19 “Therefore repent and return, so that your sins may be wiped away, in order that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord;

AC 3:20 and that He may send Jesus, the Christ appointed for you,

AC 3:21 whom heaven must receive until *the* period of restoration of all things about which God spoke by the mouth of His holy prophets from ancient time.”

AC 3:22 “Moses said, ‘THE LORD GOD WILL RAISE UP FOR YOU A PROPHET LIKE ME FROM YOUR BRETHREN; TO HIM YOU SHALL GIVE HEED to everything He says to you.

AC 3:23 ‘ And it will be that every soul that does not heed that prophet shall be utterly destroyed from among the people.’

AC 3:24 “And likewise, all the prophets who have spoken, from Samuel and *his* successors onward, also announced these days.

AC 3:25 “It is you who are the sons of the prophets and of the covenant which God made with your fathers, saying to Abraham, ‘AND IN YOUR SEED ALL THE FAMILIES OF THE EARTH SHALL BE BLESSED.’

AC 3:26 “For you first, God raised up His Servant and sent Him to bless you by turning every one *of you* from your wicked ways.”

God’s program for Israel was still on track even though Christ had extended to non-Israelites the promised blessing of Spirit baptism.

to realize the existence of a discontinuity, i.e., an additional program operating alongside promises made to Israel alone. Indeed, people of Israel are “the sons of the prophets and of the covenant which God made with your fathers,” but through his “Cornelius” experience, God taught Peter about another people who experienced the same Spirit baptism, not to replace the covenant people, but to join them in enjoying one of the benefits of the New Covenant.

Covenant Discontinuity Developed

Paul picked up the baton from John and Luke in discussing Spirit baptism as related to the body of Christ. He maintained the theme of continuity of God’s covenants with Israel in his sermons at Pisidian Antioch (Acts 13:23, 32) and in his defense before Agrippa (Acts 26:6),²⁴ but his best-known discussion of discontinuity came in 1 Cor 12:12-13.²⁵ In the two verses, several issues related to the current discussion should be raised.

Declaration of Unity (12:12-13)

12:12—Christ a many-membered body. Having differentiated between spiritual gifts and

²⁴Paul continues to call on the validity of promises made to the OT ancestors of Israel, “our fathers”:
 AC 13:23 “From the descendants of this man [i.e., David], according to promise, God has brought to Israel a Savior, Jesus,

.....
 AC 13:32 “And we preach to you the good news of the promise made to the fathers.

.....
 AC 26:6 “And now I am standing trial for the hope of the promise made by God to our fathers.”

²⁵In the midst of his words to the Corinthians about the proper use of spiritual gifts, Paul had specific revelations regarding Spirit-baptism for the body of Christ:

1CO 12:12 For even as the body is one and *yet* has many members, and all the members of the body, though they are many, are one body, so also is Christ.

1CO 12:13 For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and we were all made to drink of one Spirit.

non-Christian phenomena (12:1-3), and having shown the unified origin of widely varying spiritual gifts (12:4-11), Paul now shifts the focus to the singular organism through which spiritual gifts function. To refer collectively to Christians under the figure of a human body is a favorite Pauline analogy (Rom 12:4-5; 1 Cor 10:17; Eph 1:23; 2:16; 4:4, 12, 16; Col 1:18, 22). It is the body figure that dominates 1 Cor 12:12-31a, where the writer teaches several important lessons regarding the duties of various members.

Creation of the body comes into view first of all (vv. 12-13), and in His description the Holy Spirit through Paul makes a point of declaring the unity of this body. Actually, the purpose of the twelfth verse illustrates the way a group of such varied individuals (12:4-11) can constitute one organic whole. The resolving of this seeming paradox comes from a parallel in everyday life, the human body. Though the body is one organic whole, its various parts perform widely differing functions, so that no two parts of the body are exactly the same.

A threefold occurrence of “body” in verse 12 generates intense interest in this organism. In each case, it refers to the physical body as commonly known by everyone. This physical body is one entity despite the many components that make it up. Conversely, it is also true that all the segments of the physical frame, overwhelming in number though they be, still blend together into one structure. This visible counterpart of a spiritual reality demonstrates effectively that “oneness” does not necessarily exclude multiplicity, nor does the “many” rule out the “one.” In other words, a unified spiritual company characterized by wide variety in its individual parts is a valid possibility. Christians gifted in extremely diverse ways can be and have become parts of one organic whole without losing their diversification.

This body-unit includes all Christians, as Paul notes initially in verse 12 and confirms

with assurance in verse 13. He reveals the unifying life that combines Christians of all generations and places them into one body in the closing part of verse 12: “so also is Christ.” It is involvement in His personality that supplies the cohesive force to this conglomeration of individuals. But this involvement requires further elaboration.

The following probably best describes the nature of the involvement.²⁶ It is with Christ

²⁶Much discussion has surrounded the nature of the church’s involvement in Christ’s person. Five interpretations of that involvement follow.

1. The church as a body is identical with its leading member, the head, which is Christ. Support for this approach comes mainly from noticing that Christ as the head is a Pauline concept (Eph 4:15-16, 25; 5:23, 30; Col 1:18) (H. A. W. Meyer, *Critical and Exegetical Handbook to the Epistles to the Corinthians*, rev. and ed. William P. Dickson, trans. D. Douglas Bannerman [Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1879] 1:373). Yet Christ’s appearance as the head is observed nowhere else in 1 Corinthians, especially chapter 12. In fact, 1 Corinthians 12:21b identifies the head as being other than Christ.

2. Another viewpoint represents the church as being involved in Christ’s person because of believers’ being united and identified with Him individually (Leon Morris, *First Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians*, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1958] 174; C. K. Barrett, *A Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians*, Harper’s New Testament Commentaries [Harper & Rowe: New York, 1968] 287-88). The “in Christ” teaching of identification signifies that each individual becomes one with Christ the moment he is born again (1 Cor 1:30) (Morris, *Corinthians*, 174). Such an understanding agrees well with the emphasis upon unity in 1 Corinthians 12 (cf. v. 12) (ibid.).

As much as this understanding has to commend it, a distinct difference between a relationship with Christ individually and the church’s collective joining to Him is necessary to do justice to the present discussion. This chapter speaks of the church as a collective body, not of the individuals who compose that body. This, then, is not an appropriate place to apply the “in Christ” teaching of the Christian’s identity with Christ.

3. Another way of approaching the issue is to posit that the identity here grows out of a conception of the church as a living organism deriving her life (R. St. John Parry, “The First Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Corinthians,” in *Cambridge Greek Testament for Schools and Colleges* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1916] 183) or nature (Archibald Robertson and Alfred Plummer, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the First Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians*, 2d ed. [Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1914] 271) from the glorified Christ. One or the other of these two grounds accounts for the unity that exists.

Both of these alternatives are doubtless valid observations regarding the church, but the question is whether the teaching in this context is specific enough to justify them as explanations of the issue at hand. Since examination of the current chapter fails to reveal any attention to either life from Christ or the nature of Christ, both must be ruled unsatisfactory.

4. A fourth way of explaining the statement is to view “Christ” as a figure of speech called metonymy. In other words, “Christ” is a shortened way of saying “body of Christ,” a view that looks to 12:27—“you are the body of Christ”—for support (Gordon D. Fee, “The First Epistle to the Corinthians,” in *New International Commentary on the New Testament*, ed. F. F. Bruce [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987] 603; Simon Kistemaker, *Exposition of the First Epistle to the Corinthians* [Grand Rapids: Baker, 1993] 429). The difficulty with this view is that it “generalizes” the text and does not take its specific wording seriously. Paul knew how to write “body of Christ,” but he did not do so here. Besides that, the view introduces a new figure of speech into the text without a contextual warrant for doing so. Chapter 12 already uses the figure of a human body. To understand “Christ” to mean “body of Christ” would compound figures of speech to the point of needless confusion.

5. A final suggestion for explaining the church’s involvement in the person of Christ sees Him as the “ego” of the body. The decisions of the body are made by Him. Its feelings and sensitivities as well as its intellectual

spiritually as it is with the human body physically. One life principle and true personality pervade each of them. Whatever affects any member of the spiritual body, affects Christ, for He lives His life through the body (cf. Acts 9:5).²⁷ When a spiritual gift operates through any member of the body, it is a manifestation of Christ's life at work, indwelling the collective body through the person of the Holy Spirit. In some mysterious way this organism operates in widely scattered areas from generation to generation as an exhibition of the resurrected Christ. He assuredly dwells within each individual member of the body (Rom 8:9; 1 Cor 6:19), but more significantly in this passage, He indwells the collective body that is His church and supplies to that body a pervading unity that nothing can destroy.²⁸ This body possesses one life, and that life

functions are His. In this sense, He is the true personality of the body (Meyer, *Epistles to the Corinthians*, 1:373; Thomas Charles Edwards, *A Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians* [London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1885] 324-25). The concept of the Spirit (of Christ) as the life principle of the body has already found its way into the discussion (cf. v. 7). The functioning of various members (i.e., gifted individuals) is none other than an activity of Christ carried out by the Holy Spirit. It is furthermore recalled that Paul's earliest encounter with Jesus Christ impressed him with the truth that anyone who did anything to Christ's body did it to Christ Himself (Acts 9:5). The only difference in 1 Corinthians 12 is that Paul links the body's identity with Christ mainly to the flow of activity resulting from various spiritual gifts.

To be sure, this explanation limits the all-inclusiveness of the way Christ permeates the body. At the same time, however, no reason for thinking that Paul intended an all-inclusive sense comes to light. He has an immediate objective in the chapter, that of correlating unity in the body with a variety of spiritual gifts, and this device furnishes him a convenient opportunity for doing so. The functioning of gifts, therefore, is none other than a manifestation of Him who is the true personality of this spiritual organism.

²⁷While in the process of persecuting the Christian church, note Luke's account of Paul's encounter with the Lord Jesus. "The Lord deliberately identified Himself with His church, a truth which became deeply ingrained in Paul as he grew in understanding of its meaning" (Harrison, *Acts* 148).

^{AC 9:3} As he was traveling, it happened that he was approaching Damascus, and suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him;

^{AC 9:4} and he fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to him, "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?"

^{AC 9:5} And he said, "Who are You, Lord?" And He *said*, "I am Jesus whom you are persecuting,

^{AC 9:6} but get up and enter the city, and it will be told you what you must do."

²⁸Another example of God's indwelling a collective body of Christians occurs in 2 Cor 6:16-18, in this case the local church in Corinth. In this instance, the apostle uses two OT promises of the regathering of Israel in Ezek 37:27 and Lev 26:11-12. If he were thinking of the continuity of Israel's covenant promises, he could not have made that application. Obviously, his mind was on the discontinuity when he applied the words to the church.

^{2CO 6:16} Or what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For we are the temple of the living God; just as God said, "I WILL DWELL IN THEM AND WALK AMONG THEM; AND I WILL BE THEIR GOD, AND THEY SHALL BE MY PEOPLE.

^{2CO 6:17} "Therefore, COME OUT FROM THEIR MIDST AND BE SEPARATE," says the Lord. "AND DO NOT TOUCH WHAT IS UNCLEAR; And I will welcome you.

belongs to none other than the Lord Jesus Christ.

12:13—How the body gets members and puts life into them. Verse 13 proves the likeness of Christ to a human body as stated in verse 12. Though Christ’s name is not in verse 13, the Holy Spirit, with whom He is one (cf. 12:4-5), replaces Him, as the Spirit’s agency in constituting and permeating the one body of Christ is delineated. One factor is clear-cut: the same unity that pervades the physical body (v. 12) also characterizes the spiritual body (“one Spirit . . . one body . . . one Spirit,” v. 13). The appropriateness of this principle as a remedy to the Corinthian schisms (1:12-17; 12:25) goes without saying.

Another feature that marks both physical and spiritual bodies is the all-inclusiveness of their scope.²⁹ No member is excluded from being a part in the physical body; the same must be

^{2CO 6:18} “ And I will be a father to you, And you shall be sons and daughters to Me,” Says the Lord Almighty.

²⁹A minority voice has arisen on behalf of limiting the scope of *pantes* (“all”) in 12:13, whether it be the former occurrence (John Baker, *Baptized in One Spirit* [Plainfield, N.M.: Logos, 1967] 19) or the latter (Howard M. Ervin, *These Are Not Drunken as Ye Suppose* [Plainfield, N.J.: Logos, 1968] 45-50). In limiting the former *pantes*, one claims that all the Corinthian Christians of Paul’s day had experienced Spirit baptism, but that was not true of all Christians everywhere. The view uses Acts 2, 8, and 19 as cases where people had been converted, justified, and regenerated, and yet were not baptized in the Spirit (Baker, *Baptized in One Spirit*, 19). Associated with this viewpoint also is the unnatural meaning assigned to *eis* (“into”) in verse 13, “with a view to” or “in relation to.” Baptism of some in the body of Christ is in this argument said to be “for the purpose of” enriching and benefitting the fellowship and life of the total body.

In addition to the unnatural meaning given to *eis*, various other difficulties beset this approach to *pantes*. It avoids the obvious universal thrust of 1 Corinthians 12, which encompasses Christians everywhere, and excludes even Paul himself, who was not a native Corinthian. *Pantes* must have in its scope all the apostles (cf. 1 Cor 12:28), none of whom belonged to the city of Corinth. This view also has against it the questionable practice of interpreting 1 Cor 12:13 on the basis of passages from Acts whose assumed interpretation is at best questionable. To limit the scope of *pantes* would be self-defeating in that it would distinguish two groups within the body of Christ, one Spirit-baptized and the other not. This completely subverts Paul’s avowed purpose of proving unity of the body.

Turning to Ervin’s view, one finds a limitation placed on the latter *pantes* in verse 13. Ervin allows the all-inclusive nature of the former *pantes*, but limits the other instance to those individuals who have received power for charismatic witnessing (Ervin, *These Are Not Drunken*, 16, 51). He sees Paul using “made to drink one Spirit” in the sense that Luke uses “baptized in the Spirit” in Acts. This is doubtful because of the extreme likelihood that these two close missionary associates would use terminology in the same way. Ervin’s explanation, furthermore, has the unfortunate consequence of fragmenting the body of Christ, just as does Baker’s. Following out his theory to its logical conclusion, one would have to posit that the latter *pantes* (v. 13) stipulates a different group—only a limited number of members—as compared to the former *pantes*, which includes all members of the body. This is not only

and is true of its spiritual counterpart (“we all . . . we all,” v. 13). Not one single person in Christ is excluded from participation in His body. Verse 13 talks about a body that is all-encompassing and universal. Religious and racial backgrounds are of no consequence when including in or excluding from this body (“Jews or Greeks,” v. 13). Neither does it matter to what social stratum a person may belong (“slaves or free,” v. 13). The only prerequisite is a genuine faith in Jesus Christ as Savior (cf. 1 Cor 1:18, 21-24).

Verse 13 makes two informative statements about this body, one having to do with its formation and the other with its inner life.

1. Formation of the body of Christ: “By one Spirit we were all baptized into one body.” Including himself along with his readers, Paul by this statement marks the divine action whereby all Christians at the moment of conversion become parts of Christ’s body. Baptism in this instance has no direct connection with the ordinance of the same name, but looks at a spiritual act that is well known to both Old and New Testament traditions.³⁰ It has roots as far

unfortunate from the standpoint of fragmentation and the creation of disunity, but illegitimate from an exegetical point of view (cf. Fee, *First Corinthians* 604-5).

It is the much saner posture to see both instances of *pantes* in 1 Cor 12:13 as inclusive of all Christians (Carson, 1987, pp. 44-45). All are in the body and have their gifts by virtue of this same Spirit baptism. None is excluded. That is not a subsequent or separate act experienced by only a limited number. Neither is being made to drink one Spirit separate from this initial experience of being brought into the body. Unity of the body demands unanimity in the singular experience that is here described.

³⁰The issue of whether *ebaptisthēmen* (“were . . . baptized”) in 1 Corinthians 12:13 refers to the ordinance of water baptism, to a purely spiritual transaction, or to both, has received wide discussion. The idea that it looks solely at water baptism is not probable because of the Holy Spirit’s association with the baptism, as expressly declared in the verse.

1. A dual reference to water baptism and a receiving of the Holy Spirit in conjunction with it has been the view of many. They seek support for this double reference in the parallel passage of Rom 6:3-5, as well as in Gal 3:27-28 (e.g., Barrett, *First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 288). Existence of the same disagreement in these other contexts as in the current verse weakens that argument from comparison. Morris seeks to add credibility to this view by alluding to the parallel meaning of baptism in 1 Cor 1:13-17 (Morris, *First Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians*, 174). Just how parallel 12:13 is with 1:13-17, however, is open to question. In chapter 1 of the epistle, discussion revolves around baptism administered by a human agent; this is not the case in chapter 12. A further proof of the

back as the words of Moses in Num 11:29: “Would that all the LORD’s people were prophets, that the LORD would put His Spirit upon them!” The prophet Isaiah likewise looked forward to the coming of the Holy Spirit to be “poured out upon us from on high” (Isa 32:15). He also recorded God’s promise, “I will pour out My Spirit on your offspring” (Isa 44:3). All these were promises to God’s earthly people Israel.

The most notable OT instance of this teaching is Joel 2:28-29, where along with other promises the prophet quotes the Lord God as predicting, “I will pour out My Spirit on all mankind.” It was because of such written anticipations as these that various Jewish sects of the intertestamental period, such as the one at Qumran whose teachings have been discovered in the Dead Sea Scrolls, had definite expectation of a coming age of the Spirit. It was also in this light

combination meaning of the verb in 12:13 points to the overwhelming usage of *baptizō* among early Christians to speak of water baptism (H. A. W. Meyer, *Epistles to the Corinthians*, 1:373-74.; Oepke, βάπτω, βαπτίζω, in *TDNT*, 1964, 1:539; D. A. Carson, *Showing the Spirit: A Theological Exposition of 1 Corinthians 12–14* [Grand Rapids: Baker, 1987] 43). The fact that the connotation of the word so strongly included water leaves no doubt in the readers’ minds that it signified actual baptism here. Again, however, it is questionable whether such a strong water connotation always applied (Fee, “First Epistle to the Corinthians,” 604). In fact, this is the very issue the present discussion seeks to resolve. Furthermore, a convincing argument that the term’s usage does not automatically involve water comes in connection with Mark 10:38-39 and 1 Corinthians 10:2. In other passages such as Luke 12:50 and Acts 1:5, to have *baptizō* signify “baptize in water” would be to introduce a contradiction in sense, whereas the same meaning in John 1:26 and 31 would create tautology (Dunn, 1970, p. 129).

2. Those holding the other position assert that 1 Corinthians 12:13 has no reference to the ordinance and that it stipulates the spiritual transaction by which the Holy Spirit at the time of conversion places a person into the body of Christ (Kistemaker, *First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 430). They base their conclusion on the context’s emphasis on the body’s unity, and notice that to introduce the ordinance of baptism into a discussion with these Corinthians would have an opposite effect. Administration of the ordinance among them had been the occasion of strong disunity (1 Cor 1:12-17). These also notice a closely parallel usage of *baptizō* (“were baptized”) in 1 Corinthians 10:2 that connotes a purely spiritual identification, the absence of water being especially notable. Hodge has well pointed out, in addition, that a dual reference to the ordinance of baptism and to baptism by the Spirit is contrary to historical precedent (Charles Hodge, *An Exposition of the First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 6th ed. [London: Banner of Truth, 1959] 153-54). Earliest teaching on the subject, rather than making the two synonymous, pits them against each other in an emphatic contrast (e.g., Acts 1:5). That Spirit baptism and water baptism are separable from one another is also evident in that the former took place prior to the latter in the experience of Cornelius’s household (Acts 10:44-45; 11:15-16) (J. K. Parratt, “Holy Spirit and Baptism,” *Expository Times* 82 [1971]: 235). Paul’s extreme care in distinguishing between outward rite and inward spiritual activity would hardly allow him to merge these two into one word (cf. Rom 2:28-29) (James D. G. Dunn, *Baptism in the Holy Spirit* [Naperville, Ill.: Allenson, 1970] 129-30).

The formidable evidence is on the side of position 2, necessitating exclusion of the ordinance of baptism from the meaning of this verse.

that John the Baptist by divine revelation came preaching, “He who is coming after me . . . will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire” (Matt 3:11; cf. Mark 1:8; Luke 3:16; John 1:33).

The Lord Jesus also spoke frequently about a future coming of the Spirit: “This He spoke of the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were to receive; for the Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified” (John 7:39). Later, on the evening before His crucifixion in a discourse preparing His disciples for His departure and the beginning of the church on the day of Pentecost, He extended to the church some of the benefits of that promise to Israel, by adding further to His disciples’ expectation: “And I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may be with you forever; that is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it does not behold Him or know Him, but you know Him because He abides with you, and will be in you” (John 14:16-17). Just a few days later, the Savior once again kindled His followers’ hopes by reiterating the Baptist’s promise: “For John baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now” (Acts 1:5).³¹

A climax to these anticipations came on the day of Pentecost when Peter provided an explanation for the spiritual phenomena that people had witnessed. He proclaimed the arrival of

³¹Some find a difference between Spirit baptism in 1 Corinthians 12:13a and the Spirit baptism referred to in Acts (Ernst S. Williams, *Systematic Theology*, 3 vols. [Springfield, Mo.: Gospel Publications, 1953] 3:47; Ralph M. Riggs, *The Spirit Himself*, Springfield, Mo.: Gospel Publications, 1949] 59; David J. du Plessis, *The Spirit Bades Me Go*, [Dallas: (n.p.), 1961] 70). They make this differentiation because of a difference in the agent performing the baptism. They recognize that every Christian has experienced the Spirit baptism of 1 Cor 12:13, where the Holy Spirit is the agent. But they limit the baptism of Acts, where the Spirit is the element instead of the agent, to only those Christians who have experienced the filling of the Spirit and spoken in tongues.

Stott has ably pointed out in response to this position, however, that the Greek construction is precisely the same in the other Spirit baptism passages as it is in 1 Corinthians 12:13, and that no adequate reason exists for referring the Corinthians passage to a separate Spirit baptism (John R. W. Stott, *The Baptism and Fullness of the Holy Spirit* [Chicago: InterVarsity, 1964] 23). Another argument against distinguishing between Corinthians and the rest of the Spirit baptism contexts is to note the Son’s integral part as the source of this baptism in Corinthians, the same role He has elsewhere (1 Cor 12:5). This agrees closely with His agency in baptizing throughout Acts. No room remains for distinguishing two Spirit baptisms because of difference in agent or anything else. All instances speak of the same baptism, one that is not reserved for just a portion of the body of Christ, but one that is common to every Christian, making him a part of that body (cf. Carson, *Showing the Spirit*, 46-47).

the predicted outpouring by observing the applicability of Joel's words to the occasion (Acts 2:16-21). Such a provision was not heretofore available, but now the initial members of the body of Christ were partaking of that very provision (but not fulfilling the promise, for only to Israel was the promise made, and only Israel can reap its fulfillment). It is referred to as "the promise of the Holy Spirit" (Acts 2: 33, 39) and "the gift of the Holy Spirit" (Acts 2:38; cf. John 4:10, 14; 7:37-39).

Repeatedly Acts as well as the NT epistles refer to this baptism as a "pouring out" (Acts 2:17, 18, 33; 10:45; Rom 5:5 ; Titus 3:6), with a consequent "falling upon" (Acts 8:16; 10:44; 11:15) or "coming upon" (Acts 1:8; 19:6). They specifically identified the occurrence with the baptism of the Holy Spirit spoken of by John and Christ when Peter analyzed it for the Jerusalem church: "And as I began to speak, the Holy Spirit fell upon them, just as He did upon us at the beginning. And I remembered the word of the Lord, how He used to say, 'John baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit'" (Acts 11:15-16).

All these passages are but a fraction of the total number of references to the dramatic coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost and His coming on each occasion subsequently when a person became a Christian. Those are enough, however, to show the prominence of the baptism of the Holy Spirit in the minds of Paul and other early Christians. This prominence caused Paul to draw upon the earlier terminology of John the Baptist, the Lord Jesus, and Peter. It is as a result of this "pouring out" that a person becomes a member of Christ's body (1 Cor 12:13). The Holy Spirit's coming to a person at conversion includes many aspects and accomplishments, but this particular one deserves special mention in the present context of 1 Corinthians.

From one perspective, the agent of this baptism is the Spirit, as seen from the words "by

one Spirit” (v. 13).³² From another perspective, Christ Himself is the baptizer (Matt 3:11; Mark

³²The *en* (“by”) early in 1 Corinthians 12:13 has been subject to a variety of understandings.

1. One group of interpreters has taken it to be in the locative case. This approach means that *pneumati* (“Spirit”) names the sphere in which the baptism of the Spirit takes place. This position emphasizes the normality of understanding the locative case following the preposition *en* and the necessity of a clear contextual indication in the cases where an instrumental meaning is intended (Archibald T. Robertson, *A Grammar of the Greek New Testament in the Light of Historical Research* [Nashville: Groadman, 1934] 590). Another argument notes that earlier New Testament teaching regarding this baptismal act makes Christ rather than the Holy Spirit the agent of baptism. The latter would have been the case were *en* to be understood instrumentally (see view 3) (cf. Matt 3:11; Mark 1:8; Luke 3:16; John 1:33) (Stott, *Baptism and Fullness of the Holy Spirit*, 16). The view also points out that a parallelism with *en tōi Iordanē* (“in the Jordan”) in Matthew 3:6 and Mark 1:5 gives credence to the locative sense of the word (Oepke, in *TDNT*, 1:539). Dunn adds to this that *en* with *baptizō* never designates a baptizer. Rather, it is always the element in which the baptized one is immersed (Dunn, *Baptism in the Holy Spirit*, 127-28; cf. Fee, “First Epistle to the Corinthians,” 605-6). Matthew 3:11 and parallels are sometimes cited in favor of this position as examples showing *en* should be understood locatively (Morris, *First Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians*, 174). Another comparison that lends credence to taking *en* with a locative interpretation places 1 Corinthians 10:2 alongside the present verse because another instance of *baptizō* with the prepositions *eis* and *en* is found there. The clear function of *en* in 1 Corinthians 10:2, “in the cloud and in the sea,” is locative, and this identifies the Pauline habit in such a construction as this, it is claimed. That *en* is necessarily understood locatively in these verses, however, is disputed, and so the evidence that argues thus is largely neutralized.

2. A second way of understanding *en* is to assign it an instrumental function introducing the means whereby the baptism was carried out. In such a case, *pneumati* names the element employed in the baptismal act. Mark 1:8, Luke 3:16, and Acts 1:5 and 11:16 confirm this fact. In these verses, *hudati* (“with water”) without a preposition can hardly represent any other than the instrumental case, for the purpose of designating the means, or element, of the baptism. Spirit baptism being antithetical to *hudati* in these cases, is therefore presumably instrumental also, as opposed to locative (Hodge, *Exposition of the First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 254). Another reason given for an instrumental-of-means sense is the image of the Spirit’s being “poured out” as water. This marks Him as being typified in the other kind of baptism, the one carried out with water as the element. It is further reasoned that since the Spirit is the “means by which” rather than the “agent by whom” in the other six passages dealing with Spirit baptism, He must viewed in the same light here (cf. Matt 3:11; Mark 1:8; Luke 3:16; John 1:33; Acts 1:5; 11:16). Supporters of view 2 also note the relevance of *puri* (“fire”) in Matthew 3:11 and Luke 3:16. As *pneumati hagiō* (“Holy Spirit”) is in parallel relationship with the *puri* and as *puri* must express means rather than agency, they conclude that the preposition points to means rather than agency in 1 Cor 12:13 also. The principal deficiencies of this position appear in the form of supports in favor of viewpoint 1, which says *en* governs the locative rather than the instrumental case.

3. A third viewpoint also takes *en* as governing the instrumental case, but as introducing the agent who carries out the baptism rather than the means by which it was performed. Support here is forthcoming from the immediate context of 1 Corinthians 12. Specifically, in 12:9, where *en tōi autōi pneumati* (“by the same Spirit”) is found twice, it is difficult to dispute that those two uses of the preposition denote agency rather than means, the Holy Spirit being depicted as the agent who distributes the gifts there alluded to (Kistemaker, *First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 428). First Corinthians 12:8 and 11, where it is “through [*dia*] the Spirit” that gifts are bestowed, provide confirmation of the present context’s emphasis on agency of the Spirit. There “distributing to each one . . . just as He wills” describes the Spirit’s active part in allotting the gifts. Coupled with this is the fact that 1 Corinthians 12:4-6 pictures all three Persons of the Trinity as sources of the gifts. It is no surprise, therefore, to find the Holy Spirit as the agent of baptism, a baptism which in 1 Corinthians 12:13 relates primarily to the placement of Christians in the body of Christ according to gifts bestowed. It is no problem that Christ is the one pictured elsewhere as the baptizer (i.e., in a remote sense), whereas the Spirit is the agent of baptism in the present passage (i.e., in a more immediate sense). Neither is it any great problem that an agent of baptism is sometimes unnamed (Acts 1:5; 11:16), or that the element of baptism is always stated elsewhere (cf. Stott, *Baptism and Fullness of the Holy Spirit*, 16-17). The speech and writing habits of other New Testament figures are not determinative of Paul’s practice in conjunction with this doctrine. In fact, contextual considerations in the other six passages taken from the

1:8; Luke 3:16; John 1:33). Nor should the Father be omitted, as He also is ultimately involved as agent (Acts 2:33; 1 Cor 12:18). Yet this is not an inconsistency, as it is common in the Bible for all three Persons to be active agents in performance of the same task, for example, in the creation of the world. All three are a common source of the gifts, as already noted (1 Cor 12:4-6). So Christ is the baptizer in a remote sense, and the Spirit is the agent of baptism in the more immediate sense. The immediate context strongly establishes the Spirit's agency (vv. 8, 9, 11).

Other words of clarification regarding this baptism by the Holy Spirit are in order. For example, it is important to observe that this act was not a once-for-all occurrence limited to the day of Pentecost; it also occurred in connection with the Samaritan believers (Acts 8:16), those of Cornelius's household (Acts 10:44-45; 11:15-16), and the disciples of John in Ephesus (Acts 19:6). That baptism by the Spirit was a once-for-all Pentecostal provision into which Christians enter will not satisfy terminology showing that the happening was subsequently repeated. This spiritual baptism is repeated each time a person converts to Christ. It is at that moment that the new Christian takes up his assigned position in the body of Christ and receives gifts that befit this position.

Another aspect important to notice is that baptism by the Holy Spirit does not occur at some time subsequent to conversion and is not synonymous with the filling of the Holy Spirit (cf. Eph 5:18). The Spirit's filling speaks of His control over the Christian life and comes about only in the lives of those Christians who yield themselves to God's will. The Spirit's baptism,

Gospels and Acts are somewhat different from 1 Corinthians 12. Furthermore, an element of baptism need not always be mentioned. For example, Paul refers to baptism in Romans 6:3, where no element is present.

The issue involved in this difficult passage is not easily resolved. Each position has much favorable evidence on its side. Yet in overall evaluation, it seems the preference should be go to the immediate context of 1 Corinthians 12. In that case, view 3 is most accurate: the Holy Spirit is the personal agent for implementing baptism in verse 13.

on the other hand, is common to all Christians, and in this respect is distinct from the issue of whether a Christian is under the Spirit's control at a given moment. In fact, in only one case does the filling of the Holy Spirit take place in connection with Spirit baptism, and that is only by coincidence because of the unique character of Pentecost as the birthday of the Christian church (Acts 2:4). Throughout the rest of Acts, filling or fullness is separate from the moment of initial baptism or indwelling.

It is also good to keep in mind that speaking in tongues was not an essential part of or a necessary adjunct to Spirit baptism. Speaking in tongues occasionally accompanied Spirit baptism (Acts 2:17, 18, 33; 10:44-45; 11:15-16; 19:6) in the days immediately after the initial outpouring, but that was not the norm for first-century Christianity, not even for the period of the book of Acts. It is certainly not the norm for twentieth-century Christianity, when the need for such evidential gifts as tongues has long since ceased to exist. Holy Spirit baptism is only one of a number of transactions that the gift of tongues verified in the book of Acts. Other accomplishments of the Spirit at conversion that the tongues gift also verified include the regeneration (cf. John 3:6) and sealing (cf. Eph 4:30) of a new believer, but tongues cannot be construed as inseparable from these. By the same token, the gift was not a necessary accompaniment to baptism of the Spirit.

In only three instances did tongues verify the Spirit's being poured out. It is far better to note that baptism by the Spirit needs no outward verification, indeed, in most instances it has had no outward sign to certify its occurrence. It was and is a purely invisible action whereby the Spirit of God places the believer in Christ into the mystical relationship known as the body of Christ. Once a part of that body by Spirit baptism, the first-century believer may or may not

have exercised the gift of tongues. The will of God was determinative in this matter (see v. 11). Since the first century, when God chose to cease bestowing the tongues gift on believers altogether (see discussion of 13:8 ff.), Spirit baptism has had no outward verification.

2. Inner life of the body of Christ: “we were all made to drink of one Spirit” (12:13).

Associated with the momentary happening known as Holy Spirit baptism is the initiation of another relationship in which the Spirit is also prominent. At the same time He performs the inner baptismal act, He also takes up His residence within the individual Christian. This residence is otherwise known as the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.³³

³³Another issue in 1 Corinthians 12:13 focuses on the word *epotisthēmen* (“were made to drink”). To what ordinance of the church and/or ministry of the Spirit does this verb refer?

1. One position is that the verb refers metaphorically to a Christian’s receiving the Spirit at the time he receives water baptism. Whether it be a figure for the watering of plants or the taking of water into the human system internally, the position holds that the water of baptism is an apt outward representation of the Spirit’s coming to individual Christians (Edwards, *First Epistle to the Corinthians* 326; Parry, “First Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians” 184). Either of the representations follows naturally from a picture of the Spirit being “poured out” upon Christians (John 7:37-39; Acts 2:17; Rom 5:5) (Meyer, *Epistles to the Corinthians*, 1:374). Some also suggest that water baptism should be included here based upon the conclusion that it is present also in the earlier part of the verse (e.g., Parry, “First Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians,” 184).

Objections to this point of view direct themselves only against seeing a reference to the rite of baptism. It is an uncommon thing to have the last half of the verse say the same thing as the first half (Frederic L. Godet, *Commentary on St. Paul’s First Epistle to the Corinthians*, trans. A. Cusin [1886; reprint, Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1957] 2:211), even if one allows that water baptism is in view in v. 13a. A further objection notes that water baptism is a very inexact representation of an inner reception of the Spirit such as is depicted in verse 13b (*ibid.*, 2:211). Again, it remains to be proven that water baptism is even a part of verse 13a, much less verse 13b.

2. Another widely held approach to this part of v. 13 is to refer it to the ordinance of the Lord’s Supper. Again, this grows largely out of seeing an ordinance in v. 13a. When baptism is envisioned there, the other ordinance of the church, the Lord’s Supper, is its natural sequel. Further substantiation for this claims the presence of this same communion ordinance in the broader context of this part of 1 Corinthians (cf. 11:17-31). The symbolism thus involved has baptism representing the Spirit in the form of an external element, whereas the elements of communion present Him as being received inwardly. This view includes an understanding of *epotisthēmen* as a gnomic aorist, referring to the repeated, periodic commemorations at the Lord’s Table (Edwards, *First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 326).

Opposition to view 2 comes again in the form of noting it is yet to be proven that verse 13a refers to any ordinance. It also sees the Lord’s Supper as being foreign to the context of chapter 12, though the proximity of the chapter 11 account is undeniable (Hodge, *First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 255). It is also an unnatural expedient to read a gnomic aorist into the present setting. Furthermore, the idea of drinking the Holy Spirit is alien to symbolism at the Lord’s Table in that the cup typifies Christ’s blood (1 Cor 11:25) and not the person of the Holy Spirit (Godet, *First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 2:210).

3. An approach that has merit sees the “being made to drink one Spirit” as a reference to bestowing spiritual

The figure of being “made to drink of one Spirit” (“of” is absent from this expression in the Greek text) is in complete harmony with the scriptural custom of referring to this Person by the symbol of water. Furthermore, the way water becomes a part of man’s inward physical makeup well represents His inward presence. It is in these terms that the Lord Jesus spoke concerning the coming of the Spirit, not only to baptize, but also to indwell those who believe in

gifts on Christians thereby enabling them to function as one body. Certainly much can be said for this emphasis in the present context, for in verse 14 immediately following, diversity of the body’s gifts becomes the subject of discussion (ibid., 2:211). It is also argued in support that the communication of spiritual gifts is a natural sequel to the ordinance of baptism (Acts 8:17; 10:45-46; 19:6; 2 Tim 1:6) (ibid.).

Perhaps the principal difficulty with this approach is the necessity of beginning a new paragraph in the middle of verse 13. It would have Paul talking about unity through verse 13a, but then switching very abruptly and imperceptibly to a new subject of discussion, diversity of gifts, in the middle of his sentence. It is also important to note that the figure of drinking is not effective as a portrayal of active service such as the gifts involve. It speaks more of personal possession or internal inclusion. As argued against viewpoints 1 and 2, it remains to be proven that the ordinance of baptism is a part of verse 13a.

4. A final understanding of *epotisthēmen* in 1 Corinthians 12:13 excludes any reference to an ordinance and refers the verb to the Holy Spirit’s indwelling within each member of the body of Christ. At conversion each Christian has received the Spirit as indweller. Though He is the same Spirit who imparts spiritual gifts, His action referred to by this particular verb is not a direct reference to His bestowal of gifts (cf. Rom 8:9, 15). Such an inward reception of the Spirit is frequent in Pauline thought (e.g., 1 Cor 2:12), and drinking Him is an apt representation of thus partaking of Him. Water to be drunk is a well-known figure for the Holy Spirit (John 4:13-14; 7:37-39; Acts 2:17; Rom 5:5). Contextually, this view is strong in that conceiving of all members as partaking of the same Spirit enhances the major idea of verse 13, that of unity. This view also accords well with and provides a natural explanation for the aorist tense of *epotisthēmen*. Reception of the Spirit occurred at a particular time in the past for each individual Christian, just as did his baptism by the Spirit (v. 13a). It was at that point that the Spirit’s dwelling within him began (Hodge, *First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 255).

One apparent inadequacy of viewpoint 4 is the *gar* that introduces verse 14 (Godet, 1886, 2:210). To have verse 13b continue the thrust of unity denies *gar* its usual explanatory emphasis in making a transition from verse 13b to verse 14. If one understands, however, that the *gar* of verse 14 is reaching back to explain verse 11 rather than verses 12-13, the difficulty is circumvented.

The conclusion must be one of a purely spiritual understanding attached to *epotisthēmen*. It refers to the spiritual transaction whereby the Holy Spirit comes to make His abode in the individual Christian at the time of conversion and is therefore in agreement with the conclusion regarding *ebaptisthēmen* in verse 13a. It was in this former case also a spiritual transaction, that of baptism by the Holy Spirit, which is a ministry occurring simultaneously with the initiation of His indwelling ministry.

A more specific question regarding *epotisthēmen* is pertinent. Does it refer to the figure of giving a person something to drink or to the figure of irrigating parched land for agricultural purposes? The latter alternative is Paul’s usage of the term in 1 Corinthians 3:6-8, and in this light could be conceived of as carrying on the Old Testament images of the Spirit’s being poured out upon the land and the people (Isa 32:15; 44:3; Ezek 39:29; Joel 2:26) to make them as a well-watered garden (Jer 31:12) (Dunn, *Baptism in the Holy Spirit*, 131). This, however, is too repetitious of the emphasis that has already occurred in the *ebaptisthēmen*. It is more convincing to see Paul using the verb in the sense of giving someone something to drink, as he does in 1 Corinthians 3:2. Where persons are involved, this is natural, since this is a vivid picture of their receiving the Spirit inwardly, that is, just as they receive a drink of water. Inward reception forms a natural part to external engulfment such as is found in the baptism of the Spirit.

Him (John 7:37-39; 14:16-17).

By adding a reference to this additional function of the Spirit, Paul reinforces a dual emphasis found in the Acts history of Christianity's first thirty years. Receiving "the promise of the Holy Spirit" (Acts 2:33), receiving "the gift of the Holy Spirit" (Acts 2:38), and receiving "the Holy Spirit" (Acts 10:47; 19:2) appear in conjunction with the Holy Spirit's baptism, just as an inner reception is in the present Corinthians verse. That was part of the promise of Joel 2:28-29 that Christ extended to include the church. The spiritual baptism of a person into the body of Christ also entails God's taking up a permanent abode within that person. His coming to indwell occurs more frequently in Acts than the baptism itself (in addition to the Acts passages just cited, see Acts 1:4; 2:39; 8:15, 17, 18, 19; 8:20; 10:45; 11:17; 15:8). Paul also amplifies the indwelling ministry by frequent references to it (Rom 8:15; 1 Cor 2:12; Gal 3:2; cf. Rom 8:9; 1 Cor 6:19).

The references to divine residence within the believer reveal that it is a relationship that begins concurrently with the Spirit baptism. For this reason, the same applies regarding a possible connection between indwelling and speaking in tongues as already has been stated regarding baptism and tongues: speaking in tongues is not an essential part of or a necessary adjunct to being "made to drink of one Spirit." As stated in 1 Cor 12:10, 30, tongues were abilities possessed by only a limited number of first-century Christians, whereas Paul emphatically notes that all Christians have been made to drink of one Spirit.

The presence of the Spirit within Christians individually carries with it His consequent presence within the body of Christ collectively. That is the life principle of the body and explains how Christ is the body (v. 12) as its true personality. Through the third Person of the Holy Trinity, the second Person lives His life in the various members, the visible evidences of

that life being its manifestation through spiritual gifts.

It is, then, because of one body with one personality that the Scripture declares in 1 Cor 12:12-13 a unity underlying the functioning of spiritual gifts.

Covenant Discontinuity Development Concluded

No discussion of Covenant Discontinuity would be complete without a few brief words on Paul's reference of baptism, specifically or with related terminology, in which he says nothing about the Holy Spirit or water. In these passages, the conclusion regarding such passages must be that he was referring to a spiritual action, implying that the Holy Spirit was the baptizer.

Those include at least five passages (Rom 6:3; 1 Cor 10:2; Gal 3:27; Eph 4:5; Col 2:12).³⁴

³⁴Instances in which baptism entailed a spiritual transaction, but the Holy Spirit is not mentioned.

1CO 10:1 For I do not want you to be unaware, brethren, that our fathers were all under the cloud and all passed through the sea;

1CO 10:2 and all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea;

.....

RO 6:3 Or do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death?

RO 6:4 Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life.

.....

GAL 3:26 For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus.

GAL 3:27 For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ.

GAL 3:28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.

GAL 3:29 And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's descendants, heirs according to promise.[The reference to "Abraham's descendants" in Gal 3:29 is, of course, in a discontinuous sense, i.e., an application by Paul without ruling out a continuous meaning of "Abraham's descendants" in a continuous sense.]

.....

EPH 4:4 *There is* one body and one Spirit, just as also you were called in one hope of your calling;

EPH 4:5 one Lord, one faith, one baptism,

EPH 4:6 one God and Father of all who is over all and through all and in all.

.....

COL 2:11 and in Him you were also circumcised with a circumcision made without hands, in the removal of the body of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ;

COL 2:12 having been buried with Him in baptism, in which you were also raised up with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead.

In each case, the apostle does not name the agent in the spiritual transaction involved.

Also, Paul has other passages in which he refers to what must be spiritual baptism, in which contexts the Holy Spirit is not named as the agent of baptism: Rom 5:5 and Titus 3:5-6.³⁵

The use of ἐκκέω, ἐκχύνω to refer to the coming of the Spirit on people is more frequent in Acts (2:17, 18, 33; 10:45) than in Paul's epistles.

End of Discontinuous Interlude

Since the baptism of the Holy Spirit dealt with in the NT pertains mostly to the body of Christ, expectation that the discontinuous aspect of that baptism will end when that body is completed is valid. At that point, the continuity of Israel's covenants will remain. It has never been interrupted. In essence, this is the point that Paul makes on Rom 11:25-27: once the fullness of the Gentiles has come into the church, Israel's covenants, including the future baptism of the Spirit, will be fulfilled with Israel's future salvation (cf. Acts 28:20).³⁶

³⁵“Poured out” or “poured forth” is a frequent way of referring to the coming of the Spirit in both OT and NT, not just in the writings of Paul:

RO 5:5 and hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us.

.....
TIT 3:5 He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit, ^{TIT 3:6} whom He poured out upon us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior,

³⁶Paul probably had the future fulfillment of Israel's covenants when he wrote Rom 11:25-26 and when he spoke to the Jews in Rome about the hope of Israel (Acts 28:20):

RO 11:25 For I do not want you, brethren, to be uninformed of this mystery—so that you will not be wise in your own estimation—that a partial hardening has happened to Israel **until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in;**

RO 11:26 **and so all Israel will be saved;** just as it is written, “THE DELIVERER WILL COME FROM ZION, HE WILL REMOVE UNGODLINESS FROM JACOB.”

RO 11:27 “THIS IS MY COVENANT WITH THEM, WHEN I TAKE AWAY THEIR SINS.”

.....
AC 28:20 “For this reason, therefore, I requested to see you and to speak with you, for I am wearing this chain for the sake of the hope of Israel.”