

By

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The thrust of Rick Walston's book *The Speaking in Tongues Controversy: The Initial, Physical Evidence of the Baptism in the Holy Spirit* (Fairfax, VA: Xulon Press, 2003) is that the two major distinctive doctrines of Pentecostal theology—the initial evidence of tongues and the separability/subsequence of Spirit-baptism—are wrong. In his own words, Walston is “attempting to lead the reader to the obvious conclusion that Luke does not intend to establish tongues-as-evidence as a doctrine or as a paradigm” (85); the same can be said for the doctrine of separability and subsequence, though he devotes a scant eight paragraphs to it (141-144).

Walston's endeavor to disprove these aspects of Pentecostal theology relies on a number of strategies. First, he attempts to show that whereas Pentecostals believe Luke's theology is predominantly pneumatological, it is in fact more soteriological. For Walston, this entails (1) accepting Acts 2:38-41 as the paradigmatic passage of Acts, (2) statistically comparing the occurrences of pneumatological and soteriological passages in Acts, and (3) redefining the baptism in the Holy Spirit as a salvific event. Second, he constructs an anti-Pentecostal interpretation of Acts using the hermeneutical principle of *authorial intent* as a singular, over-arching, controlling interpretive canon. This entails building a massive construct upon what Luke does *not* say at opportune times.

Before examining Walston's success in developing his argumentation, it should be noted that the work, as a whole, is written in a popular style. There is nothing wrong with this; we need writers who can translate biblical truths into common language. However, in this case, there seems to have been a severe oversight of the most recent scholarship in the relevant fields. When I pick up a book on the charismatic/Pentecostal elements of Luke-Acts, one of the first things I do to determine the extent of its scholarship and, thus, its academic value, is turn to its bibliography. If key authors are missing, the work's integrity is immediately suspect. On the subject at hand, I would expect to find several entries by James D. G. Dunn, Howard M. Ervin, Robert P. Menzies, and Max Turner, to name a few. These are missing from Walston's work. (There is a passage [47-48] referencing Dunn but only in that he was the stimulus of a response from a Pentecostal theologian.) In that Walston's work was published in 2003 and the others' earlier, the omission of interaction with these authors is inexcusable and misrepresentative, leaving the reader with thoughts of either unfair or unprofessional source selectivity; it is an extreme case of stacking the deck. Furthermore, Walston's heavy reliance upon a single source to bolster his arguments, in this case Gordon D. Fee, leaving the work of other influential scholars virtually unmentioned, is incredible.

The Paradigmatic and Soteriological Nature of Acts 2:38-41

According to Walston, “[S]ince Peter proclaimed [in Acts 2:38] . . . that all who believed would receive the gift of the Holy Spirit, and since all of the three thousand on Pentecost received the Holy Spirit in the same fullness as the 120 had and just as Peter said would happen, then it cannot be denied that a *paradigm* was established. However, it is not the paradigm of baptism in the Holy Spirit with the evidence of speaking in tongues. Rather, the paradigm was (and continues to be) ‘repent and accept Jesus and *automatically* receive the baptism in the Holy Spirit’” (138). The paradigm, having been “clearly explained” (79) by Peter became “the divinely established pattern” (77). “Perhaps the strongest argument for this is Acts 2:41: ‘Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day’” (125). Thus, for Walston, not only is Acts 2:38 paradigmatic, but it is illustrative of Luke's emphasis throughout Acts, which is “predominantly soteriological” (72-73).

In Walston's opinion, because the three thousand “accepted his [Peter's] message,” “were baptized,” and “were added to their number that day,” clearly they received the gift of the Holy Spirit. “Logic demands (and Luke implies) that they did receive the ‘gift of the Holy Spirit,’ . . .” (125). Does it (and did he)? Walston rushes on to the subject of the absence of tongues in the passage, leaving the reader wondering *what logic?* and *what implications?* Only an uncritical reading of this passage, driven by an inordinately strong dependency upon a particular interpretation of Pauline literature (à la Fee), could lead to these conclusions.

In pursuing Luke's intent in Acts 2:38, first, consideration needs to be given to the grammatical construction of the verse. After all, if the Greek future (“will receive”) *demand*s an *immediate* consummation rather than allowing a dilatory (later) fulfillment, the argument is half over (“half” because Walston still has to prove that tongues did not occur and that the baptism in the Holy Spirit was the *cause of* and not *in addition to* salvation).

In a personal interview of NT scholar Paul Elbert, I asked his opinion about the following passage from Catholic scholar George T. Montague's *The Spirit and His Gifts* (New York: Paulist Press, 1974): “The future *lempsesthe* of Acts 2:38 is not a dilatory future but the future of unqualified promise, to be fulfilled immediately upon the conditions preceding,” (53). Elbert responded: “He [Montague] has no basis to say that other than his opinion. Now it would be a fine thing if biblical scholars would start thinking that they had opinions instead of facts. That is an opinion. It might be so, but, on the other hand, it might not be so, because the indefinite use of the future was widely used and there is no way to tell whether that is an indefinite future or a future that is right away. In fact, the whole weight of the sermon is that this will happen in the future. . . . Jesus would say, ‘Seek and ye shall receive.’ That is an indefinite future. He doesn't say *when* God would do it. And the indefinite in the promises of Jesus is very common. It was a very common way to talk . . . using the future tense. . . . Interesting thing is, if you go back and look at all the future tenses in Luke-Acts (especially the ones where the subject is to be acted upon) . . . you'll find that the . . . majority . . . are exactly

these kind of futures—they're indefinite. God is going to do something, but they don't say when. In every case . . . that the future is used that involves an action of God, which it is in this case, in Acts 2:38c, . . . it is indefinite. It's never pinned down" (October 28, 1984).

Fourteen years later, Elbert would write the following about this verse:

Now, just as the disciples before them who have just experienced their first coming of the Lukan gift of the Spirit, Peter's hearers, meeting the salvific condition set forth, are prepared for their own promise of this gift. The two imperatives are followed by a future indicative, "and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. . . ." Grammatically, the general observation of Winer is apropos, "The future tense does not always indicate pure actual futurity, but sometimes possibility (as indeed the future and the possible are closely allied), and expresses what *can* or *should* or *must* take place." This indefinite tense indicates a time relatively future to the preceding imperatives, which set the qualifying ideas for the expected future event, but do not set the time for it. The tenses themselves certainly allow for, and normatively require in a predictive and gnomic future, the possibility for a separation in time between the immediate qualifying conditions and the future events. The immediate context from Lk 11:13; 24:47, 49 to Acts 1:14; 2:4, (1:8; 2:38c) simply predicts the expected reception of the gift to take place at a time and in a form designed by the Lord, anticipating its evangelistic use within a future occasion as the Lord directs.

Theophilus [to whom Luke and Acts were written], not being or needing to be a grammarian, would add two and two and get four. Luke does not intend to confront Theophilus with "weighty problems," problems that afflict interpreters who want to force Luke to be Paul and allow for no development or diversity in NT pneumatology. Rather Luke's case is clear and contains no hidden variables which Theophilus needs to detect before he can understand this narrative. Sensing that the whole story is Luke's vehicle for his understanding, I suggest that he would recall the pointed conditional lesson on persistent prayer set out in the context Luke provided for disciples with the first mention of the gift of the Holy Spirit at Luke 11:13 and now apply that lesson to the condition set out here. . . . If he would repent, seek forgiveness, call upon the Lord's name (become a convert via salvation which Jesus offers), and submit to baptism, then he too, through persistent prayer, would confidently expect the Lord to pour out upon him (2:33) the Lukan gift of the Holy Spirit.¹

¹ Paul Elbert, "Towards an Understanding of Luke's Expectations for Theophilus Regarding the Lukan Gift of the Holy Spirit," *Pentecostal Mission at 2000: Issues Home and Abroad, Conference Papers of the 29th Annual Meeting of the Society for Pentecostal Studies, Northwest College, Kirkland, WA* (Lexington, Kentucky: Society for Pentecostal Studies, 2000), 16-17, cf. 10-11 and Paul Elbert, "Luke's Fulfillment of Prophecy Theme: Introductory Exploration of Joel and the Last Days," Society for Pentecostal Studies Conference, Marquette University (March 2004), 18-22. Elbert has also argued that all of the imperative-future middle/passive combinations (as at Acts 2:38) in Luke-Acts and the Septuagint are intended in Greek thought to represent two temporally non-simultaneous verbal ideas or events, cf. "The Syntax of Imperative-Future Combinations and Imperative-

As I mentioned earlier, Walston places incredible weight upon the work of Gordon Fee. For that reason, he may appreciate this next point. Pre-dating the interview with Elbert, I corresponded with Fee and asked him the same question that I put before Elbert concerning the future tense of the Greek *lempsesthe*. He replied: "You will note that no good commentary (Cadbury-Lake, Haenchen, Bruce) even take[s] up Montague's questions. The question, by the way, is not what the Greek will allow (it will 'allow' either), but rather what did Luke intend his readers to understand by so reporting Peter's words" (October 19, 1981). So, even Fee agrees that, on a strictly grammatical basis, the future tense of "will receive" does not have to be interpreted as an *immediate* fulfillment. (Concerning the second part of Fee's statement, I would ask, *How can a reader get to Luke's intentions before settling on the possibilities that the language allows?* It's as though Fee has already decided what Luke is saying before he examines the Greek.)

For Walston, Acts 2:38 is the Lukan *paradigm* or *pattern* for conversion. Here are the components: (1) repent, (2) be baptized in water in the name of Jesus Christ, (3) receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. Conditions 1 and 2 are not enough since the gift of the Holy Spirit is what saves: "If one is a Christian, he has been baptized in the Holy Spirit; in fact, it is this gift of the Holy Spirit that separates him from the world and makes him a Christian" (135). "The dual idea that there are Christians who are 'spirit-filled' and Christians who are not 'spirit-filled' is an idea that is foreign to the New Testament. . . . One does not receive Christ and not receive the gift of (or baptism in) the Holy Spirit" (135). "The New Testament never makes the distinction between (1) getting saved and (2) being filled with the Holy Spirit as though they are two entirely different experiences" (139). Practically speaking, does this mean that we are baptizing non-Christians? In Walston's world, it must mean this, for they are not Christians until they receive the gift of the Holy Spirit, and they cannot be Christians until they have fulfilled the conditions of the "divinely established pattern," which requires repentance and baptism before the promise of the gift can be realized.

If one repents, accepts Christ as his savior, is baptized in water, and then receives the gift of the Holy Spirit, what is the function of the gift? One need only follow Luke as he leads Theophilus (who stands in for all of us) through the narrative of Jesus' promise in Acts 1:8 to its fulfillment in 2:1-41 to see that the gift is not for one's personal salvation but is a prophetic empowerment for service and witness. In fact, as Roger Stronstad writes, "Peter restricts the eschatological

Present Participle Combinations in Luke-Acts and Elsewhere," Society of Biblical Literature Conference, Gregorian University, Rome (July 2001).

gift of the Spirit to the penitent, the saved.”² Eduard Schweizer agrees, “[T]he Spirit is imparted to those who are already converted and baptized.”³

William and Robert Menzies argue forcefully against the view that Acts 2:38-39 is primarily soteriological:

In Joel’s prophecy the Spirit comes as the source of prophetic inspiration, a point that again Luke highlights by altering the Greek text of Joel by inserting the phrase “and they will prophesy” (Acts 2:18). Another alteration, Luke’s transformation of Joel’s “slaves” into “servants of God”—effected by his double insertion of “my” in Acts 2:18 . . .—highlights what is implicit in the Joel text: The gift of the Spirit is given only to those who are members of the community of salvation. Thus Luke’s explicit definitions (Luke 24:49; Acts 1:4-8) and his use of the Joel citation indicate that “the promise” of the Spirit, initially fulfilled at Pentecost (Acts 2:4), enables the disciples to take up their prophetic vocation to the world.

Although the Lukan “promise” of the Spirit must be interpreted in light of Joel’s promise concerning the restoration of the Spirit of prophecy, Acts 2:39 does include an additional element, insofar as Luke extends the range of the promise envisioned to include the promise of salvation offered in Joel 2:32 (as well as the promise of the Spirit of prophecy in Joel 2:28). As Dunn notes, Acts 2:39 echoes the language of Joel 2:32/Acts 2:21: “Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.” In Acts 2:39 Luke extends the range of “the promise” to include this salvific dimension because the audience addressed is not disciples.

Yet we must not miss the fact that “the promise” of Acts 2:39 embraces more than the experience of conversion. Consistent with Luke 24:49; Acts 1:4; 2:33, the promised gift of the Spirit in Acts 2:39 refers to the promise of Joel 2:28, and thus it is a promise of prophetic enabling granted to the repentant. The promise of Acts 2:39, like the promise of Jesus in 1:8, points beyond “the restoration of the preserved of Israel”: Salvation is offered (Joel 2:32), but the promise includes the renewal of Israel’s prophetic vocation to be a light to the nations (Joel 2:28). . . .

Acts 2:39 does not indicate that the Spirit comes as the source of new covenant existence. Rather, it simply reminds us that the prophecy of Joel 2:28-32 includes two elements: the gift of the Spirit of prophecy (v. 28) and the offer of salvation to those who call on the name of the Lord (v. 32). Acts 2:39 refers to both, but it does not suggest the two are identical. Indeed, this sort of equation runs counter to Luke’s explicit statements (Luke 24:49; Acts 1:4-8), his use and redaction of the Joel citation . . . , and the broader context of his two-volume work. . . .

There is simply no evidence to support the notion that by referring to Joel 2:28-29, Luke intended his readers to think of some commonly expected, all-embracing soteriological bestowal of the Spirit, the details of which were pieced together from a variety of Old Testament texts. . . . [T]he most that can be gleaned from the text [of Acts 2:38] is that repentance and water baptism are the normal prerequisites for reception of the Spirit, which is promised to every believer.⁴

If Luke, as Walston believes, is setting up Acts 2:38 as the soteriological paradigm, *we should expect to find the paradigm illustrated somewhere in Acts*. This is what Walston believes, for he writes in another context that “Had Luke made a point of clearly, repetitiously, and consistently depicting throughout the book of Acts that all who were saved and filled with the Holy Spirit spoke in tongues, then there would be a paradigm (norm) that we would have to follow” (153). In an effort to demonstrate the preeminence of Luke’s soteriological interest (evidently through *repetition* and *consistency*), Walston identifies twenty-six passages where Luke mentions people being saved. Here is how they compare to Walston’s declared paradigm gleaned from Acts 2:38: (1) repentance is not mentioned in *any* of the passages, (2) water baptism is mentioned in only seven of them, (3) the gift of the Holy Spirit is mentioned in only five. Thus, using Walston’s own methodology, *the statistical evidence does not support the claim that Acts 2:38 is a soteriological paradigm encoded with the non-Lukan concept of a soteriological Spirit-baptism*. (Having explored the interpretation of *lempsesthe* as dilatory, I recognize that the Pentecostal interpretation that the three thousand were baptized in the Spirit *and* spoke in tongues is also feasible. How this could happen without Luke’s recording it is covered later.)

The Soteriological vs. The Pneumatological

According to Walston, “Pentecostals have only minored on Lukan soteriology. . . . Classical Pentecostals have *minored* on what Luke *majored* on” (44). But, Walston continues, if Pentecostals would allow Scripture to speak for itself instead of interpreting it through their assumptions, it would become “obvious that Luke’s intent is to establish the soteriological nature of the early church in conjunction with the preaching of the gospel and the infilling of the Holy Spirit” (85). Walston quotes Pentecostal scholars Roger Stronstad’s *The Charismatic Theology of St. Luke* and Douglas Oss’ contribution to *Are Miraculous Gifts for Today?* and Donald John’s contribution to *Initial Evidence* a number of times in an attempt to demonstrate that Classical Pentecostals believe that Acts is, for the most part, a pneumatological, not soteriological, narrative (47-

² Roger Stronstad, *The Charismatic Theology of St. Luke* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1984), 57; cf. Roger Stronstad, *The Prophethood of All Believers: A Study in Luke’s Charismatic Theology* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999), 68-70.

³ Eduard Schweizer, “Pneuma, pneumatikos, k.t.l.,” *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, ed. Gerhard Kittel, trans. Geoffrey W. Bromiley, vol. 6. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1968), 412.

⁴ William W. and Robert P. Menzies, *Spirit and Power: Foundations of Pentecostal Experience* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2000), 77-80; cf. Robert P. Menzies, *Empowered for Witness: The Spirit in Luke-Acts* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1994), 171, 182, 203-204.

55).⁵ It is clear that Walston has misread the Pentecostal argument. Luke records incidents of repentance, salvation, and conversion in Acts; these are soteriological elements and Pentecostals recognize them as such. *However, Walston fails to realize that Luke does not directly associate these elements with the Holy Spirit.* Thus, Luke's pneumatology does not include regeneration, as, for example, Paul's can be interpreted as including.⁶ Walston's own list of twenty-six soteriological incidents in Acts is made up mainly of Luke simply saying, in various forms, that *the Lord added to their numbers or certain people believed.* This is the case in at least seventeen of the incidents, and in another five the Spirit is mentioned as the agent because what is being described is the baptism in the Holy Spirit, not salvation! In none of Walston's twenty-six incidents of salvation does Luke describe the Spirit as being directly and explicitly active in the heart of the believer to effect regeneration. For these reasons, Pentecostals can validly say that although Luke speaks of salvation and regeneration in Acts, his focus is the Spirit in relation to the prophetic empowerment of believers for service and mission. (Are we not reminded of Luke's programmatic prophecy of Jesus', "You shall be my witnesses. . . .")

As mentioned above, Walston presents statistical data that proves that Luke's intent was soteriological and not pneumatological. As proof of this, he presents twenty-six reports of conversion and notes that only three explicitly mention tongues. (He also uses these statistics to show that it was not Luke's intent to present tongues as the initial evidence of the baptism in the Holy Spirit. I address this below.) In my own survey of Acts, I discovered that Luke narrates seventy-five scenes in which charismatic activity is present (e.g., tongues, prophecy, visions, healings, miracles) compared to sixty-six scenes where soteriological activity is present. These seventy-five and sixty-six scenes usually overlap, with the charismatic activity (which is usually more detailed) leading to the, usually, very generalized salvific outcome, which is just as we should expect given the promise in Acts 1:8. *Statistically (once again using Walston's methodology), Luke's intent (or emphasis) leans not toward the soteriological but toward the pneumatological.*

⁵ Douglas A. Oss, "A Pentecostal/Charismatic View," in *Are Miraculous Gifts for Today? Four Views*, ed. Wayne A. Grudem (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996), 239-283; Donald A. Johns, "Some New Directions in the Hermeneutics of Classical Pentecostalism's Doctrine of Initial Evidence," in *Initial Evidence: Historical and Biblical Perspectives on the Pentecostal Doctrine of Spirit Baptism*, ed. Gary B. McGee (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1991), 145-167. Interestingly, Fee sides with Stronstad and against Walston's view, writing, "I strongly agree with . . . Stronstad, on the 'charismatic nature' of Lukan theology. . ." (*Gospel and Spirit: Issues in New Testament Hermeneutics* [Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1991] 101).

⁶ William W. and Robert P. Menzies, *Spirit and Power: Foundations of Pentecostal Experience* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2000), 89; Robert P. Menzies, "Spirit-Baptism and Spiritual Gifts," in *Pentecostalism in Context: Essays in Honor of William W. Menzies*, ed. Wonsuk Ma and Robert P. Menzies (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997), 52-56.

What do Pentecostal scholars actually believe about the soteriology of Acts? Based on Walston's assessment, they think it is void of soteriology. Nothing could be further from the truth. Just so there is no mistake, here are a few comments. In Stronstad's work cited above, he writes that ". . . Acts is the story of the geographic advance of the gospel" (63); "The inaugural gift of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost is a pivotal event in Luke's history-of-salvation theology" (49); and "[I]n the charismatic theology of St. Luke, the Holy Spirit plays a leading role on the stage of salvation history" (48). In a later work he writes that Acts "is primarily about Christ, salvation and the Holy Spirit. . . . In Luke's theology, the day of Pentecost is a momentous and epochal episode in the forward movement of the history of salvation" (*Prophethood* 27, 70). Finally, he must have had Walston's position in view when he penned the following:

Since Luke-Acts is the story of the origin and spread of the gospel, and since the Spirit of prophecy is given to the penitent, it is historically and theologically impossible for there not to be a close relationship between salvation and the gift of the Spirit. But in spite of the close relationship between salvation and the gift of the Spirit, for Luke-Acts the *function* of the gift of the Spirit is not soteriological but prophetic. To confuse the close relationship between the two as meaning an identity of function is a serious methodological error and leads to a gross distortion of Luke's very clear and explicit pneumatology. (*Prophethood* 122)

In a paper read at the 2004 Society for Pentecostal Studies Conference, Paul Elbert speaks of Luke as having "two main thematic experiential nexuses, the soteriological one and the gift of the Holy Spirit [i.e., the pneumatological] one" ("Luke's Fulfillment" 25). In the same work, he writes,

For Luke, the ministry of the earthly Jesus and of the heavenly Jesus are dynamically linked, the soteriological nexus of faith/repentance/forgiveness/salvation in the ministry of the earthly Jesus in characters' lives (Prodigal Son, Woman with Ointment, Zaccheus) continues in characters' lives under the ministry of the heavenly Jesus (Ethiopian Eunuch, Sergius Paulus, Lydia, Philippian Jailer, Crispus). The former characters can be understood by Luke to fulfill prophetic announcements from heaven and from the Holy Spirit prompted revelation that Jesus is a Savior, with narrative coupling to that same component of Joel's prophecy (Acts 2:21). The latter characters can be similarly understood. And for Luke, the ministry of the heavenly Jesus also includes the outpouring of the gift of the Holy Spirit, fulfilling a programmatic prophecy by John the Baptist, teaching on prayer and known predictions by the earthly Jesus and His narrative predictions, as well as another component of Joel's prophecy (Acts 2:17a, 18). This ministry takes its literary place alongside the soteriological nexus in Lukan personification in another collection of experientially descriptive and delicately different phrases, namely the pneumatological nexus of Spirit-reception/Spirit-filling/Spirit-falling-upon/Spirit-outpouring. This latter pneumatological nexus of the Lukan gift of the Spirit is narratively connected . . . with distinctly noticeable and prominently placed promissory language. I argue that both the soteriological nexus and the

pneumatological nexus are well illustrated by the expected examples and precedents and that both are contained in Luke's programmatic concept of ongoing prophetic fulfillment. I also suggest that prophetic fulfillment is understood by Luke as underpinning the missionary guidance portrayed in Acts. (6)

Robert Menzies explains the relationship between the Holy Spirit and conversion in Acts, writing, ". . . Luke always attributes forgiveness . . . , which is granted in response to faith/repentance, to Jesus" (*Empowered* 217). ". . . Luke does not view the gift of the Spirit as a necessary element in conversion. In Luke's perspective, conversion centers on God's gracious act of forgiveness (e.g. Acts 5.31-32; 10.43). And, . . . in terms of human response, faith-repentance is the decisive element in conversion, for it forms the sole prerequisite for receiving the forgiveness of God (Lk. 5.20; 24.47; Acts 3.19; 5.31; 10.43; 13.38; 26.18)" (*Empowered* 224).

So, an examination of Walston's claim that Pentecostals have "minored" on Lukan soteriology (re Acts) proves true. However, his claim that Pentecostals have "minored" on what Luke "majored" on proves false. Since Luke "majored" on pneumatology, the Pentecostal position aligns best with the material in Acts. Furthermore, Pentecostals do not believe that Acts is void of soteriology, but recognize that Luke is communicating to Theophilus (and us) information about the prophetic-empowerment available through the Spirit to accomplish the mission of Luke's programmatic verse 1:8, i.e., Spirit-inspired disciples will spread the gospel.⁷

Redefining the Baptism in the Holy Spirit

In order to refute the view that there is a spiritual experience beyond conversion known as *the baptism in/filling with/reception of the Holy Spirit* and solidify a non-Pentecostal view of conversion-initiation, it is *absolutely necessary* that Luke's characters in these pneumatological narratives be re-defined as non-Christians, thus rendering the pneumatological activity soteriological. Of the scholars who take this Lukan cessationist view, James D. G. Dunn has written the most enduring presentation in his 1970 *Baptism in the Holy Spirit* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press).⁸ Gordon Fee, once a Classical Pentecostal, in the 1980s

⁷ James B. Shelton summarizes the Lukan data succinctly and accurately: "Although Luke is not averse to associating the Holy Spirit with conversion, this is not his major pneumatological thrust. Some misunderstanding has arisen when the role of the Holy Spirit in empowering for witness is confused with conversion. . . . Luke associates the Holy Spirit with conversion to some degree, but he does not clearly describe that role since his attention is centered on another major role of the Spirit: inspired witness" (*Mighty in Word and Deed: The Role of the Holy Spirit in Luke-Acts* [Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1991], 127, 148.)

⁸ For critiques of Dunn's work see Howard M. Ervin, *Conversion-Initiation and the Baptism in the Holy Spirit: A Critique of James D. G. Dunn's Baptism in the Holy Spirit* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1984); Menzies, *Empowered for Witness*; E. A. Russell,

(if not before) fell into the camp of Pauline charismatics and Lukan cessationists. As mentioned earlier, Walston does not use Dunn or other reputable scholars to support his arguments, *with the lone exception of Fee*. Fee's work that Walston relies upon most is *Gospel and Spirit: Issues in New Testament Hermeneutics*; the actual chapters that Walston depends upon were first published in 1980 and 1985.⁹

Summarizing from Fee's twenty-five-year-old work, Walston writes, "Fee says that to be saved *is to be filled with the Spirit*. . . . Christians are filled with the Holy Spirit by virtue of being Christians" (129). "[I]f people are saved, they are as a matter of course, baptized in the Holy Spirit" (114). For Fee to arrive at these conclusions (and he must in order to, primarily, force them to match his view of Pauline pneumatology, and, secondarily, to rebut the Pentecostal doctrine of separability/subsequence), he must explain away the clear language of Luke. Walston accepts Fee's assertions uncritically. (He should at least press Fee to demonstrate why the extemporaneous and independently valuable discursive writings of Paul should be used to interpret the carefully and elegantly designed rhetoric of Luke.)

Luke narrates at length four episodes where believers are specifically baptized in/filled with/recipients of the Holy Spirit for the first time:

- (1) the 120 Jewish disciples (Acts 2);
- (2) the Samaritans (Acts 8);
- (3) the Gentiles (Acts 10); and
- (4) the Ephesians (Acts 19).

(1) *Acts 2*: Since Walston agrees, albeit inconsistently, that the 120 were saved before they received the gift of the Holy Spirit (141), it is not necessary to discuss this episode.

(2) *Acts 8*: Walston presents no evidence to counter the obvious separability/subsequence illustrated in this passage. Briefly, in Samaria the evangelist (and deacon) Philip preached Jesus, the people believed, the people were baptized in

"They believed Philip preaching," (Acts 8.12)," *Irish Biblical Studies* 1 (1979), 169-176; J. Gibley, "Baptism in the Holy Spirit in the Acts of the Apostles," *One in Christ* 10 (1974), 162-171; William Atkinson, "Pentecostal Responses to Dunn's *Baptism in the Holy Spirit: Luke-Acts*," *JPT* 6 (1995): 87-131; and Shelton, *Mighty in Word and Deed: The Role of the Holy Spirit in Luke-Acts*. Interestingly, even Dunn concedes that "Luke intended to portray 'speaking in tongues' as 'the initial physical evidence' of the outpouring of the Spirit," *Jesus and the Spirit: A Study of the Religious and Charismatic Experience of Jesus and the First Christians as Reflected in the New Testament* (London: SCM, 1975), 189-190 (italics his).

⁹ For an assessment of Fee's outdated ideas see William W. and Robert P. Menzies, *Spirit and Power* 109-118 and Menzies, *Empowered* 237-239.

Jesus' name (v. 12, 16), *but* they did not receive the Holy Spirit. The apostles in Jerusalem hear that the Samaritans have "received the word of God" (v. 14), so they send Peter and John, who, when they arrive, pray for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit (v. 17). After laying hands on them, they receive the Holy Spirit. Obviously, any attempt to explain away the separability/subsequence exhibited in this passage becomes fantastical. Menzies calls this passage "an insoluble problem for those who maintain that Luke establishes a necessary link between baptism/Christian initiation and the gift of the Spirit" (*Empowered* 211).¹⁰

(3) **Acts 10:** Luke's narrative of the Gentiles being baptized in the Holy Spirit is the single precedent that non-Pentecostal scholars have where the subjects of the narrative evidently were saved and baptized in the Holy Spirit simultaneously (note that it is still quite impossible to prove that the latter was the cause of the former). According to Walston, this passage "needs little argument" and provides "evidence beyond a reasonable doubt" (122). He admits, "The first outward evidence that they had been baptized in the Holy Spirit was that they spoke in tongues (10:46)" (122). But, remember, he believes that the baptism in the Holy Spirit effects salvation. So, he explains, "[T]he first physical evidence that they had been *saved* was that they spoke in tongues (10:46)" (122, emphasis his). "[S]peaking in tongues was not just the initial, physical evidence of the baptism in the Holy Spirit; it was in fact the initial physical evidence of salvation . . ." (95). In Walston's view, Peter associates tongues with a salvation experience (87). But why would Peter do this? Luke doesn't portray Peter as having any experiences with unbelievers who, upon repenting, calling on the name of the Lord, and being baptized in the name of Jesus, receive salvation and tongues. On the other hand, Luke does portray Peter as having experienced, at Jerusalem then Samaria, *believers* receiving a baptism in the Holy Spirit, evidenced by glossolalia.

Although Luke does not, as in the other scenes, make clear the timing of the Gentiles' moment of salvation in relation to the moment when they were baptized in the Holy Spirit, he does hint that the Gentiles were saved before they received the Spirit when he has Peter say, "They have received the Holy Spirit just as we have" (10:47). Walston agrees that the 120 at Jerusalem were saved before Pentecost (141). If then, the Gentiles received the Holy Spirit just as they did, perhaps they were saved before they received this endowment of power, if not but by mere moments. Furthermore, using the interpretive principle of analogy of scripture, it is quite clear that the Jewish, Samaritan, and Ephesian episodes steer the reader to this conclusion.

Having said this, there is, it seems to me, a logical reason that God telescoped the Gentile experience of salvation and the baptism in the Holy Spirit into one event (or one of very close proximity), and that is because there is no

¹⁰ Cf. Menzies, *Empowered* 204-213; Anthony Palma, *The Holy Spirit: A Pentecostal Perspective* (Springfield, MO: Gospel Publishing House, 2001), 119; and J. L. Hall, "A Oneness Pentecostal Looks at Initial Evidence," in *Initial Evidence* 178.

outward, immediately observable evidence of salvation, without which the Jews would have been more apt to dispute and deny that God had "granted the Gentiles repentance unto life" (11:18). But if one must be saved to receive this gift evidenced by tongues, as in the Pentecostal view, tongues are *a fortiori* evidence that one has been saved.¹¹

Of the four episodes involving the baptism in the Holy Spirit, this is the only one whose timing is ambiguous. Why make the possible exception, the rule?

(4) **Acts 19:** Quoting Fee, Walston argues that the *disciples* who are mentioned here "were obviously not Christians because the one essential ingredient [i.e., the Spirit] was missing" (*Gospel and Spirit* 114). However, Luke's consistent terminology ("disciple" for *believer in Jesus* or *disciple of Jesus*) is insurmountable and reveals the speciousness of the anti-Pentecostal interpretation.¹² But if that isn't enough, these disciples, as Luke narrates the scene, are baptized in water (surely they are Christians by now), Paul then lays hands on them, and only *then* does the Holy Spirit come upon them (19:5-6). Obviously, the Holy Spirit comes upon them *after* they are saved.¹³

Authorial Intent—the Doom of Pentecostal Theology?

For Walston, "Of all the arguments opposing the initial, physical evidence of the baptism in the Holy Spirit, that of *authorial intent* is, without a doubt, the most convincing . . ." (59). His methodology for proving this entails asking what he calls a "Guiding Question" of each incident where Luke describes someone experiencing salvation. That question is: "What *importance* does Luke give to tongues as evidence of the baptism in the Holy Spirit?" (pp. 61, 71). He then claims that there are twenty-six references in Acts of people being baptized in the Holy Spirit (126). (He can say this because he assumes he has proven that anytime someone is saved, he or she is baptized in the Holy Spirit; ergo, to be saved = to be baptized in the Holy Spirit. So, he writes, "[E]ven though Luke does not specifically mention the words 'baptism in the Holy Spirit,' this baptism nonetheless transpires when one becomes a Christian," 125.) Walston continues, "If Luke mentions the outward manifestation of tongues on only three of twenty-six soteriological occasions, with the number of people demonstrating this

¹¹ Cf. Menzies, *Empowered* 215-218 and Johns 163.

¹² Cf. Elbert, "Towards," 19-25; Paul Elbert, "An Observation on Luke's Composition of Questions," *CBQ* 66/1 (January 2004): 107-108; Palma 128; and Menzies, *Empowered* 218-225.

¹³ However, as Pentecostals, we would do well to remember these words from Oss: ". . . Pentecostals historically have emphasized that this experience is available from the moment the Holy Spirit indwells the believer, and their testimonies often speak of being both saved and baptized in the Holy Spirit all at once, while responding to an invitation for salvation," 242.

outward manifestation to be around 150 out of well over three thousand people, then the obvious question must follow, *How important could it have possibly been to Luke?*” (110). Thus, he reasons concerning the Jerusalem Pentecost and Acts 2:41, “It cannot be logically nor exegetically argued that all Christians who are baptized in the Holy Spirit should speak in tongues from a small sampling of only 120 out of 3,120 people” (126). And, “If it were as important an issue as Classical Pentecostals say it is, Luke would have used this three-thousand-person example to develop the concept. But, he does not” (71).

Throughout his chapter on authorial intent, Walston mentions a number of places where Luke, if he had wished to show that speaking in tongues is the initial, physical evidence of the baptism in the Holy Spirit, could have done so, explicitly, and with great effect, e.g., the three thousand in 2:41, the Samaritans, the priests in 6:7, and Paul, but Luke is silent. Even if all of these believers did speak in tongues, the fact that Luke *does not mention it* is proof that tongues are not that important to Luke; thus, it was not Luke’s “intent to convey tongues as the initial, physical evidence of the baptism in the Holy Spirit” (73).

Just as Walston uses Acts 2:38-41 as the *locus classicus* to prove that to be saved is to be baptized in the Holy Spirit (and vice versa), he also uses this passage as the *locus classicus* to prove that it is *not* Luke’s intent to teach that tongues are the normative, initial evidence of the baptism in the Holy Spirit. After repeating his Guiding Question, he writes, “The issue is not, ‘Did the three thousand speak in tongues?’ The issue is, ‘*Why does Luke not make a point of saying that they did (or did not) speak in tongues?*’ He does not mention it because it is not an issue. What Luke does take the time and space to describe is the soteriological outcome on this unique day” (71). Walston calls the incident with the three thousand a “paradigmatic gold mine” had Luke wanted to establish tongues as the evidence of Spirit-baptism (72).

Let’s examine the scene that Walston is using—all of it, as Luke intended, not just a portion. The way Luke presents it to Theophilus, it begins at Acts 2:1 and runs *in real time* all the way to 2:40; then, Luke caps it off with the summary statement of v. 41 (the verses that follow in chapter two describe action occurring days afterward). The scene has two foci: (1) the coming of the Holy Spirit with its accompanying signs and (2) Peter’s sermon and interaction with the crowd. Luke has already portrayed Jesus as telling the disciples to remain in Jerusalem until they are baptized in the Holy Spirit so that they will receive power to be his witnesses (1:5, 8). Since the disciples are already saved, this is a post-conversion empowerment, i.e., a pneumatological, not soteriological, experience. Acts 2:1-13 describes the fulfillment of Jesus’ promise in detail. Luke ends with a question (“Whatever could this mean?”), segueing into Peter’s sermon. Peter explains what it means by quoting the prophet Joel. Significantly, Peter quotes a primarily pneumatological portion of scripture. To make this point clear, Peter edits Joel’s prophecy, adding “and they shall prophesy” to verse 18. Because he is speaking to non-Christians, Peter includes Joel’s statement that “whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved” (2:21). Peter, next, goes into an explanation of Jesus of Nazareth, Lord and Messiah, who has poured out “this which you now see and

hear,” speaking of the promise of the Father or, more specifically, the accompanying *signs* of the promise (v. 33). Cut to the heart, the Jewish listeners ask Peter, “[W]hat shall we do?” (v. 37). Peter replies, “Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call” (vv. 38-39). Finally, Luke concludes the scene, “Then those who gladly received his word were baptized; and that day about three thousand souls were added to them” (v. 41).

Now, back to Walston’s question: “*Why does Luke not make a point of saying that they did (or did not) speak in tongues?*” The answer to this question relates to Walston’s (under)statement that “Luke is not a substandard communicator” (85). Luke is believed by many scholars to be the most eloquent, articulate, intentional, and educated writer of scripture. For that reason, we should not expect him to write in a sophomoric, coarse, unreflective, or tedious style. Stronstad writes, “Arguably, Luke-Acts is the most carefully designed book in all of biblical literature, certainly in the New Testament” (*Prophethood* 14). According to Elbert, the writings of Luke exemplify the highly developed, conventional Greco-Roman narrative tradition, as illustrated in the teachings of Theon of Alexandria, a rhetorician and contemporary of Luke’s:

Luke is in accord with the instruction of Theon on this expected method of narrative persuasion via plausible examples and precedents serving to provide Christian expectation. Clarity, understandability, and vividness of examples and precedents are the narrative tools deemed important by Theon; it is unsurprising then that Luke employs such contemporary narrative technique. Lukan portrayal of interaction with, and of Christian expectation of, the divine is quite harmonious with Theonic characterization and personification.¹⁴

Luke’s refined architectonics in Acts does not require the tedious repetitions that our 21st-century minds may desire.¹⁵ Even as Luke tells the

¹⁴ Paul Elbert, “Paul of the Miletus Speech and 1 Thessalonians: Critique and Considerations,” *ZNW* 95/3-4 (2004): 258-268: 265, footnote 34. For information about Aelius Theon of Alexandria and his potential narrative-rhetorical influence on the composition of narratives, see the “Introduction” in James R. Butts, *The ‘Progymnasmata’ of Theon: A New Text with Translation and Commentary* (Ph.D. Diss, Claremont Graduate School; Ann Arbor, MI: University Microfilm International, 1987), 1-95.

¹⁵ Note that Fee believes that in the early church, “Glossolalia . . . has all the earmarks of being commonplace,” (“Toward a Pauline Theology of Glossolalia,” in *Pentecostalism in Context: Essays in Honor of William W. Menzies* 30), and concludes that “Precisely because it was ‘normal’ in this sense [i.e., expected and recurring], it was the presupposition of life in the Spirit for them; *thus they felt no compulsion to talk about it at every turn,*” *Gospel and Spirit* 102 (italics added); J. Rodman Williams notes that “If both the reception of the Spirit and tongues were common knowledge and experience to Luke’s readers (as I believe they were), *he scarcely needs to say so each time.* Incidentally, this

disciples that they would be his witnesses in Jerusalem, Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth (the Gentiles), rather than laboriously naming all the cities and regions, he deliberately chooses two of the most momentous occurrences of tongues to narrate for Theophilus—the first Jews and the first Gentiles saved calling upon the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Would not *these* be the “paradigmatic gold mines” in Luke’s mind? The third occurrence, the Ephesian disciples, was probably narrated, in part, because of Paul’s involvement (given Luke’s propensity to give Peter and Paul equal time) and because it is the last scene in the Acts narrative with characters who are baptized in the Holy Spirit. For us, it serves the additional purpose of disallowing the Lukan cessationist notion that Spirit-baptism is an apostolic-age or unique experience.¹⁶ Of these three occurrences, Donald Johns writes, “It is difficult to deny that speaking in tongues *did* accompany being baptized in the Spirit in three texts in Acts. It is a common storytelling technique the world over to tell things in groups of threes:

same point may be made about belief in Christ and baptism in water. Often Luke specifically mentions water baptism in connection with faith in Jesus Christ . . . ; on other occasions he describes people coming to faith without reference to water baptism. . . . However, it very likely that Luke would have the reader assume the occurrence of water baptism when it is not mentioned. Such baptism was doubtless common experience and practice in the early church,” (*Renewal Theology: Salvation, the Holy Spirit, and Christian Living* [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1990] 210, footnote 7, italics added); cf. Palma 157.

Although the conventional narrative style of Luke’s day deemed repetitious accounts unnecessary, there is yet an additional reason why Luke does not associate tongues with many of the occurrences of salvation in Acts (other than the quite plausible explanation that the subjects were saved but not immediately filled, per the Samaritan precedent). In many cases where Luke notes soteriological activity in Acts, it is with great brevity (as Williams notes, even repentance and water baptism are seldom mentioned). The brief soteriological conclusion comes about as a result of the narrative’s clear emphasis—pneumatological activity, e.g., 2:1-41, where only a couple of verses can be considered soteriological. But not all pneumatic activity is related to tongues; in fact, tongues may be a result of previous pneumatic activity just as salvation may come as a result of previous pneumatic activity. For Luke, then, the issue of disciples speaking in tongues when baptized in the Spirit is akin to the issue of salvation—both usually occur as a result of prior Spirit-inspired witness. Both are extremely important to Luke, but they are simply not his central focus, a focus which is, in fact, the *efficient cause* of the spreading of the gospel, i.e., the Spirit-inspired witness of each individual disciple. And, as I have said, this is just as we should expect since Luke has laid out the prophetic missionary program from chapter one: “But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth” (v. 8).

¹⁶ Cf. Ronald Kydd, “I’m Still There! A Reaffirmation of Tongues as the Initial Evidence of the Baptism in the Holy Spirit,” (Toronto: The Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada, 1977), 13.

three times should be enough to tell anything. The paradigmatic effect of these stories should lead us to expect the same things in our own experience with the Spirit. Actually, as we are drawn into the story, we should experience the Spirit along with Peter, Cornelius, and all the rest. By telling these stories, Luke shows that this is the way his world works” (163; cf. 153-56).¹⁷

Oss draws this issue closer to the subject at hand, i.e., *authorial intent*:

Beyond the traditional Pentecostal interpretation of Acts, two specific insights from narratology have proven helpful in more recent years in determining Luke [*sic*] intent: the idea of narrative as “narrative world” and narrative analogy. Both of these aspects of narratological analysis are ways of looking at “patterns” as evidence of an author’s intent in creating a narrative.

(i) Regarding the notion of “narrative world” in any historical narrative, the manner of retelling has a purpose: to inform a community about its heritage, identity, common experience, and essential qualities. The narrator at the same time is informing the community about the nature of its own world, how it ought to be structured, and in some instances how it ought not to be structured. Thus, in the case of biblical narrative, the accounts provide order to our “world” and are intended to tell how to live our lives, how we experience the Spirit’s presence, etc. The author uses biblical “narrative world” to shape the believing community’s world.

¹⁷ W. and R. Menzies approach the issue of tongues as evidence through a synthesis of biblical and systematic theology; through the contributions of each they conclude that “1. Paul affirms that the private manifestation of tongues is edifying, desirable, and universally available. . . . 2. Luke affirms that the Pentecostal gift is intimately connected to inspired speech, of which tongues-speech is a prominent form, possessing a uniquely evidential character. 3. Therefore, when one receives the Pentecostal gift, one should expect to manifest tongues, and this manifestation of tongues is a uniquely demonstrative sign (evidence) that one has received the gift” (*Spirit* 130). Using this methodology, the Menzies eschew Pentecostal hermeneutics based on “biblical analogy or historical precedent. . . . Rather, drawing from the full scope of Luke’s two-volume work, it [their argument] focuses on the nature of Luke’s pneumatology and, from this framework, seeks to understand the character of the Pentecostal gift. The judgment that the gift is distinct from conversion is rooted in the gift’s function: It provides power for witness, not justification before God or personal cleansing. The universal character of the gift established in Luke’s narrative rather than historical precedent is the basis for its normative character,” (*Spirit* 115). It is unfortunate that R. Menzies seems unaware of the Greco-Roman narrative rhetorical convention that Luke uses (cf. *Empowered* 237, 245-246), for it pushes the historical occurrences of Spirit-baptism and tongues beyond the “naïve historical precedent” argument. Of course, the two methodologies are not mutually exclusive but, rather, corroborative; they each answer questions that the other does not address. It will be interesting to watch their symbiotic development in the field of Pentecostal scholarship. Walston seems unaware of both methodologies, focusing only on the older argument based on the repetition of glossolalia in conjunction with Spirit-baptism (113-118).

(ii) The second useful perspective on authorial intent is provided by what Meir Sternberg calls “narrative analogy.” This refers to a specific relationship among events in a narrative, inviting readers to read one story in terms of other similar stories. Thus one event provides “oblique commentary” on another. The narrator accomplishes this particular phenomenon through carefully developed patterns or “echoes.” His repetition of similar or contrasting events establishes the points of comparison for the reader. Repeating themes, details, phrases, behaviors, etc., call the reader’s attention to the analogy. The “echo effect” thus serves to control interpretation, adding emphasis and specifying communication of central meanings.

The composition of Luke-Acts was surely not a haphazard process. The analogies, or echo effects, in the narrative are evident because of the careful crafting of the narrative by the author. He included details because they were central to his agenda. In the case of tongues and Spirit-baptism in Acts, it seems improbable that Luke was unaware of the echo he was creating. Rather, *he intentionally created the relationship between tongues and Spirit-baptism in his narrative, along with the specific function of tongues as evidence, in order to communicate that relationship to his readership as a prescribed paradigm* [italics added].

(iii) A redemptive-historical approach to the IPE [Initial Physical Evidence] doctrine is a third more recent development in Pentecostal hermeneutics. Simply stated, in the Old Testament when the Spirit came upon the prophets, prophetic speech always accompanied the Spirit’s anointing. Likewise in Acts, when the Spirit comes upon an individual for the first time, Spirit-prompted speech occurs, except that in Acts the utterance is in tongues. Another dimension of this redemptive-historical development pertains specifically to Acts 10:44-46, where tongues is more than evidence of an individual experience (although it is that). There glossolalia functions as evidence of the inclusion of Gentiles in the Spirit’s anointing. Stated in principle, it is evidence that the Spirit’s power is for *all* who come into the kingdom. (261-63)

Whereas the foregoing Pentecostal scholars have addressed the issue of Luke’s intention by examining the genre in which Luke wrote and thus discerning a strong intentionality on Luke’s part to present tongues as a signification of Spirit-baptism, others have questioned elements of the presupposition within the *authorial intent* argument itself. Robert Menzies responds to Fee, writing, “The question of Luke’s intent, which looms so large in Fee’s argument, is clearly subordinate to the more fundamental question outlined above [i.e., the prophetic-empowerment rather than soteriological character of Spirit-baptism, and its universal character]. For if my description of Luke’s ‘distinctive’ pneumatology is accurate, then Luke’s intent to teach a Spirit-baptism distinct from conversion for empowering is easily demonstrated. One need only establish that Luke’s narrative was designed to encourage every Christian to receive the Pentecostal gift. And, since Luke highlights Pentecost as a fulfillment of Joel’s prophecy concerning an outpouring of the Spirit upon ‘all flesh’ (Acts 2.17-21), this appears to be self-evident” (*Empowered* 239). Later in the same work, he writes the following of

Fee’s conclusions regarding intent and the early Pentecostals’ use of “naïve appeals to historical precedent” (239):

[W]e should be careful not to jump to the unwarranted conclusion that this judgment necessarily invalidates the doctrine of evidential tongues. Nevertheless, this is precisely the conclusion that is usually drawn. The reason is clearly articulated by Fee, who suggests that normative theology at this point must be grounded in Luke’s ‘primary intent’ or ‘intention to teach’. But surely this is overly restrictive. Not all questions of normative teaching are rooted directly in the intention of the author. [Larry] Hurtado [in *Initial Evidence* 191-192] notes the oft-cited illustration of the doctrine of the Trinity, which is not taught explicitly in the New Testament but developed on the basis of inferences from biblical teaching. Is it not valid to inquire about the character of Luke’s pneumatology, and then to wrestle with the implications which emerge from his pneumatology for our contemporary questions? Only ‘the most severe form of biblicism’ would deny the validity of this sort of exercise.

An exclusive focus on an author’s ‘primary intent’ or ‘intention to teach’ too often leads to a form of tunnel vision which ignores the implications of an individual text for the theological perspective of the author. . . . [T]he value of a passage for assessing the theological perspective of a given author cannot be reduced to its ‘primary intent’. A passage must be understood in terms of its original setting and intention, but *the theological freight it carries may transcend its ‘primary intent’*. Each piece of evidence must be taken seriously as we seek to reconstruct the theological perspective of the biblical author. . . .

. . . This task of reconstruction cannot be limited to a survey of the ‘primary intent’ of isolated passages; rather, it calls for a careful analysis of the theological significance of the author’s entire work. (246-248, italics added)

Stronstad echoes Menzies sentiments and develops an understanding of Luke’s intent based on the Greco-Roman culture of which Luke and Theophilus were a part:

It was once commonplace among interpreters to affirm that authorial intentionality, that is, the author’s purpose for writing a document, is the essential criterion which governs the reader’s understanding of the text. But the question of authorial intentionality is complicated by a variety of factors. These include whether the purpose is explicit or implicit and whether it is simple or complex—that is, whether there is one primary purpose, or a combination of primary, secondary and even tertiary purposes. Consequently, several dangers attend the search to determine authorial intention. One danger is the all-too-common tendency toward reductionism, putting forward the claims of one purpose to the exclusion of all others. Another danger is to confuse the use to which the document, in whole or in part, might be put with the purpose of the document. The most insidious danger is to identify the interests and agenda of the interpreter as those of the author.

Though the question of Luke's purpose has proven to be problematic it is not a matter for despair. The most satisfactory answer to the question of Luke's purpose lies in the recognition that it is multiplex. This multiplex purpose not only has a historical dimension, as the reader would expect since the genre of Luke-Acts is historical narrative, but it also has both a didactic or instructional dimension and a theological dimension. Luke himself identifies this multiplex purpose, beginning with his prologue (Lk. 1.1-4). . . .

Using the genre, or medium of historical narrative, Luke teaches Theophilus and his extended audience in a variety of ways. These include . . . (1) proof of prophecy; (2) precedents and patterns. . . .

. . . For example, Peter's witness to Cornelius and his household (Acts 10.1-48) is the historical precedent which justifies the salvation of the Gentiles by grace apart from the works of the Law (Acts 15.6-11). This same episode also makes explicit the pattern for Spirit-baptism which Luke has earlier implied in his programmatic Pentecost narrative. . . . And so, by reporting the pouring out of the Spirit, first upon the disciples, and, subsequently, upon Cornelius and his household, and also by reporting Peter's statements which connect the latter gift of the Spirit to the former, Luke teaches that here is a pattern of Spirit-baptism. It is an inaugural reception of the Spirit of prophecy attested to by the sign of speaking in tongues. (*Prophethood 22-25*)

Elbert's research confirms the 21st-century reader's need to understand the Greco-Roman narrative-rhetorical tradition if he is to appreciate the literary artistry of Luke and come to understand what Luke *intends* to teach Theophilus:

If Theophilus was a literary minded person, as Luke appears to be, a person educated in the Empire where rhetorical training was mandatory in the schools, he would naturally expect Luke to illustrate ongoing prophetic fulfillment by examples and precedents in characters' lives within the framework of the two scrolls (or papyrus codices) dedicated to him. Such an expectation on Theophilus' part would be quite consistent with the accepted rhetorical procedure of illustrating main points with examples and precedents in the traditional standards of narrative composition, as set out in the contemporary treatise of Theon. Theon's instructional effort builds on solid rhetorical tradition concerning the necessity and the quality of the expected examples and precedents. Any real thematic paradigm that fulfilled prophecy beyond narrative time would have to be illustrated by examples and precedents in order to be convincing within Graeco-Roman narrative-rhetorical culture. ("Luke's Fulfillment" 3-4)

Inasmuch as we are all Theophiluses, it would serve us well to become familiar with the literary medium with which Luke communicates to Theophilus, and not assume that he uses a medium contemporary to ourselves.

So, it would seem that the *authorial intent* argument posed against the biblical doctrine of initial evidence is not as impervious as Walston believes, having been found to be vulnerable on at least two critical fronts: (1) its deficiency

in rhetorical technique recognition and (2) its assumed imperiousness, which subjects it to neutralization by *reductio ad absurdum*.

Conclusion

Concerning his work, Walston writes, "This book argues that the *tongues-as-evidence position* cannot be biblically supported. In fact, I shall show that the main book, i.e., Acts—from which this Classical Pentecostal peculiarity is derived—does not teach this idea at all" (27). His attempt to show this fails because (1) he does not prove that the passages that explicitly mention Spirit-baptism (or its synonyms) are describing conversion rather than post-conversion experiences, (2) he wrongly extrapolates Spirit-baptism to every incident of repentance/conversion/salvation in Acts, (3) he misunderstands the nuances of the elements that make up pneumatology and, thus, misreads his Pentecostal sources, (4) he uncritically accepts Fee's unwarranted and, now, outdated conclusions concerning authorial intent, and (5) he shows no knowledge of and thus does not interact with the Greco-Roman rhetorical narrative conventions and their vindication of the Pentecostal understanding of Acts. Furthermore, all of these issues are pervaded by a sense of staleness due to Walston's omission of current scholarship.

The last two decades have seen tremendous strides in Pentecostal scholarship. In the approximately 100-year history of the Pentecostal Movement, this, of all times, is not the time to take a step backward or call for a compromise on the Pentecostal doctrines of subsequence/separability or initial evidence. In our lifetime, the strength of the evidence for the validity of these doctrines has grown exponentially. Perhaps their acceptance shall develop as have two other Pentecostal issues: *First*, at the beginning of the twentieth century, no serious NT scholar believed that all of the NT spiritual gifts were for the contemporary church; before the century's end, few serious scholars believed in the cessation of any of the gifts; *second*, a mere thirty years ago, a consensus of scholars relegated Acts to the genre of history; today, its didacticism is clear.¹⁸ If Pentecostal

¹⁸ Cf. W. and R. Menzies, *Spirit and Power* 37-45; Kydd 7-11, 14-15; Elbert writes to the point, relating the didactic view of Luke-Acts to its contemporary genre, "Pentecostals' view of narrative and their application of its didactic intentions is entirely consistent with, and essentially the same as, how it was regarded in the Graeco-Roman world at the time Luke-Acts was written, where the narrative-rhetorical tradition was regarded as a means to persuade with clarity and plausibility, to set forth vivid examples and precedents, and to provide the reasons for why such actions occurred. Therefore, one may appropriately mention that the criticism or condemnation of using Luke's narrative to establish what Luke expects believers to pray for and what Luke expects God to do in answer to prayer—because Lukan characters who bear witness to Jesus also pray and receive the Lukan gift of the Holy Spirit—is, from the perspective of Pentecostal tradition, negative criticism that misunderstands Luke as having only strictly historical motives, not theological motives," (*The Globalization of Pentecostalism: A Review Article*, *Trinity Journal* 23NS, No. 1 [Spring 2002] 81-101: 83-84).

scholarship continues to develop as it has in the last twenty years, by the end of the twenty-first century it may be that no serious NT scholar will deny the Pentecostal doctrines of subsequence/separability and initial evidence. Of all times in the history of the Pentecostal movement and New Testament scholarship, today is not the time to seek a *tertium quid* or an *aggiornamento*. So, I would say to Walston, “You left too early. But you’re welcome to return.”

I conclude with some thoughts for non-Pentecostals to consider while pondering the viability of their position. Concerning the Pentecostal doctrine of *initial evidence*, the non-Pentecostal view would be more tenable

- (1) If only some, instead of *all*, of those who were specifically baptized in the Holy Spirit spoke in tongues,
- (2) If Luke’s two major illustrations were not representative of both classes of peoples that made up the whole human race,
- (3) If Luke had not connected glossolalia with his *first* and *last* explicit report of the baptism in the Holy Spirit,
- (4) If he had not connected glossolalia with *every* illustration of an explicitly stated “baptism” in the Holy Spirit,
- (5) If Paul had not said that he desired that *all* would speak in tongues,
- (6) If Luke had not said that the gift of the Spirit was for *all* people and for *all* times,
- (7) If Luke had not implied that observers could know immediately from external observation that someone had received the Holy Spirit,
- (8) If Luke had not described the Jews as recognizing that God had accepted the Gentiles based solely on the externally perceptible, singular sign of glossolalia,
- (9) If Paul’s and the Ephesian disciples’ baptisms in the Holy Spirit had been administered by one of the twelve apostles.

Concerning the Pentecostal doctrine of *subsequence/separability*, the non-Pentecostal view would be more tenable

- (1) If the 120 had not been Christians,
- (2) If the Samaritans had not been Christians,
- (3) If Paul had not been a Christian,
- (4) If the twelve Ephesians had not been Christians,
- (5) If Luke had not instructed *disciple-believers* to pray for the Spirit,
- (6) If Luke had not equated filling=gift=reception=baptism and then reported *subsequent* fillings of disciples who had already been filled,
- (7) If Luke had not associated prophetic utterances and empowerment with the baptism in the Holy Spirit,
- (8) If Luke had not used pneumatological language of the Septuagint (“filling”), relating it to OT believers, to describe the NT baptism in the Holy Spirit,

- (9) If throughout the OT and NT the activity of the Holy Spirit related to human functionality had not been associated with giftings (usually prophetic) for *believers*.¹⁹

¹⁹ You may e-mail the author at rgraves@tffps.org. ©Copyrighted 2005, Robert W. Graves, All Rights Reserved.