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He will Baptize You with the Holy Spirit and Fire

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HE WILL BAPTIZE YOU WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT AND FIRE

A Thesis Presented to the Faculty
of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis
Department of Exegetical Theology
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Master of Sacred Theology

by
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INTRODUCTION

The phrase, *Αὐτὸς ὑμᾶς βαπτίσει ἐν πνεύματι ἁγίῳ καὶ πυρὶ*,¹ has puzzled me for years. This thesis is an attempt to solve the puzzle. The first half of the thesis will be a history of the interpretation of this phrase. An essay by James D. G. Dunn will provide the outline for this historical review.

The second half of the thesis will be the interpretation of the phrase. I will demonstrate that there is only one baptism and that is purifying. The most compelling argument to read two baptisms in the phrase, one purifying and the other judging, has been the repetition of the word fire in the following verse. I will show that the key to understanding the two verses together, Matthew 3:11 with 12 and Luke 3:16 with 17, is not to let the concept of baptism tie the two verses together, but to let the person of God tie them together. The Holy Spirit of fire purifies in baptism. That same fiery God destroys the chaff, the unrepentant, with unquenchable fire.

¹Matthew 3:11 and Luke 3:16.

CHAPTER I
THE HISTORY OF THE INTERPRETATION OF THE PHRASE
HE WILL BAPTIZE YOU WITH THE
HOLY SPIRIT AND FIRE

Twenty years ago James D. G. Dunn wrote an excellent summary¹ of the interpretation of the phrase, "Αὐτὸς ὑμᾶς βαπτίσει ἐν πνεύματι ἁγίῳ καὶ πυρί."² In his essay Dunn says that there are two ancient interpretations, two comparatively modern ones and two new developments to help us understand what St. John the Baptist meant when he said, "He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire."

Both Spirit and Fire as Purifying

St. John Chrysostom is given credit by Dunn for being the first exegete to conclude that both Spirit and fire are purifying. Dunn says that Chrysostom understood 'fire' to be "an inflaming, purifying, but essentially gracious outpouring of the Spirit."³ An examination of the Archbishop's sermon

¹James D. G. Dunn, "Spirit-and-Fire Baptism", Novum Testamentum, 14 (1972): 81-92.

²Matthew 3:11 and Luke 3:16.

³Dunn, 81.

called "Homily XI"⁴ reveals that Chrysostom thought that the Baptist added "fire" to show the vehement and uncontrollable quality of God's grace. The fire image is to remind the Baptist's hearers of God's discourse with Moses in the bush, with all the people at Mount Sinai and with Ezekiel on the Cherubim. The hearers would consider that they would be like the prophets of old when they received the baptism of the Coming One. More than merely purifying, Chrysostom thought of baptism with the Holy Spirit and fire being an encounter with God that empowered the recipients to be prophets. Dunn claims that it is Catholics for the most part who have followed Chrysostom, but that his view has been generally abandoned.

Dunn cites two moderns who have followed the lead of Chrysostom, M.-J. LaGrange⁵ and Paul Gaechter.⁶ LaGrange's commentary, a rather brief exposition of the text, says that there has been a division of opinion since Jerome, whether the Messiah's baptism with fire had a single or double role. The single role would be, following Chrysostom, one of grace. The

⁴The Homilies of St. John Chrysostom, Archbishop of Constantinople, on the Gospel of Matthew, trans. George Prevost from the edition published in 1839 by Frederic Field, A Library of Fathers of the Holy Catholic Church, vol. 11 (Oxford: John Henry Parker, 1843), 153-154.

⁵M.-J. LaGrange, Evangile Selon Saint Matthieu, 7th ed. (Paris: J. Gabalda et Cie, 1948), 53.

⁶Paul Gaechter, Das Mattheus Evangelium (Innsbruck-Vienna-Munich: Tyrolia-Verlag, 1963), 96-97.

double role would be, following Willoughby Allen,⁷ and Alfred Loisy,⁸ purification for the believer, but judgment for the unbeliever. LaGrange sides with Chrysostom because baptism is not a final judgment act. The fire of Matthew 3:12 is a separate image from the use of fire in 3:11.

Gaechter gives credit to Adolf Schlatter⁹ for pointing out that there is only one ὑμᾶς that is baptized, so Spirit and fire come to the same "you." Also, Schlatter shows that there is only one preposition, ἐν, that takes as its objects both Spirit and fire. The καί simply allies Spirit and fire and does not set them in opposition. Schlatter uses *Rektion* (complement or agreement) to describe this καί that connects Holy Spirit and fire as two complementary concepts.¹⁰ Gaechter, following Schlatter, says that Holy Spirit and fire are connected as a hendiadys.¹¹ Gaechter says that the two expressions, Holy Spirit and fire, give two expressions to the

⁷Willoughby C(harles) Allen, A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on The Gospel According to S. Matthew (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1912), 25-26.

⁸Alfred (Firmin) Loisy, The Origins of The New Testament, tr. L. P. Jacks (London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd), 117.

⁹Adolf Schlatter, Johannes der Taufer, 108, quoted in Gaechter, 97.

¹⁰Adolf Schlatter, Johannes der Taufer (Basel: Verlag Friedrich Reinhardt AG, 1956), 108.

¹¹A Hendiadys is an expression of an idea by two nouns connected by "and" (as cups and gold) instead of by a noun and an adjective (as golden cups). Webster's Seventh New Collegiate Dictionary (Springfield, MA: G. & C. Merriam Company, 1961), 388.

same profound reality.

A more complete and modern exposition of the text in Dunn's Chrysostom category would be that done by R. C. H. Lenski.¹² Lenski argues that the preposition ἐν in the phrases, ἐν ὕδατι and ἐν Πνεύματι,¹³ must have the same meaning. He argues against a locative meaning for ἐν. Although John's baptism was done in the water, the fulfillment¹⁴ at Pentecost of Jesus' baptism with the Holy Spirit does not call for a locative meaning. At Pentecost the Baptism was not done in the location of the Spirit or in the location of the fire. Lenski also argues against an instrumental idea where ἐν would be translated "with" because the Holy Spirit is not an instrument or a means like water or fire might be. Lenski argues that ἐν has its ordinary meaning "in connection with".¹⁵

Lenski says that the one preposition, ἐν, combines Spirit and fire, ἐν πνεύματι ἁγίῳ καὶ πυρί, making them one concept over against the one water. Lenski says that even when this is

¹²R. C. H. Lenski, The Interpretation of St. Matthew's Gospel, (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Publishing House, 1943), 116-118.

¹³Matt. 3:11 reads ἐν ὕδατι, but Luke 3:16 simply has the dative.

¹⁴Jesus himself indicates that Pentecost would be the fulfillment of John's prophecy. See Acts 1:5.

¹⁵Lenski, The Interpretation of St. Matthew's Gospel, 117.

recognized, it is usually misapplied. Instead of a Pentecost fulfillment, the Spirit is somehow conceived as immediately coming upon those baptized by the Messiah, but the fire is reserved for final judgment. The Old Testament idea that fire is a purifier is ignored.¹⁶ Pentecost itself, combining the Spirit and cloven tongues of fire, is the most obvious argument that fire does not have to imply judgment.

Leon Morris agrees that there is but one baptism because there is but one preposition, *ἐν*, and that this baptism is purifying. He points out that John must have had Joel 2:28-30 in mind because this prophecy, which would be fulfilled at Pentecost, not only speaks of the Spirit being poured out on all flesh, but in verse 30, it mentions fire.¹⁷

A Gracious Spirit But fire As Judgment

Origen, Dunn says,¹⁸ understood John's prophecy to be a double lustration-- the Holy Spirit for the repentant and the fire of everlasting punishment for the unrepentant. It may be that Dunn has categorized Origen wrong. A thematic

¹⁶Mal. 3:2, Zech. 13:9, Isa. 6:7, 1 Pet. 1:7 and Isa. 4:4.

¹⁷Leon Morris, The Gospel according to Matthew (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1992), 61-62.

¹⁸Dunn, "Spirit-and-Fire Baptism", 6.

anthology of Origen's writings¹⁹ shows that Origen considered baptism with water for repentance to be what a Christian undergoes on earth.²⁰ Elsewhere Origen calls the earthly Baptism "with water and the Spirit."²¹ What happens after death and in the process of entering heaven, though, involves fire. Origen says that Baptism with the Holy Spirit and with fire is the rebirth of washing through fire and the Spirit where the Christian becomes "like unto the glorious body" of Christ (Phil. 3:2). The water/Spirit baptism is on earth and the fire baptism after death. He maintains that after death we still need a sacrament that washes and purifies us, similar to the purification of Mary and Jesus 40 days after his birth. He thinks that after death one will encounter the Lord Jesus Christ standing in a river of fire with a flaming sword in hand. Those wanting to depart this life and to cross over into paradise will need to be baptized in this stream. They will have to have been baptized with water and the Spirit on earth so that they will be considered worthy of receiving the baptism of fire in Christ Jesus. Origen himself anticipated coming to that fire, but he did not anticipate traversing that fiery stream in the same way as the Apostles Peter and Paul.

¹⁹Origen, Spirit and Fire: A Thematic Anthology of His Writings, ed. Hans von Balthasar, trans. Robert J. Daly (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1984) 353-354.

²⁰*Ibid.*, 353.

²¹*Ibid.*, 354.

They will hear the words, "When you walk through fire you shall not be burned" (Isa. 43:2). Unbelievers, however, will not be baptized at the river of fire.²² Origen, then, did not consider the fire as judgment for the unbeliever, but as an after death purification for the believer who is on his way to heaven.

Whether Dunn may have put Origen in the wrong pigeon hole may matter much to historians, but probably matters little to exegetes. What does count is that there have been many exegetes who have followed the line of thinking that the baptism in the Spirit is for the repentant and the baptism in fire is the judgment of the unrepentant.

Rudolph Yaeger²³ helps contrast the Chrysostom and the so-called Origen views. He says that Chrysostom and others²⁴ translate the καί as ascensive.²⁵ An ascensive καί would add to and increase the meaning.²⁶ An ascensive καί is most

²²Ibid.

²³Rudolph O. Yeager, The Renaissance New Testament, vol. 4 (Woodbridge, VA: Renaissance Press Inc., 1979), p. 233.

²⁴Most Catholic expositors, Erasmus, Beza, Calvin, Clericus, Wetstein, Storr, Eichhorn, Kauffer, Olshausen, Glockler, Kuhn, Ewald, Meyer and J.F. & B. Ibid.

²⁵Robert W. Funk, trans. and ed., A Greek Grammar of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature, translation and revision of F. Blass and A. DeBrunner, Grammatik des neutestamentlichen Griechisch, incorporating supplementary notes by A. DeBrunner (The University of Chicago Press, 1961) Paragraph 442 (12), p. 228.

²⁶Ascensive means rising or tending to rise. Webster's, 51.

often translated "even," as in Matthew 5:46, and would cause the phrase to be translated, "He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit, even fire." Origen, Yaeger says, and others²⁷ translate καὶ adjunctively.²⁸ Fire, then, would not have anything essentially to do with the Holy Spirit, but is added to the image for the sake of adding to the purifying work of the Holy Spirit the work of fire. In this view fire is not essential to the Holy Spirit, but a tool the Holy Spirit uses. If the work of fire is the opposite of the work of the Holy Spirit, that is, if fire is for judgment and the Holy Spirit works to purify, then the καί is an adversative καί.²⁹ This would be translated, "He will baptize with the Holy Spirit and yet fire." This is the grammatical interpretation consonant with Dunn's misconception of Origen and with all those who see two baptisms, one with the Holy Spirit for purification and the other with fire for judgment. The fourth option is the *hendiadys* that Schlatter and Gaechter advocated.³⁰ This view treats the καὶ πῦρ as an alternative to τοῦ πνεύματος, a genitive

²⁷Several Fathers, Kuinoel, Schott, Fritzsche, Neander, de Wette, Paulus, Ammon, B. Crusius, Arnoldi, Hoffmann, Bleek, Keim, Volkmar, Hengstenberg, Weber and Gess are listed with Origen by Yaeger as understanding an adjunctive καὶ, Yaeger, 233.

²⁸Adjunctively describes the joining or addition of one thing or another even though the first thing has nothing essentially to do with the other. Websters, 12.

²⁹J[ohn] D[ewar] Denniston, The Greek Particles, 2nd Edition (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1954), 292-293.

³⁰See page 3.

that acts as an adjective. These four views will be discussed in Chapter II.³¹

Dunn cites Burton Easton³² as one who thinks that the Holy Spirit was for the repentant and fire for the unrepentant. Easton thinks that purifying fire would have been meaningless to the Baptist's audience; therefore fire must have the same sense as in Luke 3:9 and 17.³³ Julius Schniewind would be another who sees the fire for the

³¹See pages 43-45.

³²Burton Scott Easton, The Gospel According To St. Luke: A Critical and Exegetical Commentary (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1926), 40.

³³Most of the controversy regarding this verse has to do with the fire. Easton, however, adds a bit of controversy with regards to the Holy Spirit. He thinks that the Baptizer's prophecy would not have been fulfilled in Christian baptism. Luke, Easton says, would have known that in Christian baptism the baptized only receives a first pledge of the Spirit, the full endowment coming on the last day. He refers to Romans 8:23. Easton is wrong. In Romans 8:23 the genitive, τοῦ πνεύματος, is not partitive but appositional. Lenski in his commentary on Romans says, "The first fruits are the Spirit." (R. C. H. Lenski, The Interpretation of St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans [Minneapolis, Minn.: Augsburg Publishing House, 1936], 541.) The Scriptures do not divide the Spirit. C. Clarke Oke "A Suggestion with Regard to Romans 8:23," Interpretation: A Journal of Bible and Theology 11 (1957): 455-460 suggests that ἀπαρχή in Rom. 8:23, although it should be translated first-fruits elsewhere in the New Testament, has the connotation of "birth certificate" in Romans 8. He makes reference to George Milligan's Here and There Among The Papyri where ἀπαρχή is shown to be a technical term for birth certificate in Roman Egypt. If so, ἀπαρχή in Rom. 8:23 establishes the Christian's status as a child of God. The certificate which entitles the Christian registry as a child of God is the Spirit. The Spirit should not be divided up as Easton suggests.

unbeliever only.³⁴ He says that the Messiah baptizes either with the Spirit or with fire. He gives new life to the converted, but destroys those who oppose him. William Arndt is another who falls into this category.³⁵ He argues that the context, especially the use of the word 'fire' in verses 9 and 17, demands this view.

No Holy Spirit, Only Fire

Dunn³⁶ attributes the first comparatively modern twist to the interpretation of the phrase to C. A. Briggs.³⁷ Briggs attempted to construct a probable original Aramaic of John's preaching. The idea is that the text itself is not the truth, but that something behind the text is the truth. Briggs finds "Holy Spirit" to seem out of context. He thinks that "Holy Spirit" was added by Matthew and Luke to give a Pentecost explanation to John's original, "He will baptize you with fire." He does not see the fire as reserved for the afterlife. He sees John prophesying the coming of a Messiah who would baptize with fire, that is, exercise judgment.

³⁴Julius Schniewind, Das Evangelium nach Matthaus (Gottingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1964), 24-25.

³⁵William F. Arndt, Bible Commentary: The Gospel According To St. Luke (St. Louis, Mo.: Concordia Publishing House, 1956), 116-117.

³⁶Dunn, "Spirit-and-Fire Baptism", 82.

³⁷Charles Augustus Briggs, The Messiah of the Gospels (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1894), 66-68.

Briggs sees the Baptist having in mind the coming of the Son of Man in a cloud with the Ancient of Days and in the fiery stream, as in the apocalypse of Daniel.³⁸

Dunn notes that H. G. Marsh³⁹ followed Briggs. Marsh says that the Lewisian Syriac of Matthew 3:11 inverts the order and reads, "He shall baptize you with fire and with the Holy Spirit." This, Marsh says, may lend some support to Briggs' suggestion that the original Aramaic saying of John referred to fire alone and judgment alone. Other big names in Biblical criticism followed Briggs' lead. Julius Wellhausen⁴⁰ thinks that the Q-source blended the non-Christian fire-baptism tradition of John with the Christian Spirit-baptism tradition of Mark so that Jesus Christ could be identified with the fiery judge prophesied by the Baptizer. Martin Dibelius⁴¹ considers each of the Gospel writer's formulations of the phrase (that of Matthew, Mark and Luke) to be secondary. He thinks that a baptism with fire could not have come from the Jesus of the Gospels. Its source must have

³⁸Dan. 7:9-12.

³⁹H. G. Marsh, The Origin and Significance of the New Testament Baptism (Manchester, England: Manchester University Press, 1941), 28-30.

⁴⁰J[ulius] Wellhausen, Das Evangelium Matthaei (Berlin: Druck und Verlag von Georg Reimer, 1904), 6.

⁴¹Martin Dibelius, Die urchristliche Ueberlieferung von Johannes dem Tauffer, Forschungen zur Religion und Literatur des Alten und Neuen Testaments, 15. Heft (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1911), 56.

been John and his disciples. Rudolf Bultmann agrees⁴². He thinks the Q-source to have preserved the original baptism of fire. Whether Spirit was included in Q or added by Matthew and Luke when they melded it with Mark, Bultmann leaves open. In any event he considers the Baptizer to have originally prophesied a Messiah who would baptize with fire.

Eduard Schweizer compares Matthew 3:11 and Luke 3:16 to mixed-fruit.⁴³ One picks through the fruit to find Q (presumably the original John the Baptist) and the Markan tradition and the combination of the two that we find in the text. He says in his Kittel article on πνεῦμα⁴⁴ that there can be little doubt that the Q-source is the more original, and whether the Q-source included Holy Spirit or Spirit, it is not clear, but that it did include fire, Schweizer is convinced. He says that omission of καὶ πυρὶ is understandable, but not its addition, for there was never any baptism with fire. Therefore, fire must have been in the Q-source and on the Baptist's lips. We will show later⁴⁵ how the Dead Sea Scrolls prove wrong the assumption of these critics that John

⁴²Rudolf Bultmann, The History of the Synoptic Tradition, trans. John Marsh (New York: Harper & Row, 1963), 246.

⁴³Eduard Schweizer, Das Evangelium Nach Matthaus (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1973), 27.

⁴⁴Eduard Schweizer, "πνεῦμα", Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, Ed. Gerhard Friedrich, Trans. and Ed. Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1968), 6:398-399.

⁴⁵See pages 19-34.

could not have prophesied a Messiah pouring out a gracious Spirit.

Holy Wind and Fire

In 1897 A. B. Bruce⁴⁶ propounded the view that John's message has to be seen from John's standpoint and not in the light of what Jesus later taught or what Paul wrote. That standpoint, he suggests, was judgment upon the nation of Israel. It is not judgment upon the individual, which would be more in keeping with Jesus and Paul, but it is a stormy wind of judgment that sweeps away all that is light and worthless in the nation after, what Bruce calls, an Old Testament manner. The πνεῦμα ἅγιον is holy wind because it sweeps away the light and worthless. The fire burns up what the wind leaves. Bruce assumes that John is unconcerned with the individual in spite of the witness of the text. None of the Gospel writers have John address the nation, not even Jerusalem, but only individuals, calling them to repentance. Bruce's concept of John's preaching is not supported by the texts, nor is it supported with any extra-biblical historical evidence.

No Holy, Only Wind and Fire

Robert Eisler followed Bruce, but dropped the "holy" from

⁴⁶Alexander Balmain Bruce, The Expositor's Greek Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1897), 84.

what he thought the Baptist must have originally said.⁴⁷ Eisler writes that "holy" was a Christian interpolation into the original Baptist saying. Originally, Eisler thinks, the Baptist said something like this, "I baptize you with water, but he that cometh after me, whose shoes I am not worthy to draw off, he will baptize you with wind and with fire. His fan is already in his hand and he will sweep his threshing floor, and gather the wheat into his garner, but the chaff he will burn up with unquenchable fire."⁴⁸ Eisler refers to Psalm 1:4-5 where the wicked are pictured as chaff which the wind will blow away in judgment. The next verse (Matthew 3:12 and Luke 3:17) pictures a judgment of wind. The wind is not mentioned in that verse, but is supplied from our phrase, translating $\piνεῦμα$ (רוּחַ) as wind. This would explain, Eisler said, why the Baptist's disciples in Acts 19:2-4 were wholly ignorant of a Holy Spirit.⁴⁹ This wind of judgment would be purifying for Jerusalem, as in Isaiah 4:4, where Eisler interprets that the Lord would "purge the blood-guilt of Jerusalem from her midst by the wind of judgment, רוּחַ בְּשָׁפָה, and the wind of burning, רוּחַ בָּעֵר." The wheat gathered into the

⁴⁷Robert Eisler, The Messiah Jesus and John the Baptist, trans. Alexander Haggerty Krappe, (London: Methuen & Co. Ltd., 1931), 275-280.

⁴⁸Ibid., 275.

⁴⁹We will show that Acts 19:2 can be translated, "But we have not heard if the Holy Spirit is," that is, "is come." See pages 61-62.

granary, Eisler said, is regenerated Israel. Eisler's view is that the Baptist preached that those who are winnowed away by the wind of judgment are "as heathens because they have submitted to the yoke of the Romans and the Idumaeen dynasty."⁵⁰ Eisler supports his view of a wind of judgment from the Book of Jubilees, which Eisler thought was a Pharasaic work of the first century B.C. The discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls has helped narrow the dating and probable authorship of Jubilees. O. S. Wintermute concludes that Jubilees was written within a community of Hasidim or Essenes prior to the withdrawal by some of the members of the sect to Qumran, and that it was written between 161-140 B.C.⁵¹ In it Babel is overthrown by a mighty wind.⁵² Eisler thinks that the Baptist conceived of a tripartation of mankind through divine judgment as in Zechariah 3:8-9.⁵³ One-third will be put through the fire and refined. Two-thirds will be cut off and perish. So, Eisler's view is in reality both purification and judgment, but purification for the one-third of Israel would not be gentle. It, too, would come through wind and fire. There is no reason for Eisler to eliminate "Holy" from the phrase, especially since he believes one-third

⁵⁰Eisler, 276.

⁵¹O. S. Wintermute, "Jubilees," The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha, ed. James H. Charlesworth (Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1985), 2:43-44.

⁵²Eisler, 277.

⁵³Ibid., 278.

will be purified through wind and fire. Why not "Holy Wind and fire"? Eisler does not do justice to the word "baptize." He sees baptism as judgment for the two-thirds and purification for the one-third. Eisler gives no evidence that baptize can refer to an act that can either be gracious or in judgment depending upon the recipient.

H. J. Flowers⁵⁴ followed Eisler's lead and adds that wind and fire often indicated the presence of God in the Old Testament, as in the story of Elijah at Carmel. Pentecost also reflects this. The church has interpreted πνεῦμα in the sense of "spirit" and added "holy" to clarify. In doing so, Flowers thought, the church distorted the teaching of John, an expectation of apocalyptic wind and fire, not a cleansing, refreshing and comforting spirit. Ernest Best⁵⁵ follows Eisler and suggests further⁵⁶ that it may have been Jesus himself who changed the meaning of πνεῦμα from wind to Spirit, from destruction to redemption.

Carl Kraeling⁵⁷ supports the argument of Eisler and adds that the words of John may have been, "I baptize you with

⁵⁴H. J. Flowers, "ἐν πνεύματι ἁγίῳ καὶ πυρί", Expository Times, 64, Oct. 1952--Sept. 1953, ed. A. W. Hastings and E. Hastings (Edinburgh, T. & T. Clark) 155-156.

⁵⁵Ernest Best, "Spirit-Baptism", Novum Testamentum 4 (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1960): 236-243.

⁵⁶Ibid., 242.

⁵⁷Carl H. Kraeling, John the Baptist (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons; London: Charles Scribner's Sons, Ltd., 1951), 62-64.

water for repentance, and if you repent not in my baptism, he, the Messiah, will destroy you with his fiery breath or Spirit."⁵⁸ Kraeling explains how the Messiah's fiery breath could be described as a Baptism. Second Thessalonians 2:8 prophesies how the Lord Jesus would slay the lawless one with the breath of his mouth. That, and our phrase, Kraeling says, echoes Isaiah 11:4, "and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked."⁵⁹ Kraeling explains that the Messiah's fiery breath is part of a set of changing metaphors of messianic judgment. Among these are the sword coming from the Messiah's mouth of Rev. 2:16, the refiner's fire and the fiery oven of Mal. 3:2 and 4:1, the lake of fire of Rev. 19:20, 20:10 and 21:8, and especially the fiery stream that comes forth from before the Ancient of Days as he sits upon his throne in judgment, Dan. 7:10. Kraeling thinks that Origen in his Twenty-fourth Homily on Luke 3:16⁶⁰ preaches that Christians who have been baptized with water and Spirit but lack purification are baptized after death by Christ who stands in a river of fire. Kraeling says that Origen knows that the baptism of fire does not refer to Pentecost but to an act of judgment on the part of the Messiah.⁶¹ As was already shown, Origen thought Christ would stand in the fiery stream

⁵⁸Ibid., 63.

⁵⁹Ibid., 62.

⁶⁰See above, 6-7.

⁶¹Ibid., 116.

in order to purify believers on their way to heaven, not to use the fiery stream in judgment. Origen's river of fire and the fiery stream of Daniel reveal why John's baptism needed to be done in a river, Kraeling suggests. Kraeling is wrong, though, in thinking the running water of John's baptism symbolizes the fiery torrent of judgment.⁶² For the individual John's baptism pre-enacts his judgment. This eschatological context distinguishes John's baptism from the Jewish lustrations of his day.⁶³ As we will show, John's baptism pre-enacts the purifying, gracious action of the Spirit in Christ's baptism. Christ's purifying, cleansing baptism is eschatological, but not in judgment, in grace.

No Fire, Only Holy Spirit

Dunn points out two new developments in the debate. With renewed interest in *Redaktionsgeschichte* a number of scholars have argued that Mark contains the original tradition. Mark wrote first, Matthew second and Luke derived his version not from Q but from Matthew. E. E. Ellis follows this line of thinking when he says that "fire" is probably a Christian "pesher-ing to" the Pentecost fulfillment.⁶⁴ Ellis argues that when fire (as judgment) is regarded as the original word and Holy Spirit as the Christian re-interpretation, the fact

⁶²Ibid., 117.

⁶³Ibid., 118.

⁶⁴E. E. Ellis, The Gospel of Luke: The Century Bible (London, Thomas Nelson and Sons, Ltd., 1966) 89.

is overlooked that John is speaking to the faithful, ὑμᾶς, who are to be delivered from the judgment of fire. So, Mark had it right, "He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit." Matthew and Luke after him added the interpretation, "with fire." The question that has to be asked is why Luke did not add, "and fire," to Acts 1:5 if he added it in his Gospel.

The Dead Sea Scrolls

Water To Purify The Flesh
Spirit to Purify
The Soul

The second new development and by far the more important is the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls. The Briggs-Wellhausen-Dibelius-Bultmann interpretation that John could not have spoken of a Holy Spirit, especially a gracious Holy Spirit, was crushed with the discovery of the Scrolls. One passage, 1QS 3:6-9, shows how the Qumran sect thought that water could be used to wash away defilement and the Spirit of holiness was needed to purify from iniquities:

For by the spirit of the true counsel of God the ways of a man will be atoned for, all his iniquities. He will behold the light of life. In the Spirit of holiness (which is given) to the community in its truth he will be purified from all his iniquities. By a spirit of uprightness and humility his sin will be atoned for. When his soul is humbled before all the decrees of God, his flesh will be purified. He will be sprinkled with the water of purification and sanctified with the waters of washing.⁶⁵

⁶⁵B. E. Thiering, "Inner and Outer Cleansing at Qumran as Background to New Testament Baptism," New Testament Studies, 26 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), 267.

There were two locations of sin in Qumran thinking, one primary and the other secondary. The inner man is the primary location and the outer man, the flesh, the secondary. The inner man is cleansed by spirit and the outer man by water.⁶⁶ B. E. Thiering thinks that 1QS 3:6-9 shows water washing away ritual defilement from the outer man, that is from the flesh, but the Spirit of holiness purifying the inner man.

Thiering enters the examination of these verses armed with certain parallels that make a distinction between inner and outer locations of sin. Josephus' account of the baptisms of John made this distinction, "For the baptism would be acceptable to God if they used it, not for the putting away of certain sins, but for the purification of the body, the soul having previously been cleansed by righteousness."⁶⁷ This distinction between two locations for sin is also found in Heb. 10:22, ". . . with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water."⁶⁸ In Jesus' Sermon on the Mount we read that murder and adultery are first performed in the heart. Sin first exists through intentions. Knowing that these two locations of sin exist in other literature of that general time, Thiering suggests that

⁶⁶Thiering, "Inner and Outer Cleansing," 266-268.

⁶⁷Josephus Antiquities, 117, The Loeb Classical Library, translated by H. St. J. Thackeray and R. Marcus, printed by permission in The New Testament Background: Selected Documents, C. K. Barrett (New York, Harper & Row, 1961), 197.

⁶⁸RSV.

in Qumran there existed these two locations of sin, the inner, which is the primary, and the outer, which is the secondary. This distinction between inner purification not by water and purification of the flesh by water is grounded in the Old Testament distinction between sin and ritual impurity.⁶⁹ In the Old Testament, sacrifice was the means of removing sin, while water the usual means of removing ritual impurity.

Separated and alienated from the Temple, it is possible that Qumran no longer used sacrifice as the way to remove sin. Whether the Qumran sect practiced sacrifice is open to debate among scholars. Even if they did practice sacrifice, though, the frequency and importance of sacrifice was probably significantly diminished. The literature has but scant reference to it. At Qumran, the inner virtue or spirit of uprightness belonging to the community probably took the place of sacrifice. The frequent washings were not sacrifices. These washings remained the way to wash off ritual impurity, but the inner cleansing by spirit was greater because it got to the essence of sin.⁷⁰

The water-washing, Thiering thinks, was part of the first stage of inclusion into the community at Qumran. Daily ablutions would follow as the flesh could again become

⁶⁹Thiering, "Inner and Outer Cleansing," 268.

⁷⁰Ibid., 269.

ritually defiled.⁷¹ After a period of probation, the full initiation rite involving spirit-cleansing brought one into full inclusion into the community. In 1QS 6:3-23 this process is described:

Every man from Israel who volunteers to be added to the Council of the community shall be questioned by the מִקְיָר at the head of the Many concerning his insight and his works. If he is capable of discipline (יְשִׁינוּ מוֹסֵר), he shall bring him into the Covenant to turn to truth and to depart from all evil. He shall instruct him in all the laws of the community. Then afterwards, when he brings him to stand before the Many, they shall all test his case (וְנִשְׁאַלּוּ הַכֹּל עַל דְּבָרָיו). According to the way the decision (lot) goes according to the counsel of the Many, he shall be either brought near or sent away. If he is brought near to the Council of the community, he shall not touch the Purity (טְהוּרָה) of the Many until he has been examined concerning his spirit and works on the completion of another full year. Also, he shall not mingle his property with that of the Many. When he has completed a year in the midst of the community, the Many shall examine his case concerning his insight and his works in the Torah. If the decision is made to bring him near to the סִידָר⁷² of the community, under the authority of the priests and the multitude of the men of their covenant, his wealth and his income will be brought near and put into the hands of the הַמְבַקֵּר over the income of the Many. It shall be inscribed by him in the record, but he shall not spend it on behalf of the Many. He shall not touch the Drink of the Many until he has completed a second year in the midst of the men of the community. At the completion of the second year he shall be examined under the authority of the Many. If the decision is made to admit him to the community, he shall be inscribed in the order of his ranking in the midst of his brothers, for law, judgement [*sic*], the Purity, and the mingling of his wealth, and his council

⁷¹B. E. Thiering, "Qumran Initiation and New Testament Baptism" (New Testament Studies, 27, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981) 620.

⁷²Pointed Hebrew text inserted from "מְנִילֵת הַסְרָצִימ", הַבְּרָמָה, מְנִילֵת מְרַבֵּר יְהוּדָה, אֲבֵרָהמָה מֵאִיר (Israel: Machbaroth Lesifruth Publishing House, 1959), 66.

and judgement [sic] will be for the community.⁷³

There were four steps, occurring on four consecutive Pentecosts, within the two grades, provisional and full membership.⁷⁴ Step one, a Jew would request of the פקיד, the one in charge, inclusion into the sect. Step two, the פקיד, would bring him before the community where they would make a decision of whether or not to admit him into provisional membership. Step three, his property is received by the community, but not spent. At this stage he may touch the Purity of the Many, but not yet the Drink of the Many.⁷⁵ Thiering is of the opinion that the Purity of the Many is bread, the subordinate element at meals. The Drink of the Many, she thinks, is the wine of the meal.⁷⁶ This, she thinks, is because in Qumran verbal usage, ". . . when two different ranks in a hierarchy are paired, the subordinate is described by a term general to the two, the superior by a term special to it."⁷⁷ Here the general term, Purity of the Many, is used to describe the bread. The special term is The Drink of the Many. In the fourth step on the fourth Pentecost full membership is given, participation in the full meal, including

⁷³Thiering, "Qumran Initiation And New Testament Baptism", 616.

⁷⁴Ibid., 616.

⁷⁵Ibid., 616-617.

⁷⁶Ibid., 619.

⁷⁷Ibid., 618.

the wine, and the member's property becomes fully mingled with the community. Now he can no longer leave.⁷⁸ Water washing to cleanse the flesh from ritual defilement is done during the second Pentecost ceremony. After this, regular water washing is done to cleanse the flesh from defilement.⁷⁹ The inner, spiritual, final membership in the community took place over the next two years. Thiering believes the Spirit of holiness of 1QS 3:7 which was thought to be given to the community was considered to purify the new member of all his iniquities during the next two years of initiation.

Future Time Purification Of
The Flesh and Spirit
Become One

At the Visitation the flesh and spirit would come together and the cleansing of the outward and the purification of the inward would become one. 1QS 4:18-22 takes us from present time to future time, to the Visitation, where God would destroy evil forever. Beginning at verse 20 we read:

Then God will cleanse by his truth all the works of man (נִכְר) ⁸⁰ and will purify for himself the frame of man (אִישׁ). ⁸¹ He will destroy every spirit of iniquity from the defilements of his flesh. He will purify him by the Spirit of holiness from all evil deeds. He will sprinkle upon him a spirit of truth like waters of purification from every lying abomination and from being polluted in a spirit of impurity. He will cause the

⁷⁸Ibid., 619.

⁷⁹Ibid., 620.

⁸⁰מניל הסרכים, הברמו 63.

⁸¹Ibid.

upright to understand the knowledge of the Most High and the wisdom of the sons of heaven, and cause the perfect of way to have insight.⁸²

In the Visitation, it seems, the distinction between flesh and spirit is no longer there. The Spirit of holiness and the waters of purification come together. A Spirit of truth is sprinkled on נִכְר like waters of purification. Spirit, formally quite different from water, now becomes like water.⁸³

A Spirit-Sprinkled Mighty Man Or A Spirit-Sprinkled People

How נִכְר is translated, as a singular or as a collective, determines whether one thinks that this passage refers to a spirit-sprinkled mighty man or to man collectively. A. R. C. Leaney considers it collective.⁸⁴ He calls the collective understanding a more conservative interpretation that is more in keeping with all other evidence about the sect's eschatological expectations. Thiering agrees, noting that נִכְר is used at the end of verse 23 as a collective.⁸⁵ It is, however, an unusual choice of a Hebrew word for mankind collectively. Throughout the Old Testament it is used to

⁸²Thiering, "Qumran and New Testament Baptism," 271.

⁸³Ibid., 271.

⁸⁴A(lfred) R(Robert) C(lare) Leaney, The Rule Of Qumran And Its Meaning (London: SCM Press Ltd, 1966), 157.

⁸⁵Thiering, "Qumran and New Testament Baptism," in footnote 17, 271.

connote strength and might. It is man as strong, distinguishing him from women, children and other non-combatants.⁸⁶ The נִכְרִי is the hero who defends collective mankind. In adjectival form, it is used to modify the word God in the messianic prophecy of Isaiah 9:5 (Hebrew.) The word itself sets itself apart from mankind in general. It refers either to a hero or to an army of mighty men, but not to all mankind.

Dunn thinks that the Isaiah scroll found in Cave I at Qumran links a Spirit-anointed Messiah and a divine outpouring of the Spirit in the messianic age.⁸⁷ Isaiah 52:14-15a in that scroll reads, "As many were astonished at him-- so did I anoint his face more than man's, and his form beyond that of the sons of men-- so shall he *sprinkle* many nations because of himself. . . ."⁸⁸ William Brownlee argues for "face" in verse 14, as opposed to "appearance" to translate מְרֹאדוֹ.⁸⁹ This Hebrew word in late Hebrew seemed to have changed in meaning from appearance to face. Brownlee cites the Song of Songs 2:14 where a lover longs to see his maiden's face, something real, as opposed to appearance. Her voice is sweet

⁸⁶Brown, Francis, S(amuel) R. Driver and Charles A. Briggs, A Hebrew And English Lexicon Of The Old Testament (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1974), 150.

⁸⁷Dunn, "Spirit-and-Fire Baptism," 89.

⁸⁸Ibid., 89-90.

⁸⁹William Hugh Brownlee, The Meaning of The Qumran Scrolls for The Bible (New York: Oxford University Press, 1964), 213.

and her face, as opposed to appearance, is comely. The key to understanding the Covenanters interpretation of Isaiah 52:14-15a is in the noun, **מִרְאֵהוּ**. Dunn supports the interpretation of Brownlee⁹⁰ that the covenanters of Qumran understood **יָזַה**, the Hiphil of **זָהַר**, to mean sprinkle and that the covenanters thought of a Spirit-anointed Messiah anointing or sprinkling with the Spirit. First, Dunn says, the Hiphil of **יָזַה** is always used in the Old Testament of ritual sprinkling, either for consecration or for cleansing.⁹¹ And if cleansing is the reason for the sprinkling of Isa. 52:14-15, then it must have been regarded as something the Messiah would do through the Holy Spirit, because the Holy Spirit was regarded in the scrolls as a cleansing power.⁹² Second, **יָזַה** occurs only twice in the Scrolls and both times have to do with the water of purification⁹³ and one of those passages, 1QS 4:21, speaks of God sprinkling a spirit of truth upon man (**יְזַרְהוּ**) like waters for purification.⁹⁴ Dunn says this echoes Ezek. 36:25-27, "I will sprinkle clean water upon you. . . . A new heart I

⁹⁰Brownlee, The Meaning of The Qumran Scrolls for The Bible, 206-214.

⁹¹Dunn, "Spirit-and-Fire Baptism," 90.

⁹²Ibid., 90. Dunn notes 1QS 3:7-9; 1QH 16:12; 7:6; 17:26; and frag. 2:9, 13.

⁹³1QS 3:9 and 4:21.

⁹⁴See above, 19.

will give you and a new spirit I will put within you. . . . And I will put my spirit within you. . . ." ⁹⁵ Dunn also refers to the Damascus Rule 2:12 where the Old Testament prophets are called "anointed ones" who made known the Holy Spirit to the remnant, to men called by name. So, the idea that the Holy Spirit would be passed on by a Messiah or messiahs either was present in Qumran or was not far off. ⁹⁶ Joseph Fitzmyer speaking of the Qumran texts in relation to John says, "Against the background of such a notion it is not impossible to understand John speaking of Jesus, the Messiah, as the bearer of the Spirit." ⁹⁷ That is an understatement.

Dunn's conclusion is that either Qumran already thought that the Messiah would be anointed by the Spirit or it was a tiny step for John the Baptist to preach a Spirit-anointed Messiah whose ministry would involve an eschatological outpouring of the Spirit. Dunn thinks this Spirit would be an instrument of judgment, linking Isaiah 11:2 with Isaiah 11:4. The Spirit-anointed Messiah would slay the wicked with the breath, רוּחַ, of his lips. ⁹⁸

⁹⁵Portions of Ezek. 36:25-27a, RSV.

⁹⁶Dunn, "Spirit-and-Fire Baptism," 91-92.

⁹⁷Joseph Fitzmyer, The Gospel According to Luke, The Anchor Bible (Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1981), 474.

⁹⁸Dunn, "Spirit-and-Fire Baptism," 91.

Was John The Baptist Raised
At Qumran?

For the purpose of defeating the arguments of those who would dissect the text and eliminate the Holy Spirit from John's mouth by saying that John could not have preached a gracious Holy Spirit or a Spirit-anointed Messiah, it is not necessary to make a historical connection between John and Qumran. It is only necessary to show that before John and before the New Testament era there were those who believed in a gracious eschatological outpouring of the Holy Spirit. If Qumran taught a Spirit-anointed Messiah pouring out the Spirit, then it is more plausible that John could have proclaimed the same.

It is interesting, nevertheless, to attempt to link John and Qumran, at least to make such a link plausible. A closer link with Qumran not only would make a gracious outpouring of the Holy Spirit on John's lips more believable, but such a link may help us interpret what John meant when he said, "He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire." John A. T. Robinson painted a picture that links John and Qumran.⁹⁹ Robinson pushes to its limits the hypothesis that John had a connection with the Qumran community.

The hypothesis is this: John was born to aging parents in

⁹⁹John A. T. Robinson, "The Baptism of John and the Qumran Community: Testing a Hypothesis", in Twelve New Testament Studies (Naperville, IL: Alec R. Allenson, Inc., 1962), 11-27.

the hill-country of Judea and was raised in the wilderness.¹⁰⁰ His father was a priest, but we next find John¹⁰¹ not exercising his priestly office, but living as an ascetic prophet, preaching and baptizing. Is it not possible that at the death of his parents John was reared in the desert discipline of Qumran? The Covenanters had¹⁰² a considerable following among rural priestly families, at least one for every ten of its members. Qumran was not far from the Judean hill-country. If one assumes that the Qumran community is Essene in character, then the testimony of Josephus that they adopted other men's children to mold them in accordance with their own principles¹⁰³ would make the adoption of John by the Essene Covenanters a possibility.

When the adult John appears in Matthew 3 and Luke 3 he has no connections with any other community. He is an individual prophet, quite distinctive and independent. Isa. 40:3, all four Gospels attest, is the *raison d'être* of his ministry, "A voice cries: 'In the wilderness prepare the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God.'"¹⁰⁴ This verse is quoted in the Manual of

¹⁰⁰Luke 1:5-80.

¹⁰¹Matthew 3 and Luke 3.

¹⁰²1 QS 6:3; 1 QSa 2:22; CDC 15:5.

¹⁰³Flavius Josephus, The Wars of the Jews, Book 2, Chapter 8, Paragraph 120, trans. William Whiston, The Works of Josephus (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1987), 605.

¹⁰⁴Isa. 40:3, RSV.

Discipline¹⁰⁵ with this introduction, "Now when these things come to pass in Israel to the Community, according to these rules, they will separate themselves from the midst of the session (or habitation) of perverse men to go to the wilderness to clear there the way of (the Lord), as it is written. . . ." At first sight, Robinson says, this would appear to be a description of the present life of the Community, but the words, "Now when these things come to pass in Israel," is a formula used twice in neighboring passages¹⁰⁶ to indicate a future, eschatological stage not yet reached by the Covenanters.¹⁰⁷ This stage will be when the Community, purified from every contamination, will separate itself from the world by marching out into the desert, ready for the final conflict between the sons of light and the sons of darkness, and prepared for the coming of the Prophet and the Messiahs of Aaron and Israel.¹⁰⁸ It may be, Robinson postulates,¹⁰⁹ that John went out from the Community convinced by the word of God¹¹⁰ that the eschatological moment was nearer than the Community believed,

¹⁰⁵1QS 8:12-16.

¹⁰⁶1 QS 8:4 and 9:3.

¹⁰⁷Robinson, "The Baptism of John and the Qumran Community," 14.

¹⁰⁸Ibid., alluding to 1 QS 9:11.

¹⁰⁹Ibid., 15.

¹¹⁰Luke 3:2.

so that, "Even now the axe is laid to the root of the trees. . . ."¹¹¹ So, he summoned the people to be baptized for the remission of sins and promised the coming of a Stronger One who would purify them further with the Holy Spirit and fire.¹¹² John was not inviting the people to a Qumran-like community marked by constant rites of cleansing, but to a final purification in anticipation of the imminent coming of the Mighty One.¹¹³

In 1QS 4:20-21¹¹⁴ one reads of a Spirit of truth that will be sprinkled upon a man, נִכְרַךְ, as purifying water, paralleling our phrase, "He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire." It is important to point out that נִכְרַךְ is the term for a warrior, a champion. The Holy Spirit would come upon this champion so that he might pour out the Spirit upon others. This is what is meant in the Gospel of John when John the Baptist says, "He on whom you see the Spirit descend

¹¹¹ Matthew 3:10 = Luke 3:9.

¹¹² Robinson is of the opinion that Qumran itself considered baptism not only to wash away outward impurities, but to remove sin. Thus, baptism, in his view, supplanted sacrifice as the way to forgive sins. Thiering (p. 18-19 above) thinks that Qumran's baptism only removed the external impurities. The Spirit resident in the Community removed inner sin. Thus, in Thiering's view, the Spirit within the Community supplanted sacrifice. John either followed Qumran (Robinson) or went further than Qumran (Thiering) with respect to the remission of sins in baptism.

¹¹³ Robinson, "The Baptism of John and the Qumran Community," 17.

¹¹⁴ See page 24 above.

and remain, this is he who baptizes with the Holy Spirit."¹¹⁵ The Spirit came upon Christ at his baptism so that he might pour out the Spirit upon others. In his commentary on Luke, A. R. C. Leaney says that Qumran's Manual of Discipline¹¹⁶ teaches that God will purge and refine with a Holy Spirit. In Malachi¹¹⁷ the Lord's messenger will purify by fire. In the Gospels he will purify with both Spirit and fire.¹¹⁸

Robinson pushes his hypothesis to the limit. He does not purport to have proved a historical link between John the Baptist and Qumran. He has, however, opened the question and shown that such a link should be seen as possible. There are many differences between John and Qumran. John does not tell his hearers to join a community, nor does he advocate repeated baptisms, nor does he emphasize ritual purity, to name a few. John is unique on the pages of Scripture and history. He is the last of the Old Testament prophets, but he appears on the pages of the New. Although he is very much different from Qumran, this great theme of the Messiah who would pour out the Spirit in the last days is found in the Scrolls. Geographical proximity in the Judaeian desert, John's presumed orphaning,

¹¹⁵John 1:33 cited in Robinson, 25.

¹¹⁶1QS 4:20. See pages 24-25 above.

¹¹⁷Mal. 3:3.

¹¹⁸A. R. C. Leaney, A Commentary on the Gospel According to St. Luke (London: Adam & Charles Black, 1958), 40.

the Essene practice of adopting boys and theological parallels, such as the Spirit-anointed Messiah, make Robinson's hypothesis that John spent some time with the Essenes one that should not be lightly rejected. Whether there is a historical link between John and Qumran is not absolutely essential for this thesis. Parallels between John and Qumran can be drawn without concluding that John was dependent upon Qumran for his teaching. The parallels do, however, make more plausible John prophesying the coming of a Spirit-anointed Messiah who would purify with Spirit and fire.

Briggs, Wellhausen and the others who followed them have been corrected. Qumran spoke of a gracious Spirit being sprinkled like water upon a mighty man during the Visitation. It is now easier to see that John the Baptist could have spoken of a gracious Spirit connected with the baptism of the Stronger One coming after him. The Dead Sea Scrolls have proven that the phrase, *Αὐτὸς ὑμᾶς Βαπτίσει ἐν πνεύματι ἁγίῳ καὶ πυρί*, need not be chopped up to make it fit the mouth of John the Baptist. The scrolls support the integrity of the text.

CHAPTER II
THE INTERPRETATION OF THE PHRASE
HE WILL BAPTIZE YOU WITH THE
HOLY SPIRIT AND FIRE

Αὐτός

The disciples of John came to Jesus to inquire for their imprisoned master, "Are you he who is to come, or shall we look for another?"¹ This verse and other preconceived notions of what sort of Messiah John could have expected have convinced many critics that the One whom John was expecting could not be the Spirit-anointed Christ the Gospels reveal. Qumran has condemned the critics and given credence to the Scriptures. Qumran was expecting a Spirit-anointed Messiah or messiahs. Qumran was expecting a visitation in which the inner man and the outer man would be purified no longer by water but by the Spirit of truth. Qumran has cast us back on the Scriptures themselves and shown that John could very conceivably have expected a "he," αὐτός, who graciously bestows the Spirit.

John uses αὐτός even though the subject is inherent in the verb, βαπτίσει. Rudolph Yaeger says the reason for the emphasis

¹Matt. 11:3, RSV.

is nearby.² Luke 3:15 provides the answer. The people wanted to know if John were the Christ. He said, "I," Ἐγώ, "baptize you with water. . . he," αὐτός, "will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire." The use of the pronoun serves to contrast Ἐγώ and αὐτός.

The prophesy of John the Baptist is followed in all three Synoptics by the Baptism of Jesus.³ The Spirit of God came upon or even over him, ἐπ' αὐτόν, Matthew and Luke attest.⁴ John uses the same preposition, but adds that the Spirit "remains," ἔμεινεν ἐπ' αὐτόν.⁵ Mark uses εἰς αὐτόν.⁶ The Spirit goes into him and, Mark adds, "drives," ἐκβάλλει,⁷ him into the wilderness. Matthew and Luke have him led into the wilderness by the Spirit to be tempted by the devil.⁸ Luke has him return by the Spirit into Galilee to begin his ministry.⁹ Luke has him testify to his anointing by the Spirit for

²Rudolph O. Yaeger, The Renaissance New Testament, (Woodbridge, VA: Renaissance Press, 1979), 4:232.

³The Fourth Gospel adds more testimony of John about the Christ and the Baptism of the Christ, but does not record Jesus' actual Baptism.

⁴Matt. 3:16 and Luke 3:22.

⁵John 1:32.

⁶Mark 1:10.

⁷Mark 1:12.

⁸Matt. 4:1 and Luke 4:1.

⁹Luke 1:14.

ministry at his homecoming sermon in Nazareth.¹⁰ Matthew has him testify, "But if it is by the Spirit of God that I cast out demons, then the kingdom of God has come upon you."¹¹ It is clearly the testimony of all four Gospels that the anointing by the Spirit initiated and empowered the ministry of Jesus.

Ὑμᾶς-- Only One You

There is only one Ὑμᾶς, you, in the phrase. John is addressing those who are coming to him for baptism.¹² Matthew's Gospel may leave us wondering whether he is addressing a brood of viperous, unrepentant Pharisees and Sadducees or whether he is addressing those who would repent and submit to baptism. Luke's Gospel makes it clear that our phrase is addressed to the multitudes who were willing to amend their sinful lives, "What then shall we do?",¹³ and to people who were expecting the Christ, "As the people were in expectation. . . ."¹⁴ To these John says, "I baptize you, Ὑμᾶς, with water; but he who is mightier than I is coming, the thong of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie; he will

¹⁰Luke 4:16-20.

¹¹Matt. 12:28.

¹²Matt. 3:11a and Luke 3:16a.

¹³Luke 3:10-14.

¹⁴Luke 3:15, RSV.

baptize you, ὑμᾶς, with the Holy Spirit and with fire."¹⁵

The repentant and expectant multitudes received John's baptism and were promised the baptism of the Mightier One. Matthew tells us that the baptizees were those from Jerusalem, all Judea and all the region around the Jordan.¹⁶ It is Israel who is the ὑμᾶς. If this is proselyte baptism, then all men are treated as heathen. All men are treated as sinners. It is not the purpose of this paper to analyze the nature of the baptism of John. The question, however, does touch the topic of this thesis. Suffice it to say that John's baptism, whether proselyte in nature or not, puts all men, Pharisees and Sadducees,¹⁷ as well as tax collectors, soldiers¹⁸ on the same plane. John's baptism was for the forgiveness of sins.¹⁹ It would make no sense for John to dispense forgiveness to those whom the Messiah would destroy with fire. It would make sense for John to announce forgiveness to those who would receive the Messiah's baptism. The context in Luke's Gospel makes it clear that the ὑμᾶς is the repentant who were submitting to baptism. The ὑμᾶς in Matthew's Gospel

¹⁵Luke 3:16, RSV. Matt. 3:11 adds, ". . .for repentance."

¹⁶Matthew 3:5.

¹⁷Matthew 3:7-10.

¹⁸Luke 3:12-14.

¹⁹As in every instance of the forgiveness of sins in the Bible, the source of that forgiveness is the atoning sacrifice of Christ.

is also directed to the repentant. John the Baptist's words of warning called sinners to repentance, "Bear fruit that befits repentance."²⁰ The unrepentant would turn away from John's baptism. The repentant, the ὑμᾶς, would submit.

βαπτίζει

Some think that the context demands the Messiah to administer two baptisms, the baptism of the Holy Spirit for the repentant and the baptism of fire for the unrepentant. The chaff being burned with unquenchable fire in the following verse might lead to this conclusion. Throughout the New Testament, however, baptism cleanses. βαπτίζω is used 51 times in the New Testament²¹ and, aside from our phrase, there are only two that may indicate that baptizing is anything but a blessing. In Luke 12:50 Jesus says that he is distressed until the completion of his baptism. This is tied in with casting fire upon the earth in verse 49 and with bringing division into a family, verse 51.²² Mark 10:38-39, also,

²⁰Matthew 3:8, RSV.

²¹W. F. Moulton and A. S. Geden, A Concordance to the Greek Testament, 4th ed., revised by H. K. Moulton (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1963), 138.

²²Dunn thinks that for Luke the baptism of Jesus culminated in the cross where Jesus accepted the messianic baptism of Spirit-and-fire on behalf of his people. Luke 12:49 bridges the baptism of Jesus and the cross. Once Jesus had faced the fiery, bloody bath of the cross, then he could bestow the baptism of the Holy Spirit upon others. The cross had to be first, then Pentecost. James D. G. Dunn, Baptism in the Holy Spirit (London: SCM Press LTD, 1970), 42.

indicates that James and John would undergo the baptism of Jesus and ties it in with drinking Jesus' cup, the cup of God's wrath.²³ These two places in the New Testament figuratively use the verb βαπτίζω. In all other cases the usage is for good, either for John's baptism, the baptism of Jesus, Christian baptism, or ceremonial washing. Unless there are compelling reasons to interpret otherwise, the weight of the New Testament evidence would have us interpret βαπτίζω as a grace-filled act of God. As we shall see, however, even though baptism may be a grace-filled act of God, it does not mean that it is not a radical, fiery purifying from sin. The purifying fire of Baptism is grace, a gift.

Βαπτίζω is used four times in the Septuagint.²⁴ Three of them are: Naaman's bath in the Jordan,²⁵ Judith's nightly baths to cleanse herself of Assyrian impurity,²⁶ and a conclusion in Ben Sirach²⁷ that a bath is useless if one touches a dead body afterward. All three attest to βαπτίζω being good. In Isaiah 21:4 in the Septuagint βαπτίζω is used

²³In the Garden of Gethsemane, Mark 14:35-36, Jesus prays that the cup or the hour might be removed from him if it is His Father's will. This calls to mind the Old Testament image of the cup of God's righteous wrath, as in Isaiah 51:17.

²⁴Edwin Hatch and Henry A. Redpath, A Concordance to the Septuagint, (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Book House, 1987), 1:138.

²⁵2 Kings 5:14.

²⁶Judith 12:7.

²⁷Sirach 31 (34):25.

figuratively for lawlessness coming over one. For the most part, however, the verb, although used little in the Septuagint, means wash. In response to Ladd there must be another concept besides baptism that ties Matthew 3:11 with verse 12 and Luke 3:16 with verse 17. That concept is, as shall be argued, the person of God. The Septuagint would have us interpret βαπτίζω as something that cleanses and blesses.

ἐν—One "In"

That there are not two baptisms, but one, is not only evident from the one "you," ὑμᾶς, but also from the one "in," ἐν. The one preposition unites Holy Spirit with fire into one baptism. M. J. Harris²⁸ says that generally speaking a preposition tends to be repeated before a series of nouns joined by καί. Sometimes, however, in biblical Greek, under Semitic influence, more than in non-Biblical Greek, the non-use of the second or third preposition may be theologically significant, indicating that the two or three nouns belong naturally together. One of the examples Harris gives is the phrase, ἐν πνεύματι ἀγίῳ καὶ πυρί. To understand πυρί one must tie it with πνεύματι ἀγίῳ. The question is, in what sense does the preposition tie the nouns, Spirit and fire, together?

²⁸M. J. Harris, The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology, ed. Colin Brown (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1978), 3:1178.

R. C. H. Lenski argues that the prepositions in the phrases ἐν ὕδατι and ἐν πνεύματι ought to have the same meaning. If the force of ἐν is that in baptism one is *immersed* in water, as some would have it, then one must be also *immersed* in Holy Spirit and fire. Immersion in Spirit and fire does not make sense. If the force of ἐν is locative, then both John's baptism must happen in the location of the water and the Messiah's baptism must happen in the location of the Spirit and fire. Only Origen made sense of this by putting the fire baptism in the afterlife on the way to heaven. Lacking any firm Scriptural witness to Origen's idea, however, compels us to reject it. Most usages of ἐν in the New Testament are imitations of the Hebrew ׀, usually a simple instrumental usage.²⁹ If the force of ἐν is instrumental, then the water is the instrument of John's baptism and the Spirit and fire are the instruments of the Messiah's baptism. The Spirit, however, cannot be thought of as an instrument or as a means in the same way as water and fire might be. The Spirit is God, not a means to get to God. None of these three ideas fit both phrases. Lenski favors an ordinary

²⁹Robert Funk, trans. and ed., A Greek Grammar of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature, translation and revision of F. Blass and A. DeBrunner, Grammatik des neutestamentlichen Griechisch, incorporating supplementary notes by A. DeBrunner (The University of Chicago Press, 1961), 117-118.

meaning for ἐν of "in connection with"³⁰ so that John baptized in connection with water and Jesus in connection with the Holy Spirit and fire. "In connection with" makes sense in both prepositional phrases.

καί-- Adversative, Adjunctive, Ascensive or Hendiadys

The decision regarding which grammatical label to give the καί in our text is dependent upon the interpretation of the text. There is no compelling choice based purely upon grammar. The interpretation of the text leads one to decide among four choices: adversative, adjunctive, ascensive and hendiadys. The καί could be adversative in the sense of "and yet,"³¹ such as, "He is 80 years old, and (yet) he runs ten miles a day." If one opts for an adversative understanding of καί, in our text, then fire would have to be seen as something unlike Holy Spirit. Fire, as will be demonstrated, is consonant with holy. The καί could be seen as adjunctive. An adjunct is something joined to or added to something else but not essentially a part of it.³² As will be shown, fire is characteristic of God. The writer to the Hebrews exclaims,

³⁰R. C. H. Lenski, The Interpretation of Matthew's Gospel, (Minneapolis, MN, Augsburg Publishing House, 1943), 116-117.

³¹J(ohn) D(ewar) Denniston, The Greek Particles, 2nd Edition (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1954), 292.

³²Webster's Seventh New Collegiate Dictionary (Springfield, MA: G. & C. Merriam Company, 1961), 12. See footnote 24, p. 8.

"For our God is a consuming fire."³³ When this fiery God works in baptism, the result is purification. When this fiery God judges, the chaff is burned in unquenchable fire. An ascensive καί is not strongly supported by the grammars. The example given in Funk³⁴ is Matthew 5:46, "οὐχὶ καὶ οἱ Τελῶναι τὸ αὐτὸ ποιοῦσιν." Καὶ is translated "even." Bauer's lexicon does not give an example of two nouns connected ascensively by καί.³⁵ The ascensive καί comes close to connecting Holy Spirit and fire in the way this writer thinks is the proper meaning. It raises the meaning to a higher level. The ascensive interpretation is that not only does he purify in his baptism with the Holy Spirit, but he purifies with fire. The hendiadys, however, comes closer. The hendiadys is the co-ordination of two ideas, one of which is dependent upon the other in order to avoid a series of dependent genitives.³⁶ Instead of reading, "with the Holy Spirit of fire," our text reads, "with the Holy Spirit and fire," but the prior is closer to the meaning. The idea is that fire is another way of describing the Holy Spirit and His on-going work. The

³³Hebrews 12:29.

³⁴Funk, 228.

³⁵Walter Bauer, A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature, trans. and revised William F. Arndt and F. Wilbur Gingrich, 2nd edition revised and augmented by Gingrich and Frederick W. Danker (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1979), 393 (II. 2.)

³⁶Funk, 228.

essential description is the Holy Spirit. The description that adds to the meaning is καί πυρί, but the fire that is added is characteristic of the work of the Holy Spirit.

Of the four choices, the one that the text does not support is the adversative interpretation. If fire were the opposite of Holy Spirit, then there would be of necessity two prepositions, not just one, ἐν. If fire were the opposite of Holy Spirit, then there would be two recipients of the baptism, instead of one, ὑμᾶς. If fire were the opposite of Holy Spirit, then there would be two baptisms, one for purification and the other for judgment. As it is, there is but one baptism. The other three grammatical choices all essentially reflect the meaning of the text. Whether the choice is adjunctive, ascensive or hendiadys, there is only one baptism. The fire in all three cases adds to the meaning of, "He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit." All three choices make the work of fire similar to the work of the Holy Spirit. All three choices beg an understanding of the work of both the Holy Spirit and fire that is purifying.

πυρί

Fire as Purifying

Eleazar the priest told Israel's soldiers that when they brought back booty of war they were to pass the booty through the fire, if it could stand the fire, and then it would be clean.³⁷ After purification by fire, it should also be purified with water, he said, and everything that could not stand the fire, such as clothing, should be purified with water alone.³⁸ Fire was a purifier. The Lord through Isaiah³⁹ promises to purify Jerusalem by fire, smelting away the dross and removing the alloy so that they would be like judges and counselors of old. In a clearly eschatological passage, Malachi prophesies that the Lord would purify the sons of Levi in a smelter, as one would purify gold and silver.⁴⁰ Through Zechariah the Lord promises to purify one-third of Israel with fire. He would refine them like silver and test them like gold.⁴¹ The two-thirds are cut off and smitten. They are not burned. In Zechariah fire is a purifier, not a destroyer. Fire can clearly be a purifier in the Old Testament.

³⁷Num. 31:21-23.

³⁸Num. 31:23-24.

³⁹Isa. 1:25.

⁴⁰Malachi 3:2-3.

⁴¹Zech. 13:9.

Fire for Judgment

Fire can also be destructive in the Old Testament. God's judgment, as his destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, can come through fire. Nahum says,

Who can stand before his indignation?
Who can endure the heat of his anger?
His wrath is poured out like fire,
and the rocks are broken asunder by him.⁴²

Daniel gives us this picture of the final, fiery judgment of the Ancient of Days:

As I looked,
thrones were placed
 and one that was ancient of days
 took his seat;
his raiment was white as snow,
 and the hair of his head like pure wool;
his throne was fiery flames,
 its wheels were burning fire.
A stream of fire issued
 and came forth from before him;
a thousand thousands served him,
 and ten thousand times ten
 thousand stood before him;
the court sat in judgment,
 and the books were opened.
I looked then because of the sound of the great words
which the horn was speaking. And as I looked, the beast
was slain, and its body destroyed and given over to be
burned with fire.⁴³

His presence is fiery. A stream of fire came from before him, and fire was used by him for judgment. Jesus used that picture of fire for judgment. He prophesied what the Son of man would say to the cursed in judgment, "Depart from me, you cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his

⁴²Nahum 1:6, RSV.

⁴³Dan. 7:9-11, RSV.

angels. . .".⁴⁴ It is a mistake, however, to assume that because fire is used in judgment on one occasion that it is only used in judgment. As was shown above, fire can also purify.

Fire for Judgment and Purification

Achan and his household were burned with fire in order to purge the evil from Israel.⁴⁵ Achan's judgment was Israel's cleansing. If a man marries both a woman and her mother, all three should be burned so that there be no wickedness in Israel.⁴⁶ Death by fire for the three brings purification for the many.

Fire as a Description of God

Throughout the Old Testament the Lord is a fiery God. His appearing as a fiery God is sometimes pejoratively called, "Law," and discredited. Gospel promises, however, come from this fiery God. He appears as a smoking fire pot and a flaming torch passing through the halved animals to assure Abram that the covenant promises were his.⁴⁷ He appeared in a fiery bush to send Moses to deliver Israel.⁴⁸ In delivering Israel from Egypt he shielded Israel from the

⁴⁴Matt. 25:41.

⁴⁵Josh. 7:12, 15, 25-26.

⁴⁶Lev. 21:14.

⁴⁷Gen. 15:17.

⁴⁸Ex. 3:2.

Egyptian chariotry with a pillar of cloud by day and fire by night.⁴⁹

Theophanies are associated with fire and sometimes that fire destroys. God descended upon Sinai in fire.⁵⁰ Fire and brimstone fell from the Lord to burn Sodom and Gomorrah.⁵¹ Fire came forth from the presence of the Lord to burn Nadab and Abihu.⁵² When the people complained, the fire of the Lord fell on the outlying parts of the camp.⁵³ Moses reminds Israel as they are about to enter the promised land, "For the Lord your God is a devouring fire, a jealous God."⁵⁴

Throughout the Scriptures, fire comes from the Lord, revealing his presence and aiding in proper sacrificial worship. When Solomon ended his dedicatory prayer, fire came down from heaven and consumed the sacrifices on the new Temple's altar and the glory of the Lord filled the Temple.⁵⁵ He answered Elijah with fire on Mount Carmel proving he is God.⁵⁶ Isaiah the seer saw the Lord's Holy Temple and it was

⁴⁹Ex. 9:23-24, et al.

⁵⁰Ex. 19:18,

⁵¹Gen. 19:24.

⁵²Lev. 10:1-2.

⁵³Num. 11:1.

⁵⁴Deut. 4:24.

⁵⁵2 Chron. 7:1-2.

⁵⁶1 Kings 18:24, 38.

filled with smoke.⁵⁷ Fire flashed continually from the cloud in which Ezekiel saw his vision of the glory of the Lord.⁵⁸

In the New Testament his fire does not go out. The writer to the Hebrews quotes Deuteronomy, ". . .for our God is a consuming fire."⁵⁹ And our text shows him to be a Holy Spirit of fire.

Fire in the Expectation of the Messiah

Malachi gives us an eschatological picture of the Messiah being like a refiner's fire. He will sit refining and purifying the sons of Levi.⁶⁰ He is described as, "the sun of righteousness," another fiery picture, who comes "with healing in its wings."⁶¹

Isaiah 4:2-6 gives a glorious picture of the function of fire in the eschatological day. In that day the Branch of the Lord will be glorious, וְלִכְבוֹד. In that day the remnant will be holy. They will be washed and cleansed by the Lord from all filth and bloodstains by a Spirit of judgment, בְּרוּחַ מִשְׁפָּט, and a Spirit of burning, וּבְרוּחַ בָּעֵר. Judgment is a legal way to translate מִשְׁפָּט. The judges, שֹׁפְטִים, did little judging but

⁵⁷Isa. 6:4.

⁵⁸Ez. 1:4.

⁵⁹Heb. 12:29.

⁶⁰Mal. 3:2.

⁶¹Mal. 4:2.

much delivering. Similarly, מִשְׁפָּט has more to do with deliverance than judgment. We can interpret Isaiah 4:4 to read that the Spirit of deliverance and the Spirit of burning will cleanse in that day. Probably because burning hurts, it is hard to think of it as purifying. Because burning is also used as a means of destruction, as in the burning of the cities under Joshua, burning is not thought of as a purifying process, but as a means of destruction. In that day, Isaiah says, burning will be purifying, as when metal is purified through smelting.

The promises of the first chapter of Isaiah appear to be eschatological in nature also.⁶² The Lord promises Jerusalem that he will smelt away her dross and remove all her alloy, so that she might be like the judges and counselors of old and called the city of righteousness, the faithful city.

Πνεῦμα

Spirit as Purifying

The Lord promises Jacob, his servant, and Israel, his chosen, through Isaiah,⁶³ that he would pour out his Spirit upon the descendants of Israel and they would spring up like grass and willows near water. The blessing of the Spirit would cause them to write on their hands, "The Lord's."

⁶²Isa. 1:25-26.

⁶³Isa. 44:1-5.

Ezekiel prophesied⁶⁴ that the sprinkling of clean water on Israel would make them clean, and then the Lord would transplant the stony heart of Israel with a new heart and new spirit, a new spirit because the Lord would put His Spirit into Israel. Three chapters later the Lord promises to return exiles to Israel, an eschatological image, that he would not hide his face any more from them, ". . .when I pour out my Spirit upon the house of Israel, says the Lord."⁶⁵ Finally, Joel's prophecy that was fulfilled at Pentecost also anticipates the Spirit being poured out upon all flesh during the *eschaton*.⁶⁶

Spirit for Judgment

A text that connects the Spirit and the Messiah with judgment is Isa. 11:1-4. From the stump of Jesse shall grow a branch. The Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him. This shoot of Jesse shall with righteousness judge (deliver)⁶⁷ the poor, but ". . .he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth and with the breath (וּכְרוֹחַ) of his lips he shall slay the wicked." In 2 Thess. 2:8 St. Paul picks up on this image

⁶⁴Ez. 36:25-27.

⁶⁵Ez. 39:29.

⁶⁶Joel 2:28-29.

⁶⁷Translating שָׁפַט judge gives it a courtroom flavor that is unfair to that verb. If one thinks of the "judges" of Israel, Samson, Gideon, etc., one realizes that most judges are not pictured in a courtroom scene too often. They are usually delivering Israel.

from Isaiah and prophecies that the Christ would destroy the lawless one with the breath of his mouth. Judgment is definitely part of the Messianic ministry.

ἅγιω--The Spirit as Holy

Our phrase lacks the definite article. It literally says, "He will baptize with Holy Spirit and fire." Bauer⁶⁸ notes that the article is often missing in prepositional phrases. It can also be anarthrous when it is treated as a proper name.⁶⁹ There seems to be no significant difference in meaning between no article, one article or two articles, πνεῦμα ἅγιον, τὸ ἅγιον πνεῦμα, or τὸ ἅγιον τὸ πνεῦμα.

What is especially necessary is that one does not read one's pious assumptions back into such a loaded term as πνεῦμα ἅγιον. One may have a conception of a "sweet Holy Spirit" or a "gentle Heavenly Dove" that one may read into that term. Having been familiar with the Holy Spirit since childhood may lead one into a chummy misconception of a Holy God. Also, the Christian Church sees Holy Spirit in the light of Nicaea and Chalcedon. In the light of Nicaea and Chalcedon we may forget that "holy" is an adjective that modifies "Spirit" in a definite way. John the Baptist, being the last of the prophets before Christ, may have attached the adjective "holy"

⁶⁸Bauer, A Greek-English Lexicon, 676, part 5, c, β.

⁶⁹A. T. Robertson, A Grammar of the Greek New Testament in the Light of Historical Research (Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1934), 795.

to Spirit as one adjective among many used to describe the Spirit of God. Besides holy, clean and right come to mind from Psalm 51.

The term has two words, πνεύματι and ἁγίῳ, both significant, and both bringing with them enormous freight, besides the significance they have together. ἅγιον, שׁוֹדֵךְ, indicates something separate, separate from human frailty, separate and apart from the profane, and separate and apart from sin. It is a word associated with the Temple or with the Tabernacle, wherein is the most holy place where God dwells. To enter the most holy place Aaron and his sons had to wear the holy clothes that would cover their profane flesh.⁷⁰ They had to be washed with water to wash off impurity.⁷¹ They had to be anointed.⁷² Sacrifice had to be made for them.⁷³ Nadab and Abihu offered unholy fire before the Lord and were devoured by fire.⁷⁴

Without cleansing and sacrifice, man is not fit for the holy presence of God. In Exodus 19 the children of Israel washed their garments so that they would be prepared to hear the voice of a holy God. Five chapters later Moses, Aaron,

⁷⁰Exodus 28 and 29, esp. 28:42-43.

⁷¹Exodus 29:5.

⁷²Exodus 29:7.

⁷³Exodus 29:10-28.

⁷⁴Leviticus 10:1-2.

Nadab, Abihu and the 70 elders of Israel dared to approach his holy presence on Mount Sinai. In order to do this they had to offer sacrifices. Blood was shed and cast upon the people. Then the profane did the unthinkable. They climbed the mountain and ate and drank in the presence of the God of Israel.

Isaiah's vision revealed the throne room of God. The seraphim above the throne called one to the other, "Holy, holy, holy. . . ." ⁷⁵ The foundations shook. The temple was filled with smoke. Isaiah's response was, "Woe is me! For I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips. . . ." ⁷⁶ Having heard Isaiah's confession, one of the seraphim flew to the sinner with a burning coal in his hand. He touched Isaiah's lips. Isaiah's guilt was burned away, his sin forgiven. This picture of the holiness of God in contrast to the profaneness of man is inherent in the term, ἐν ἁγίῳ πνεύματι. "Holy" ought to evoke as much fear and trembling in the heart of man as "fire", if not more.

πνεῦμα--Spirit, Wind and Breath

It is common knowledge to the student of Biblical languages that πνεῦμα or רוּחַ can be translated into English as spirit, wind or breath. The mistake is often made that one

⁷⁵Isa. 6:3.

⁷⁶Isa. 6:5.

has to choose one of the three, instead of all three concepts being inherent in the single word. When Nicodemus comes to Jesus at night to determine who Jesus is and what His role is,⁷⁷ Jesus draws on the idea that the unseen wind-Spirit blows where it wills in order to illustrate the Spirit's role. The unseen Spirit blows or breathes new life into those born again. On Easter Eve Jesus breathed on his disciples, saying, "Receive the Holy Spirit."⁷⁸

In the Old Testament the best example of the fullness of the word, רוּחַ, is the dry bones chapter of Ezekiel.⁷⁹ All three concepts, breath, wind and spirit are involved in each time רוּחַ is used:

Prophecy to the breath (רוּחַ), prophecy, son of man, and say to the breath (רוּחַ), Thus says the Lord God: Come from the four winds (רוּחוֹת), O breath, (הָרוּחַ) and breathe upon these slain, that they may live."⁸⁰

The Spirit blows like the wind and breathes new life as the breath of God. These concepts are inherent in the use of πνεῦμα in our phrase.

Jesus shows us in Acts 1:5 that Pentecost, Acts 2, is the fulfillment of John's prophecy. The Spirit blew into the room. The Spirit gave breath to the disciples in that they

⁷⁷John 3:1-15.

⁷⁸John 20:22.

⁷⁹Ez. 37.

⁸⁰Ezekiel 37:9, RSV, with Hebrew inserted.

spoke the mighty acts of God in foreign tongues. The Spirit gave new life through their words to 3000 that day. The appearance of tongues as of fire indicated the presence of the Holy Spirit, the same holy, fiery God of our text.

Holy Spirit in the Old Testament

The Spirit is called holy only twice in the Old Testament. Psalm 51:11⁸¹ is one, couched between two parallel usages of רִיחַ. It could be argued that each usage of רִיחַ describes God, not man. These verses could be translated:

A clean heart create for me, O God,
And the Spirit of uprightness renew within me.
Do not send me away from you,
And the Spirit of your holiness⁸²
do not take from me.
Return to me the joy of your salvation,
And the Spirit of generosity⁸³ sustain me.

The Spirit of God cleanses, makes right, renews and sustains man. The psalmist, who according to the superscription is King David, knew that he was impure, that he was wrong, and that he could not hold himself up. He had sinned against Bathsheba, against her husband, but especially against God. "Against thee, thee only, have I sinned,"⁸⁴ he confessed.

⁸¹Psalm 51:11 in the English enumeration. It is Psalm 51:13 in the Hebrew numbering.

⁸²רִיחַ קִדְשֶׁךָ.

⁸³Ps. 51:12-14 (Heb).

⁸⁴Ps. 51:4a (Eng), RSV.

The Holy Spirit called him to repentance and created a pure heart within him.⁸⁵

Isaiah 63:10 is the other place in the Old Testament where the term, Holy Spirit⁸⁶, is used. There Isaiah recalls how Israel grieved God's Holy Spirit and therefore he became their enemy. Then God remembered Moses and the days of old when he had put his Holy Spirit in their midst. He remembered the exodus and how he delivered them. In the exodus of old the Spirit of the Lord gave them rest. This text, however, shows that the Holy Spirit can be grieved. His wrath can be poured out on those who had been his people. The Holy Spirit does deliver a people, as in the exodus, and give rest to that people; however, the Holy Spirit, when grieved, can fight against His people. There is law and gospel, judgment and mercy, in Isaiah 63. Similarly, in John's words we find the fiery Spirit of God working in grace in Baptism, but in burning judgment in the burning of the chaff.

Although the references to the Holy Spirit are but two, the Spirit and the Spirit's work are evident throughout the Old Testament. Other adjectives can be attached to Spirit besides Holy. Spirit of wisdom is used three times in the Old Testament.⁸⁷ Spirit of justice, **רוח קדש**, is used twice.⁸⁸

⁸⁵See 2 Samuel 11-12.

⁸⁶**רוח קדש**.

⁸⁷Ex. 28:3, Dt. 34:9 and Is. 11:2.

The best example of multiple modifiers to רוח is the messianic prophecy of Isaiah 11:2. There the Spirit is of wisdom, understanding, counsel, might, knowledge and fear of the Lord.

When we read the words of John the Baptist, it is important that we do not expect him to speak the language of the creeds. In a parallel fashion he can attach "of fire" to Spirit as well as "holy," just as the Spirit of burning in Isaiah 4:4.

Holy Spirit in the Intertestamental Literature

C. F. D. Moule⁸⁹ notes that in Jewish literature subsequent to the Old Testament there is a growing frequency of references to the Holy Spirit. One of the most significant for us is the reference in Psalms of Solomon to the Messiah receiving the Holy Spirit, "ὁ θεὸς κατεργάσατο αὐτὸν (the Messiah) δυνατὸν ἐν πνεύματι ἁγίῳ."⁹⁰ The Holy Spirit strengthens the Messiah not so that he might graciously cleanse his people,

⁸⁸Is. 11:2 and 28:6.

⁸⁹C[harles] F[rancis] D[igby] Moule, The Holy Spirit, Mowbrays Library of Theology (London & Oxford: Mowbrays, 1978), 22.

⁹⁰Psalms of Solomon 17:42, quoted in Henry Barclay Swete, The Holy Spirit in the New Testament (London: MacMillan and Co., Ltd., 1910), 399. That verse is numbered 17:37 in R. B. Wright, "Psalms Of Solomon: A New Translation And Introduction," The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha, ed. James H. Charlesworth (Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Co., 1985), 2:668. R. H. Charles, The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of The Old Testament in English, (Oxford: At The Clarendon Press, 1913), 2:650, notes both ways of enumerating the verses.

but so that he might rebuke rulers and remove sinners.⁹¹ Approximately a century before John spoke our phrase, the Psalms of Solomon anticipated the Messiah receiving the Holy Spirit, but not to equip him to pour out grace, but to equip him for eschatological battle. The Testament of Levi⁹² says that the Spirit of understanding and sanctification will rest upon the new priest.⁹³ The new priest of Testament of Levi 18 will pour out the knowledge of the Lord in the *eschaton* so that knowledge would spread over the earth like the water of the seas. The Spirit is gracious, but not to cleanse, to illumine.

Holy Spirit in Qumran

As was treated at length in the first chapter of this thesis, the Covenanters at Qumran used water to wash away ritual defilements, but realized that the inner man needed more than ablutions. The Spirit of holiness in 1QS 3:6-9⁹⁴, given to the community, can atone for sin. Inclusion into the community at Qumran, 1QS 6:13-23⁹⁵ shows, took four years.

⁹¹Pss. of Solomon 17:41 (36).

⁹²H. C. Kee thinks "Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs" was written in the 2nd Century B.C. The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha, 1:777-778.

⁹³T. Levi 18:7, H. C. Kee, trans., "Testament of Levi" from "Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs," The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha, 1:795.

⁹⁴See above, 19.

⁹⁵See above, 21-22.

On the third of four Pentecost initiation ceremonies, B. E. Thiering thinks,⁹⁶ the Spirit of holiness given to the community began to cleanse the inner man. The Covenanters, 1QS 4:18-22⁹⁷ shows, believed that at the visitation the cleansing by water and Spirit of holiness would be united because the distinction between flesh and spirit would no longer exist. Also, that same verse shows that the Covenanters expected that God would cleanse or purify the frame of man (שִׁמְיָא) through the works of a man (בְּכַר).⁹⁸ Finally, the Qumran Isaiah scroll reveals that at Isaiah 52:14-15a the Covenanters thought the Messiah would *sprinkle* many nations.⁹⁹ James D. G. Dunn thinks that the Covenanters anticipated this sprinkling to be sprinkling of the Spirit in the days of the visitation.¹⁰⁰ Dunn concluded that if Qumran had not already thought of the Messiah sprinkling a gracious Holy Spirit, it would have been a small step for John the Baptist to have done so.

Drawing parallels between John and Qumran and between John and the Psalms of Solomon or the Testament of Levi does not mean that John was dependent upon them. These parallels are intended to better show those who do not accept the

⁹⁶See above, 22-24.

⁹⁷See above, 24.

⁹⁸See above, 24-28.

⁹⁹See above, 24.

¹⁰⁰See above, 26-28.

inspiration of Scripture that what the Scriptures are saying is historically true. These parallels show those who do accept inspiration of Scripture that God's Spirit worked within cultural and historical contexts to reveal himself. John the Baptist, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, used words being used in his day or shortly before his day by those who were not inspired.

It may be that Qumran can help us take a look at the Baptism with the Holy Spirit in the book of Acts. It may be that when the Spirit fell upon the Gentiles at the house of Cornelius¹⁰¹ that water baptism was considered imperative to complete the act. Spirit and water were united in Baptism. For it to happen otherwise was unthinkable. Peter explained his decision to baptize these god-fearers, Cornelius and the Gentiles in his house, to the rest of apostles with these words:

And I remembered the word of the Lord, how he said, 'John baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit.' If then God gave the same gift to them that he gave to us when we believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I that I could withstand God?"¹⁰²

The gracious outpouring of the Holy Spirit in the Messiah's baptism cleansed both the outer and inner man and involved both water and the Spirit, just as the outer and inner man would be cleansed by one act of the Spirit in Qumran's view of the "visitation." Water and Spirit were united in the

¹⁰¹Acts 10:44-48.

¹⁰²Acts 11:16-17.

Messiah's baptism. To deny water to those who had the Spirit was unthinkable. The two belonged together.

Qumran may also help tie our text with its Pentecost fulfillment. Jesus said, "You heard from me, for John baptized with water, but before many days you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit."¹⁰³ On the day of Pentecost Peter invited his audience, "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit."¹⁰⁴ Upon hearing this, 3000 were baptized. The water and the Spirit were united. Proof of the Spirit's work in them was that, ". . .they devoted themselves to the Apostle's teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers."¹⁰⁵

Holy Spirit and the "Ephesian Baptists"

One of the arguments against John having proclaimed that the Messiah would baptize with the Holy Spirit is the ignorance about the Holy Spirit among the Ephesian followers of John the Baptist. St. Paul asked them, "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?"¹⁰⁶ They answered, "Ἄλλ' οὐδ' εἰ πνεῦμα ἄγιον ἔστιν ἠκούσαμεν." This could be translated in two

¹⁰³Acts 1:4b-5, RSV.

¹⁰⁴Acts 2:38, RSV.

¹⁰⁵Acts 2:42, RSV.

¹⁰⁶Acts 19:2.

ways, Dunn says,¹⁰⁷ either that these Baptists did not know about the Holy Spirit, in which case they would hardly be familiar with Jewish thought, or that they had not heard about Pentecost, that is, they had not heard that the "visitation" had come, that the *eschaton* had come, when the Spirit would be sprinkled through the Spirit-anointed Messiah. F. F. Bruce agrees with Dunn's view. He thinks that the Ephesian Baptists believed in Jesus, but had not yet been told that Jesus was the one who baptized with the Holy Spirit. Because they had not yet been baptized in the name of Jesus, they had not yet received the Spirit.¹⁰⁸ If the Ephesian followers of John the Baptist were at all like the Covenanters of Qumran, they were waiting for that day when the Spirit would be poured out by the Messiah. St. Paul tells them that the Messiah is Jesus, and, reading in between the lines, St. Paul tells them that Jesus has baptized with the Spirit. Pentecost has come. On hearing this, they received the baptism that unites water and Spirit, outer and inner cleansing, the baptism in the name of the Lord Jesus. Evidence that the Sacrament had worked was that they spoke with tongues and prophesied.

¹⁰⁷Dunn, "Spirit-and-Fire Baptism", 87.

¹⁰⁸F. F. Bruce, The Book of the Acts (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1954), 363.

The Text in Context

In the wilderness east of Jerusalem John the Baptist was the voice heralding the kingdom of heaven (Matthew). Matthew's summary of John's message is the same as his summary of Jesus' message, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."¹⁰⁹ There is continuity, not contrast, between their ministries. Luke's summary, ". . .preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins," also is continuous with the ministry of Jesus. After the resurrection he instructs his disciples ". . .that repentance and forgiveness of sins should be preached. . . ."¹¹⁰ John's message was one of preparation, preparing the people for the Coming One, the Stronger One. His baptism prepares for the kingdom that is at hand. Again, continuity, not contrast, is the theme. John's message is Good News,¹¹¹ just as Jesus' message is Good News.¹¹² There is Gospel continuity between their messages. It is important to look for this same continuity in their baptisms.

John, as Jesus, also preached the law that warns and strikes fear into the heart. To Pharisees and Sadducees coming for baptism he preached warning worthy of the best warnings in Jesus' preaching. Compare John's, "You brood of

¹⁰⁹Matthew 3:2 and 4:17, RSV.

¹¹⁰Luke 24:47, RSV.

¹¹¹Luke 3:17.

¹¹²Matthew 4:23 and Luke 4:18.

vipers!" sermon in Matthew 3:7-12 in which our verse is set with Jesus' "You brood of vipers!" sermon in Matthew 23.¹¹³ Both preachers knew how to warn of the wrath of God that is coming to the unrepentant. The Day of God's wrath is a major message of the Old Testament prophets.¹¹⁴ These New Testament prophets picked up where the Old Testament left off, preaching Good News of a coming kingdom to the repentant and the warning of God's wrath to the unrepentant. The messages of John and Jesus are replete with law and gospel. It is important to look for law and gospel in the phrase being interpreted.

John's message was for all men, for Pharisee and Sadducee, as well as for tax collector and soldier. In the same way Jesus' ministry was all men, for Pharisees, such as Nicodemus,¹¹⁵ as well as for tax collectors and sinners.¹¹⁶ The repentant tax collector and sinners, like the returning prodigal son, are welcomed by both John and Jesus into the kingdom. The unrepentant, such as the scribes and Pharisees of Matthew 23, are warned of the wrath to come by Jesus, just as John warned them in our text. The message of John and Jesus is for all men. They are all on the same plane, needing baptism, needing the forgiveness of sins,

¹¹³The vipers are mentioned in verse 33.

¹¹⁴Zephaniah 1:15; 2:2, Malachi 3:2, 18; 4:1, 5.

¹¹⁵John 3:1-15 and 19:38-42.

¹¹⁶Luke 15:1.

needing the Holy Spirit and fire and needing the kingdom. If they refuse God's Grace, they need to be warned of the fiery wrath to come.

The verses immediately following the phrase in question, Matthew 3:12 and Luke 3:17, show both grace and judgment in God's harvest. The repentant, the baptized, the forgiven, the ones who have received the Coming One's baptism are gathered into the granary. The threshing floor is cleansed, διακαθαρίῃ,¹¹⁷ in Matthew and διακαθαίρει¹¹⁸ in Luke. The force of the verb is that the threshing floor is cleansed or purified throughout or entirely. The action is one of purification or cleansing. The threshing floor was on a hillside facing the west to take advantage of the prevailing winds. The floor often made use of natural limestone rock, quarried smooth, with any crevices filled in with clay. The floor was kept leveled and rolled like a modern clay tennis court. The grain was spread uniformly over the floor. Cows, calves, sheep and donkeys were driven around and around the floor and tramped the grain out of the straw and chaff, or a threshing sled might be drawn by oxen over the grain tearing the seed from the chaff. The modes of threshing varied, but the second phase, the mode of winnowing or separating the chaff and bits of straw from the wheat, remained uniform. The

¹¹⁷Third person singular future active indicative of διακαθαρίζω.

¹¹⁸Present active infinitive of διακαθαρίζω.

farmer threw the chaff and grain into the wind with a five or seven pronged fork or with a long-handled, broad, wooden shovel. The chaff and lighter waste blew with the wind. The grain fell nearby on a pile.¹¹⁹ The clean grain fell to the threshing floor. The wind is not mentioned in the verse, but would have been an indispensable agent in the winnowing process. Wind and Spirit are the same word in Greek, as well as in Hebrew. The wind or Spirit cleanses entirely. The cleansed grain is taken from the clean threshing floor into the granary. This, following our verse, is the gracious action of baptism. The chaff is burned. In both Matthew and Luke the words the Baptist uses are *πυρὶ ἀσβέσῳ*, with unquenchable fire. Departing slightly from the imagery of threshing and winnowing, John makes it clear that the chaff, that is the unrepentant, will be burned with a fire that will never be extinguished.

It is important to understand how the fire of Matthew 3:11 (or Luke 3:16) can be gracious and the fire of Matthew 3:12 (or Luke 3:17) can be the fire of eternal punishment. Baptism is not the connector, but the person of God the Holy Spirit is the connector. Baptism in our phrase is grace. It, as was demonstrated, is almost always grace. The only exception is how Jesus in two passages refers to his impending

¹¹⁹Arthur W. Klinck, Home Life in Bible Times (St. Louis, MO: Concordia Publishing House, 1947), 24-27.

suffering as a baptism,¹²⁰ and even there it is grace for the believer as Jesus suffers judgment for us. There is but one "you", the repentant being baptized. There is but one "with" tying Holy Spirit and fire together. There is but one baptism. And it is grace. The Holy Spirit and fire could be translated, as a hendiadys, as the Holy Spirit of fire, close in meaning to the Holy, fiery Spirit. Fire is part of the essential nature of God the Holy Spirit. Fire adds to the other fearful adjective, Holy. The Holy Spirit of fire purifies entirely, cleanses completely the repentant in baptism. The unrepentant coming before this fiery God are burned with unquenchable fire. It is a fiery God that purifies with fire in baptism and who fires eternal destruction upon the unrepentant.

John's prophetic words are followed by the baptism of Jesus in the Gospels.¹²¹ The Spirit comes upon him or over Him (Matthew and Luke), into him (Mark) and remains on him (John.) The Spirit leads him out into the wilderness (Matthew and Luke), or drives him (Mark) to be tempted by the devil. There the words of the Father at his baptism, "This is my beloved Son,"¹²² are challenged by the tempter, "If you are

¹²⁰Luke 12:49-50 and Mark 10:38-39.

¹²¹Technically, John's Gospel does not actually record the baptism of Jesus. It speaks around it.

¹²²Matthew 3:17.

the Son of God. . . ."123 The battle continues throughout his ministry as he casts out demons. The tempter's direct onslaught becomes more subtle as he uses men to tempt Jesus to deny the word of the Father that would lead him to a cross. His popularity becomes a temptation to abandon the cross. It rages the hottest and heaviest on the cross when the tempter's challenge to the word of the Father is repeated by some at the foot of the cross, "If you are the Son of God, come down from the cross."124 Jesus in Mark 10:38 compares the cup of God's wrath with his baptism. In Luke 12:49-50 he speaks of fire being cast on the earth in the same breath with his baptism, and says, ". . .how I am constrained until it is accomplished!"125 Psalm 11:6 may have been in his mind where two images of fiery wrath are connected with the cup of God's wrath. G. R. Beasley-Murray thinks that the Luke verse shows Jesus combining two extraordinary ideas. He came to cast fire on the earth, that is, create a blaze that will purge the world and usher in the kingdom, and he came to experience the fire of God's wrath on his cross. Beasley-Murray says, ". . .here is an extraordinary conjunction of ideas: the Messiah has come to judge the world and be judged for the world!"126

¹²³Matthew 4:3, 6 and Luke 4:4, 9.

¹²⁴Matthew 27:40, RSV.

¹²⁵Luke 12:50, RSV.

¹²⁶G(eorge) R(aymond) Beasley-Murray, Baptism In the New Testament (London: MacMillan & Co Ltd, 1962), 75.

Jesus' baptismal battle continues to his death on the cross. His baptism is completed in His resurrection. Christian baptism, then, is being baptized into Christ's baptism. We die with Him and rise with Him.¹²⁷ The Holy Spirit who purges with fire that came upon Him in His three-year baptismal walk comes upon the Christian in baptism.¹²⁸

In Acts 1:5 Jesus said, ". . . you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit." He prophesied the fulfillment of John's words, "He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire." The baptism of Jesus was finally completed with His suffering, death and resurrection finished. Now with Pentecost Christian baptism would begin. The pre-paschal baptisms that the 120 had undergone were completed. The baptism of the 3000 was for the forgiveness of sins and with the Holy Spirit.¹²⁹

The Key

The key to understanding the phrase that has been examined is to see it in the light of law and gospel. The law says that sinner who without atonement comes into the presence of the Holy God, of a fiery God will surely die. The gospel says that the baptized have been atoned for by Jesus. The baptized are baptized into His atoning death and are raised to new life with Him. The Spirit's work in baptism is ongoing.

¹²⁷Romans 6:3-5.

¹²⁸1 Corinthians 12:13.

¹²⁹Acts 2:38.

When the baptized come into the presence of a Holy God, they will belong there. They are seen as Holy by God. The baptized will draw near to the presence of a fiery God and will not be burned. Like the 70 elders of Israel, atonement has been made for them. They belong on the mountain with God.¹³⁰ The key to understanding the fire of Matthew 3:11 and 12, as well as Luke 3:16 and 17, is to connect the verses not by baptism, but by a fiery God. The baptized belong in the presence of a fiery God. The unbaptized are burned with the unquenchable fire of his wrath.

¹³⁰Exodus 24:1-11.

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