

Roger Stronstad gave this lecture at the 19th Pentecostal World Conference on Wednesday, May 30, 2001 in the Hilton Hotel. Stronstad is the Dean of Education at Western Pentecostal Bible in Clayburn, B.C. The lecture was under the Pentecostal Theology Tract. The moderator was Dr. David Petts, of the Assemblies of God in Great Britain and Ireland.

The lecture begins with the presentation of three theories of Holy Spirit baptism:

I. The Reformed View-one is baptized into the Holy Spirit at conversion only. Thus, it is NOT a subsequent experience to salvation/conversion. I Cor.12:13

II. The Wesleyan View-"crisis" sanctification experience. One is baptized in the Holy Spirit to acquire sanctification after salvation. This is a punctiliar experience, happening at a definite time that you can measure-not progressive.

III. The Pentecostal View-Christians are baptized in the Holy Spirit after conversion for the purpose of "vocation." The Spirit baptism is not for the purposes of "saving" the people or making them "sanctified," but for the purpose of equipping the people (already converted Christians) for service. The Spirit baptism is a subsequent experience unrelated to initiating salvation or sanctification (not denying that sanctification is a byproduct of Spirit baptism).

Stronstad's thesis is that the Pentecostal view is correct, i.e., the Spirit baptism is vocational, NOT salvific. Upon finishing the introduction, Stronstad proceeded to systematically trace Luke's theology in the context of the Hebrew Bible, the historical context of the written Gospels under Greek influence, and Luke's repetition of the "promise/fulfillment" theme and "transfer of mantle" theme in Luke/Acts that the author lifted from the Hebrew Bible. The Gospel of Luke records that John the Baptist's successor will "baptize in the Holy Spirit" (Lk 3:16). This "Spirit baptism" is thematic in Luke/Acts, written by the same author.

I. The Biblical Context-i.e., how Jesus according to Luke understood the text of the TANAKH (Torah, Neviim, and Kethuvim)-the Hebrew Bible or Christian Old Testament. In Luke/Acts, Stronstad focused on how Jesus understood the text of the Bible. Jesus saw "promise/fulfillment," i.e., the promise were made in the Old Testament, and fulfilled when he was anointed by the Holy Spirit in Luke 3. Jesus saw himself as equipped for a task, AFTER he was anointed by the Spirit (Luke ch.4). Jesus' own reception of the Spirit was not to save or sanctify him, but to equip him for a task.

Later, we see Jesus promising the Holy Spirit to the disciples in Acts, and a transfer of leadership on earth. Earlier, we saw John the Baptist transfer authority from himself to Jesus in Luke 3. Hence, Stronstad's other assertion is that this is a "transfer" theme in Luke/Acts that Luke adopts to prove a theological point. Luke saw the "transfer" motif in the Old Testament, or in other words, a transfer of leadership from incumbent to successor. The Old

Testament text that Luke drew from indicates that the transfer theme was indeed present, e.g., Moses to seventy elders and Joshua, and Elijah to Elisha. This was not only a transfer of authority and leadership, but a transfer of Spirit/charismatic power.

This "transfer theme" present in the Old Testament and Luke/Acts shows:

1. A call to service is divine in origin; and
2. that call is VISIBLE to others.

A call is a vocation; the vocation is transferable; and (crucial to the classic Pentecostal view) the transferring of charismatic authority for vocational service is accompanied with an AUTHENTICATING SIGN. Stronstad not only built a case for the baptism in the Holy Spirit as a subsequent experience to salvific conversion, but provided some prima facie evidence for an authenticating sign to physically prove that Spirit baptism has taken place. The Old Testament example Stronstad used was the transfer of charismatic power from Elijah to Elisha in II Kings 2:9.

II The Historical Context-the time of Luke's writing of his Gospel and Acts. The temple under King Herod was rebuilt and it was the center of religious life. Hebrew among Jews gave way to the Greek language. A shift occurred from "West" to "East," geographically relative to the location of ancient Palestine. During the so-called "Intertestamental" period, a cessation of prophecy existed as reflected in Baruch and Josephus-"Failure of succession of prophets." In this historical context, Luke records the restoration of prophetic activity in the beginning of his Gospel with John the Baptist as a central character. John is depicted in the tradition of anointed Old Testament prophets, e.g., John the Baptist called for social justice towards others in the prophetic tradition. Likewise, John the Baptist was an eschatological prophet/messenger. No one before John prophesied Spirit baptism and fire, although the imagery is borrowed from Isaiah.

John's use of the agricultural harvest metaphor "the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire" in 3:17 parallels the remark on baptism in fire in verse 16. Thus, in Luke's depiction of John the Baptist, we see that the baptism in the Spirit has a twofold dimension of blessing and cursing. In Luke's second book, Acts chapter 1, Jesus transfers leadership to the disciples, thus echoing Moses' transferring of leadership to elders. In Acts 2, the wind and fire during Pentecost were signs of theophany and not repeated in the rest of the book. The Pentecost event is in continuity with John the Baptist's prophecy, however, the "fire" motif was dropped. The visible tongues of fire were seen only once. In the rest of the Acts accounts of Spirit baptism, the fire is absent. The Spirit baptism is a blessing, not a judgment.

Hence, it is about service, not salvation. In Acts 10, Luke identifies Cornelius' qualifications as a God fearing man, etc. This account is the only report of Spirit baptism accompanied with an explanation-"The Holy Spirit fell upon all who heard the word. The circumcised believers who

had come with Peter were astounded that the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out even on the Gentiles, FOR THEY HEARD THEM SPEAK IN TONGUES and magnifying God."vv. 44-46.

This account shows that the reception of the Spirit was for a prophetic vocation about mission to the Gentiles, NOT salvation or eschatological judgment. Stronstad said that to interpret this text otherwise is to do great mischief to the text.

Acts 19 is another confirmatory example. In this passage exist several significant observations:

1. the people Paul encountered in Ephesus were both disciples and believers, not unbelievers; 2. They received the Holy Spirit in the same way the other disciples had with the presence of speaking in tongues; 3. The Ephesian disciples had a paradigmatic sign of tongues. The same vocational prophetic gift of the Spirit, for their service and not their salvation.

III. Conclusion-Some Guiding Hermeneutical Thoughts.

1. Luke 3:17 is the promise; Acts 2 is the fulfillment. Luke, author of both books, has the promise/fulfillment theme in his writings.
2. The pouring out of the Holy Spirit is in continuity within both books. Jesus was baptized in the Holy Spirit in the Gospel of Luke, but he wasn't baptized in a judgment of fire.
3. This Spirit baptism in both books is the functional equivalent of anointing for prophets. Prophets were anointed to do a task. Therefore, the Spirit baptism is about vocation.
4. The experience is accompanied by a sign or witness. In the Old Testament, the presence of the Spirit was accompanied typically with prophecy. In the New Testament (Acts), it was typically speaking in tongues or prophecy.
5. Paradigmatic experience of Pentecost set a pattern for believers-Acts 10:47, "like as we."

Stronstad concludes that it is "quantitative snobbery on behalf of contemporary (biblical) interpreters" to interpret the text otherwise. Luke deemed his examples adequate and compelling. Until Jesus rescinds his commission, baptism with the Holy Spirit is to be understood as ongoing.