

The Gift of Prophecy in the New Covenant

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Abstract

Chapter one surveys recent research, demonstrating different approaches yield different definitions for prophecy, and suggesting a combination of historical, exegetical and biblical-theological methodology.

Chapter two concludes that intertestamental Judaism, the old covenant scriptures and the experiences of Christians formed the background to New Testament thought regarding prophecy, and the scriptures particularly encouraged a hope for widespread prophecy in the eschaton.

Chapter three examines new covenant prophecy in the gospels, finding an unprecedented increase in the Spirit's work, with more expected. Spirit-empowerment and prophecy are linked to speech that testifies to Jesus.

Chapter four identifies two types of prophecy in Acts. One is a consequence of an eschatological outpouring of the Spirit on all people giving them prophetic ability to witness to Jesus, the second is modelled after old covenant prophets – though with a contemporary twist.

Chapter five assesses prophecy in 1 Corinthians, concluding that prophecy is an intelligible Spirit-empowered revelation of the knowledge of God's salvation and the mystery of Christ, that may be given to any believer.

Chapter six examines the relationship between tongues and prophecy in Corinth, finding a close relationship between the two, with language the only difference. Tongues is Spirit-empowered speech uttered in the preferred language of the speaker, which is unknown to the majority of the congregation and therefore requires interpretation. The élite's ability to speak in Latin gave social status, but it was not understood by most Greeks in the church.

Chapter seven examines prophecy in several New Testament books, principally Revelation. The two witnesses in Revelation 11 demonstrate the church's prophetic mandate: 'the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy' (Revelation 19:10).

The thesis concludes by defining new covenant prophecy, 'Spirit-empowered speech, promised to every believer, that witnesses to Jesus by revealing the knowledge of God's salvation and the mystery of Christ'.

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1) Introduction

The purpose of this study is to examine the gift of prophecy in the New Testament (or as I prefer, prophecy in the new covenant).¹ The investigation started as an undergraduate dissertation looking at evangelical perspectives on the gift.² Within evangelicalism, debate on the gift of prophecy is largely split between cessationists on the one hand, charismatics and Pentecostals on the other, and a large number of agnostics in between.³ Cessationists argue that miraculous gifts (including the gift of prophecy) *ceased* with the passing of the apostolic age, and their theological frameworks tend to be either dispensational or reformed.⁴ Charismatics and Pentecostals argue that spiritual gifts, including prophecy, are *characteristic* of the New Testament age. At a popular level, there is a vast quantity of evangelical literature on spiritual gifts and prophecy, much of it fairly dogmatic in nature.

¹ Most writers on the subject refer to *New Testament* prophecy (and sometimes to early Christian prophecy). I prefer the term *new covenant* prophecy because speaking of *New Testament* prophecy could give the impression that this particular type of prophesying occurred throughout and only in the period covered by the *New Testament* writings, and I do not want to begin with that assumption. 'Early Christian' is better, but it still imposes an expiry date, which again I would prefer to avoid, at least at this stage. As the study progresses, more reasons for my preferring the term 'new covenant' will no doubt become clearer.

² The dissertation was entitled 'An analysis of the gift of prophecy in the New Testament in the light of the work by Wayne Grudem and the cessationist response to him'. The work concluded that cessationist writers had not adequately responded to Grudem's criticisms of their position, and suggested some areas that required further exploration. Many of those themes are now taken up in the present work.

³ This agnostic group is often characterised by the label 'open, but cautious'. At a popular level, this (and the other positions mentioned here) can be seen in Wayne A. Grudem, ed., *Are Miraculous Gifts for Today? Four Views* (Leicester: Inter-Varsity Press, 1996).

⁴ Dispensationalists emphasise literal fulfilment of Old Testament prophecies concerning Israel, and divide biblical history, and hence God's way of relating to his people, into several periods or 'dispensations'. (Often it is argued that there are seven distinct dispensations.) On the other hand, Reformed, or Calvinistic scholars reject the concept of dispensations, and instead emphasise the importance of God's eternal covenant with his people, and of the sovereignty of God in all things.

Yet the debate over early Christian prophecy is not restricted to evangelicalism, or to those writing at a popular level. After a long period of neglect, the last forty years have seen a revival of academic interest in prophecy, which itself is only a part of a larger debate about the nature and character of so-called spiritual gifts. Yet despite countless recent studies even the most basic question of definition — ‘exactly what is the gift of prophecy?’ — is still not being answered consistently, and sometimes it is not answered at all.

Between 1900 and 1970, only a handful of works on prophecy appeared: three monographs, two unpublished theses and one substantial article.⁵ The monographs, which have not stood the test of time particularly well, were Edward C. Selwyn’s *The Christian Prophets and the Prophetic Apocalypse* (1900), Erich Fascher’s *Prophētēs: Eine Sprach- Und Religionsgeschichtliche Untersuchung* (1927) and H. A. Guy’s *New Testament Prophecy: Its origin and significance* (1947).⁶ If these monographs have been largely forgotten, the two theses fared even worse. Both Ruth Bowlin’s ‘The Christian Prophets in the New Testament’⁷ and Sidney Crane’s rather idiosyncratic ‘The Gift of Prophecy in the New Testament’⁸ are barely cited in the later literature. This means that the only work on prophecy to have an enduring influence during this period was a lengthy article in *Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament* and the *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*.⁹

⁵ For a summary of the literature of this period see Gerhard Dautzenberg, *Urchristliche Prophetie: Ihre Erforschung, Ihre Voraussetzungen im Judentum und Ihre Struktur im Ersten Korintherbrief* (BWANT; Stuttgart: W. Kolhammer, 1975), 15-16.

⁶ Edward C. Selwyn, *The Christian Prophets and the Prophetic Apocalypse* (London: Macmillan, 1900); H. A. Guy, *New Testament Prophecy: Its Origin and Significance* (London: Epworth, 1947); Erich Fascher, *Prophētēs: Eine Sprach- und Religionsgeschichtliche Untersuchung* (Giessen: Töpelmann, 1927).

⁷ Ruth Elizabeth Bowlin, ‘The Christian Prophets in the New Testament’ (Unpublished PhD Thesis, Nashville: Vanderbilt University, 1958). It has not been possible to locate a copy of Bowlin’s thesis, so it is impossible to give even a summary of her work. Crane alone refers to it, and then only to its existence, not its contents.

⁸ Sidney D. Crane, ‘The Gift of Prophecy in the New Testament: An Inductive Study in the Exercise and Meaning of the Prophetic’ (Unpublished PhD Thesis, Princeton Theological Seminary, 1962). It is referenced in only one other work that I have found, and then only in a footnote: Christopher Forbes, *Prophecy and Inspired Speech in Early Christianity and its Hellenistic Environment* (WUNT2 75; Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 1995), 268 fn. 233.

⁹ Gerhard Friedrich et al., ‘προφήτης, etc.’, *TDNT*, 6:781-861.

However, from 1970 onwards, scholarly works on prophecy multiplied rapidly, partly in response to the emerging charismatic movement. In 1975, the Ecumenical Institute in Bossey organised a consultation on New Testament prophecy, describing it as ‘at the forefront of New Testament exegesis since the sixties’. The papers of the consultation were subsequently published as *The Prophetic Vocation in the New Testament and Today*.¹⁰

Writers examining the subject in this period came to their studies without any prior agreement as to what Christian prophecy actually was,¹¹ so much of the 1970s and 1980s was taken up with the quest for an agreed definition. Was Christian prophecy the announcing of eschatological secrets? Was it apocalyptic? Sentences of Holy Law? The creation of words of Jesus?¹² Despite the proliferation of studies, this quest for an agreed definition did not succeed, and twenty years later, M. Eugene Boring was still lamenting that research on early Christian prophecy had been carried out ‘without any generally accepted definition of terms’.¹³

Of course, since Boring’s sentiments of twenty years ago, many other significant studies have appeared, and by 1995 Christopher Forbes believed that Friedrich, Grudem, Dunn and Turner had reached a ‘reasonable degree of consensus as to the nature of prophecy’, namely ‘the declaring of a revelatory experience’.¹⁴ However, no breakthrough had actually occurred, because Forbes was not referring to a consensus regarding early *Christian* prophecy. As Turner makes clear, his definition was explicitly designed to be ‘in accord with most Old Testament and much intertestamental literature’.¹⁵ It therefore describes much prophecy that is *not* Christian, obviously including some Jewish prophecy, but also some Graeco-Roman prophecy as well. If Christian prophecy is essentially

¹⁰ J. Panagopoulos, ed., *Prophetic Vocation in the New Testament and Today* (NovTSup 45; Leiden: Brill, 1977).

¹¹ See Dautzenberg, *Urchristliche Prophetie*, 18-24, who concludes that there is a great uncertainty about the contents and significance of early Christian prophecy.

¹² idem, 16-17.

¹³ M. Eugene Boring, *The Continuing Voice of Jesus: Christian Prophecy and the Gospel Tradition* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1991), 36.

¹⁴ Forbes, *Prophecy and Inspired Speech*, 219, quoting Max Turner, ‘Spiritual Gifts Then and Now’, *VE*, 15 (1985), 11. Forbes was also referring to Wayne A. Grudem, *The Gift of Prophecy in 1 Corinthians* (Washington: University Press of America, 1982), 116, 142 and James D. G. Dunn, *Jesus and the Spirit: A Study of the Religious and Charismatic Experience of Jesus and the First Christians as Reflected in the New Testament* (London: SCM, 1975), 228.

¹⁵ Turner, ‘Spiritual Gifts Then and Now’, 11.

identical to non-Christian prophecy then the definition may be quite acceptable, but many writers (including Crone,¹⁶ Hill,¹⁷ Grudem,¹⁸ Aune,¹⁹ and even Forbes²⁰) make a strong case for Christian prophecy being distinctive from other forms of prophecy. If they are right, then this definition is inadequate.

So why has it proved such a struggle to obtain a consensus for a definition for prophecy? Part of the answer is that different scholars have used a variety of methodologies with which to address the question. Understanding the strengths and weaknesses of these different methods is crucial both to understand the current problem and to help determine which methodology would be the most appropriate for the present study. By way of introduction therefore, let us consider some of the key methodologies that have been employed during the last forty years. For ease of comparison, we can group the methodologies into three families, which I will call the historical method, the exegetical method, and the theological method.

The **historical method** is perhaps the most common, and is particularly prominent amongst those influenced by the Tübingen school. Perhaps the best example is David Aune's *Prophecy in Early Christianity and the Ancient Mediterranean World*.²¹ The historical method does not attempt to determine what type(s) of prophecy should be considered normative, but, as the title of Aune's work makes clear, it describes and analyses the forms of prophecy that could be found in and around Christianity in the first century. Typically, writers following this method will not restrict themselves to New Testament data, but will also study other early Christian, Jewish, and Graeco-Roman sources. The strength of the historical method is that it examines a large amount of data, and (in theory at least) does so dispassionately without dogma driving the agenda. Yet there are also at least two weaknesses. First, scholars taking the historical method are not always as free from dogma as they might suppose. Second, an even more important weakness is

¹⁶ Theodore M. Crone, *Early Christian Prophecy: A Study of its Origin and Function* (Baltimore: St Mary's University Press, 1973).

¹⁷ David Hill, *New Testament Prophecy* (London: Marshall, Morgan and Scott, 1979).

¹⁸ See above, fn. 14.

¹⁹ David E. Aune, *Prophecy in Early Christianity and the Ancient Mediterranean World* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1983).

²⁰ See above, fn. 8.

²¹ See above, fn. 19.

that this method sometimes fails to discern adequately between competing views of prophecy held by different groups. That means those taking the historical method may be able to describe *prophecy* very well, but that does not necessarily mean they are able to describe *Christian* prophecy.

The **exegetical method** is also popular, and is typified by Wayne Grudem's 1982 *The Gift of Prophecy in 1 Corinthians*,²² a very light revision of a 1979 Cambridge PhD thesis. As is typical in the exegetical method, Grudem is primarily concerned with the biblical data. This method is common amongst evangelical scholars, particularly in the English-speaking world, though it also finds expression in other circles. It is concerned primarily with prophecy within the New Testament canon, typically in 1 Corinthians and/or Acts. The method can be found in monographs on prophecy, but some of the critical commentaries on 1 Corinthians include such an extensive exegetical discussion of chapters 12-14 that they can be as thorough and perceptive as a monograph on so-called spiritual gifts.²³ The strength of the exegetical method is that it allows the scholar to focus on one small group of source material, which is relatively easy to date and locate geographically. However, there are at least two inherent weaknesses. The first is that the source material chosen may not provide sufficient information, which can lead to speculation or dogmatic assertions. The second is that if the exegetical method is limited to a small corpus or a single text, it can only ever define prophecy as it was understood by that small group. It may (for example) describe *Corinthian* prophecy without necessarily describing the full extent of *Christian* prophecy.

The third method is the **theological method**, which is most likely to be taken by scholars connected to a church or denomination with a strong confessional tradition, such as Roman Catholicism, Pentecostalism or Presbyterianism. One example is Niels Hvidt's *Christian Prophecy: The Post-Biblical Tradition*, which is written from a Roman Catholic perspective.²⁴ Scholars using this method do not ignore historical and exegetical data,

²² See above, fn. 14.

²³ For example, Thiselton's discussion of these chapters is spread over nearly 300 large format pages, and Schrage's almost 400. Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians* (NIGTC; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), 900-1168; Wolfgang Schrage, *Der Erste Brief an die Korinther*, 4 vols. (EKKNT 7; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener, 1991-2001), 3:108-501.

²⁴ Niels Christian Hvidt, *Christian Prophecy: The Post-Biblical Tradition* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007). It was originally submitted to the Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome in 2001.

but a key part of the research involves considering the interaction between the early data and later confessions or church dogma. Some scholars might view the theological method as entirely inappropriate, but at least it has the advantage of being upfront about any dogma that is influencing the study. Whether the theological method is considered a strength or weakness depends largely on the appropriateness of the theological model used (and here beauty is often in the eye of the beholder). Viewing the data through a theological lens may bring clarity; but it may also distort the data and potentially lead to incorrect findings.

Of course the boundaries between each of these methods are somewhat blurred, and several writers cannot easily be fitted into one single 'box'. Nevertheless, having these three methods in mind when reviewing the literature may help to shed some light on why different authors reach different conclusions as to what Christian prophecy is.

A review of the literature

The lack of consensus on the nature of New Testament prophecy means that a key concern of this study needs to be the most basic of all questions: exactly what *is* the New Testament gift of prophecy? The literature review that follows will therefore highlight the ways previous writers have answered that question. Because of the sheer volume of literature, the review confines itself to academic monographs that have been written since 1970 and either major explicitly on Christian prophecy, or are broader studies that have nonetheless had a significant influence on the question of prophecy.²⁵ I have included both published monographs and unpublished theses partly to supply a broader range of literature, but more importantly to demonstrate the progress in the field (the unpublished theses to which I refer are generally earlier than the published monographs).

²⁵ Inevitably I have excluded some works which others may argue should have been included. I chose not to include Ben Witherington, *Jesus the Seer: The Progress of Prophecy* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1999), because its focus is mainly on pre-Christian prophecy; M. Eugene Boring, *Sayings of the Risen Jesus: Christian Prophecy in the Synoptic Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982) and M. Eugene Boring, 'Early Christian Prophecy', *ABD*, because they have an understanding of prophecy that few others consider to be the New Testament's own view of prophecy; and Antoinette Clark Wire, *The Corinthian Women Prophets: A Reconstruction through Paul's Rhetoric* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1990) because it focuses exclusively on what Wire perceives to be the distinct prophethood of the Corinthian women, and it does not deal with Christian prophecy more generally.

I have not included academic works from earlier periods,²⁶ popular works,²⁷ or collections of essays.²⁸ Nor does it include monographs on related subjects such as glossolalia,²⁹ the charismata,³⁰ pneumatology,³¹ 1 Corinthians,³² prophecy and pneumatology in Judaism,³³

²⁶ See above, footnote 6.

²⁷ Popular works are legion, but the most well-received include Bruce Yocum, *Prophecy: Exercising the Prophetic Gifts of the Spirit in the Church Today* (Ann Arbor: Servant Books, 1976); Glenn A. Foster, *The Purpose and Use of Prophecy: A New Testament Perspective* (Dubuque: Kendall/Hunt, 1988); Kenneth L. Gentry, *The Charismatic Gift of Prophecy: A Reformed Response to Wayne Grudem* (Memphis: Footstool, 1989); G. Houston, *Prophecy: A Gift for Today?* (Leicester: Inter-Varsity Press, 1989); Clifford Hill, *Prophecy Past and Present: An Exploration of the Prophetic Ministry in the Bible and the Church Today* (Guildford: Eagle, 1995²); Wayne A. Grudem, *The Gift of Prophecy in the New Testament and Today* (Wheaton: Crossway Books, 2000²).

²⁸ e.g. Panagopoulos, ed., *Prophetic Vocation*; E. Earle Ellis, *Prophecy and Hermeneutic in Early Christianity: New Testament Essays* (WUNT 18; Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 1978); Trutz Rendtorff, ed., *Charisma und Institution* (VWGT 4; Gütersloh: Gerd Mohn, 1985).

²⁹ e.g. Cyril Glyndwr Williams, *Tongues of the Spirit: A Study of Pentecostal Glossolalia and Related Phenomena* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1981); Vincenzo Scippa, *La Glossolalia Nel Nuovo Testamento: Ricerca Esegetica Secondo Il Metodo Storico-Critico E Analitico-Strutturale* (BTNap 1; Napoli: M. D'Auria, 1982); Watson E. Mills, *A Theological/Exegetical Approach to Glossolalia* (Lanham: University Press of America, 1985); Mark J. Cartledge, *Charismatic Glossolalia: An Empirical Theological Study* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2002); Gerald Hovenden, *Speaking in Tongues: the New Testament Evidence in Context* (JPTSup 22; London: Sheffield Academic Press, 2002); Sung Bok Choi, *Geist und Christliche Existenz: Das Glossolalieverständnis des Paulus im Ersten Korintherbrief (1Kor 14)* (WMANT 115; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 2007).

³⁰ e.g. Ulrich Brockhaus, *Charisma und Amt: Die Paulinische Charismenlehre Auf Dem Hintergrund Der Frühchristlichen Gemeindefunktionen* (Wuppertal: Theologischer Verlag Rolf Brockhaus, 1972); John Koenig, *Charismata: God's Gifts for God's People* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1978); Ronald A. N. Kydd, *Charismatic Gifts in the Early Church* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1984); Don A. Carson, *Showing the Spirit: A Theological Exposition of 1 Corinthians 12-14* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1987); Siegfried S. Schatzmann, *A Pauline Theology of Charismata* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1987); Jon Ruthven, *On the Cessation of the Charismata: The Protestant Polemic on Postbiblical Miracles* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1993); Walter J. Hollenweger, *Charismatisch-Pfingstliches Christentum: Herkunft, Situation, Ökumenische Chancen* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1997); Roger Stronstad, *The Prophethood of All Believers: A Study in Luke's Charismatic Theology* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999); Max Turner, *The Holy Spirit and Spiritual Gifts: Then and Now* (Carlisle: Paternoster Press, 1999²).

³¹ e.g. Haya-Prats, *L'esprit Force de l'Eglise* (Paris: Cerf, 1975); George T. Montague, *The Holy Spirit: Growth of a Biblical Tradition* (New York: Paulist Press, 1976); Heinrich Schlier, *Der Geist und Der Kirche* (EAV 4; Frieberg: Herder, 1980); Gordon D. Fee, *God's Empowering Presence: The Holy Spirit in the Letters of Paul* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1994); Craig S. Keener, *The Spirit in the Gospels and Acts: Divine Purity and Power* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1997); Michael Preß, *Jesus und Der Geist: Grundlagen Einer Geist-Christologie* (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener, 2001); Finny Philip, *The Origins of Pauline Pneumatology: The Eschatological Bestowal of the Spirit Upon Gentiles in Judaism and in the Early Development of Paul's Theology* (WUNT2 194; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2005).

or prophecy in second and third century Christianity,³⁴ though most of these topics will prove important later in the study.

In undertaking the review, we will consider each of the three methods (historical, exegetical and theological) in turn. As the purpose of the review is to determine how other writers define the earliest *Christian* prophecy, it is not intended to examine here definitions and explanations of the pre-Christian prophesying of John the Baptist, nor even of Jesus. It is likely that this prophesying is related to Christian prophecy (and it may even transpire that it is the same as Christian prophecy), but any such similarities cannot be assumed, and for now at least the focus remains on early *Christian* prophecy.

The historical method

Writers taking the historical method flourished in the 1970s and 1980s. They include Nils Engelsen (1970),³⁵ Theodore Crone (1973),³⁶ Gerhard Dautzenberg (1975),³⁷ Mattie

³² Recent commentaries on 1 Corinthians are too numerous to usefully list here. Monographs that deal with themes in 1 Corinthians that are related to prophecy include Birger A. Pearson, *The Pneumatikos-Psychikos Terminology in 1 Corinthians* (Missoula: Scholar's Press, 1973); Martin Winter, *Pneumatiker und Psychiker in Korinth: zum Religionsgeschichtlichen Hintergrund Von 1. Kor. 2,6 - 3,4* (Marburger Theologische Studien 12; Marburg: N. G. Elwert, 1975); Alfred Schreiber, *Die Gemeinde in Korinth* (NTAbh 12; Münster: Aschendorff, 1977); Ralph P. Martin, *The Spirit and the Congregation: Studies in 1 Corinthians 12-15* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1984); Carson, *Showing the Spirit*; Luke Ndubuisi, *Paul's Concept of Charisma in 1 Corinthians 12: With Emphasis on Nigerian Charismatic Movement* (EHS 765; Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 2003); Jose Enrique Aguilar Chiu, *1 Cor 12-14: Literary Structure and Theology* (Analecta Biblica 166; Rome: Editrice Pontifici Instituto Biblico, 2007); Clint Tibbs, *Religious Experience of the Pneuma: Communication with the Spirit World in 1 Corinthians 12 and 14* (WUNT2 230; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2007); Benjamin D. Gladd, *Revealing the Mysterion: The Use of Mystery in Daniel and Second Temple Judaism with its Bearing on First Corinthians* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2008).

³³ e.g. Marie E. Isaacs, *The Concept of Spirit: A Study of Pneuma in Hellenistic Judaism and its Bearing on the New Testament* (London: Heythrop College, 1976); Rebecca Gray, *Prophetic Figures in Late Second Temple Jewish Palestine: The Evidence from Josephus* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993); John R. Levison, *The Spirit in First Century Judaism* (Leiden: Brill, 1997); John C. Poirier, *The Tongues of Angels* (WUNT2; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010).

³⁴ e.g. Jannes Reiling, *Hermas and Christian Prophecy: A Study of the Eleventh Mandate* (NovTSup 37; Leiden: Brill, 1973); Gunnar af Hällström, *Charismatic Succession: A Study of Origen's Concept of Prophecy* (SESJ 42; Helsinki: Finnish Exegetical Society, 1985); Ronald E. Heine, *The Montanist Oracles and Testimonia* (Marcon: Mercer University Press, 1989); Cecil M. Robeck, *Prophecy in Carthage: Perpetua, Tertullian, Cyprian* (Cleveland: Pilgrim Press, 1992); Christine Trevett, *Montanism: Gender, Authority and the New Prophecy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

³⁵ Nils Ivar Johan Engelsen, 'Glossolalia and Other Forms of Inspired Speech According to I Corinthians 12-14' (Unpublished PhD Thesis, New Haven: Yale University, 1970).

Elizabeth Hart (1975),³⁸ David Aune (1984),³⁹ and Christopher Forbes (1987/1995).⁴⁰

Nils Engelsen — Glossolalia and other forms of inspired speech (1970)

Nils Engelsen's contribution to the subject is his 1970 Yale PhD thesis, *Glossolalia and Other Forms of Inspired Speech According to 1 Corinthians 12-14*,⁴¹ which remains unpublished. As is typical for researchers taking an historical method, Engelsen includes an extensive discussion of prophecy in Ancient Greek, Ancient Hebrew and other pre-Christian sources. Although various New Testament passages are examined, Engelsen does not attempt any sustained exegesis.⁴²

Engelsen argues that 'the occurrence of involuntary or automatic speech within the Greek oracle cult' is 'beyond doubt'. This speech was often 'a mixture of intelligible and unintelligible ejaculations', though 'unintelligible speech prevailed'.⁴³ Engelsen's work is typical of its time, and shows a tendency to assume rather than demonstrate a similarity between Christian, Jewish, Graeco-Roman and other forms of prophecy. For example, long before citing any evidence from Paul or first-century Corinth, Engelsen concludes, 'The ecstatic phenomena in Corinth are not as such distinctively Christian, but are pan-human'.⁴⁴

However, Engelsen does admit that there might be 'essential differences' between Christian and Greek prophecy, and later describes 'possession of the Spirit' as 'the Christian distinctive'.⁴⁵ He also argues that early Christianity can be characterised as a prophetic movement, which saw the prophetic spirit as being revived in fulfilment of the

³⁶ Crone, *Early Christian Prophecy*.

³⁷ See above, fn. 5.

³⁸ Mattie Elizabeth Hart, 'Speaking in Tongues and Prophecy as Understood by Paul and at Corinth, with Reference to Early Christian Usage' (Unpublished PhD Thesis, University of Durham, 1975).

³⁹ See above, fn. 21.

⁴⁰ See above, fn. 8.

⁴¹ See above, fn. 35.

⁴² See Engelsen, 'Glossolalia', 102.

⁴³ *idem*, 20.

⁴⁴ *idem*, 21. Engelsen does not cite any evidence from Corinth until p. 71, and his detailed examination of the letter does not begin until p. 102.

⁴⁵ *idem*, 21, 90-92.

predictions of the prophetic literature.⁴⁶ He sees 1 Corinthians 12:1-3 as the interpretative key to understanding the letter,⁴⁷ and repeatedly emphasises ‘the intimate relation between the Spirit of God and Jesus’, to the extent that ‘nobody can have the Holy Spirit without having Jesus Christ’, and vice versa.⁴⁸

The Spirit of God is given to him [Jesus], and to him alone. He, therefore, is the bestower of the Spirit upon his people. To be in the Spirit means to be in Christ.⁴⁹

Possession of the Spirit was considered a Christian distinctive. The Spirit was God’s promised eschatological gift, which he now had bestowed on his people through the ascended Jesus Christ (Acts 2:33, 38-39). The Spirit is experienced as Christ’s agent, revealing his Lordship and effecting his will by the bestowal of power on his witnesses. The possession of the Spirit was not for a privileged few. In fact, all Christians possessed the Spirit because the Spirit was their mark of identity.⁵⁰

Engelsen obviously sees some differences between Christian and non-Christian prophecy, but it is not at all clear what these differences look like. The closest he gets to a definition of prophecy is that it is ‘fully intelligible, directed to man, and serving the congregation’.⁵¹ Elsewhere he adds that it is ‘dependent on revelation’, and will ‘proclaim details and glimpses of insight into God’s will and plans as these are revealed by the Spirit’.⁵² Prophecy (like glossolalia) is ecstatic,⁵³ but (unlike Pauline glossolalia) it is intelligible.⁵⁴

Some subsequent scholars have rightly criticised Engelsen for limiting his study of Greek

⁴⁶ idem, 63.

⁴⁷ idem, 103.

⁴⁸ idem, 107.

⁴⁹ idem.

⁵⁰ idem, 219.

⁵¹ idem, 146-147.

⁵² idem, 206.

⁵³ He defines ecstatic as, ‘the state of mind in which everything changes. The limits of rational reason are surpassed and a “new reality” dawns. The worshipper enters into union with the god and shares in his divine bliss. He is ἔνθεος. This “enthusiasmos” is not an empty state of mind. Filled with the god, the devotee lives for a short period in a new world, or a world transformed... Proclamations, acclamations, and unintelligible utterances flow from a delirious mouth under the spell of the god.’ idem, 5-6.

⁵⁴ The reference is specifically to *Pauline* glossolalia, because Engelsen argues that prior to Paul, glossolalia simply ‘signified a speech caused by the Holy Spirit, regardless of the question of intelligibility’, idem, ii.

prophecy to a relatively brief period at a considerable distance from the New Testament period.⁵⁵ Moreover, Engelsen's work is significantly weakened by the assumptions he makes: not only that Corinthian prophecy mirrors Graeco-Roman prophecy, but also that data obtained from the classical period can be readily applied to the later Hellenistic period. Many other writers take a different view, and as will be seen, they present considerably more evidence than Engelsen is able to muster.

Theodore Crone — Early Christian Prophecy (1973)

Theodore Crone's 1973 thesis for Tübingen⁵⁶ has generally been far more positively received than that of Engelsen.⁵⁷ Crone looks first at prophecy in the 'contemporary world of early Christianity' in Greek religion, in Judaism, and in the lives of John the Baptist and Jesus. He then moves on to look at early Christian prophecy. Like Engelsen, Crone is primarily concerned with the practice of prophecy in history — Aune commends Crone's study as 'a model of historical investigation with theological tendencies for the most part remarkably absent'.⁵⁸ However, unlike Engelsen, Crone argues that Christian prophecy has its sources not in the Graeco-Roman world,⁵⁹ but rather in the ministry of Jesus and in Judaism.⁶⁰

Crone also sees a distinction between Christian and ancient Jewish prophesying — and he concludes that around the time of Jesus most Jews believed that prophecy had ceased, or at least any prophecy that *did* continue was certainly not of the same order as Old Testament prophecy.⁶¹ In Jewish thinking there was a clear link between the Spirit and prophecy, in fact prophecy 'was the spirit's chief manifestation'. Crone argues that this is the case in both the Old Testament, the rabbis, and in the Targums.⁶² In addition, whilst

⁵⁵ e.g. Forbes, *Prophecy and Inspired Speech*, 21.

⁵⁶ See above, fn. 16.

⁵⁷ See, as just two examples, Grudem, *The Gift of Prophecy in 1 Corinthians*, 1 and Christopher Forbes, 'Early Christian Inspired Speech and Hellenistic Popular Religion', *NovT*, 28:3 (1986), 30.

⁵⁸ Aune, *Prophecy in Early Christianity*, 9. Given Aune's own anti-theological position (see p. 40, below), this is high praise indeed.

⁵⁹ 'One might expect that any influence of the Greek oracle on Christian prophecy would have made itself felt here [in Corinth]. However, this is not the case.' Crone, *Early Christian Prophecy*, 287.

⁶⁰ *idem*, 281-284.

⁶¹ *idem*, 61-66.

⁶² *idem*, 56.

Judaism did not always argue that prophecy was present in its own generation, there was an oft-expressed future hope for the Spirit's activity that 'was strongly connected with the eschatological age'.⁶³

Despite the differences between prophecy in Christianity and Judaism, Crone is in no doubt that the ministry of Jesus and contemporary Judaism was the origin of early Christian prophecy.⁶⁴ He suggests Pentecost changed Christian prophecy, 'since prophecy was a manifestation of the reception of the Spirit'. After the resurrection there was 'a new awareness of Spirit', which 'in a Jewish setting would naturally have expressed itself in an increase in prophetic activity', so 'prophecy is connected with the eschatological consciousness of the church', at least in Acts and Revelation.⁶⁵

What then is prophecy? Crone acknowledges the dilemma that faces many of those writing on the subject. The tendency is either to define prophecy so narrowly that much prophetic activity is overlooked, or so widely that the definition becomes rather meaningless.⁶⁶ Crone sees preaching as a prophet's 'most-embracing' function; it taught, exhorted and admonished. The prophet would be 'conscious of a degree of inspiration', and prophecy could (would?) have an 'enthusiastic or even ecstatic form'. The role of the prophet remained, however, distinct from that of the teacher.⁶⁷ Prophecy could have a predictive element, and could direct the assembly. For Crone, prophecy has a variety of complementary functions.⁶⁸

Crone's study remains helpful even today, partially because he carefully distinguishes between Jewish, Graeco-Roman and Christian prophecy. On the other hand, there is a weakness in that although he describes a variety of Christian prophesying, it is not always clear whether a description of prophecy that Luke applied in Antioch (for example), could be applied by Paul in Corinth. Does prophecy mean different things to different Christians, or is it simply that different authors have highlighted different

⁶³ idem, 57.

⁶⁴ idem, 281.

⁶⁵ idem, 284.

⁶⁶ idem, 290.

⁶⁷ idem, 290-293.

⁶⁸ idem, 294-296.

aspects of the same phenomenon?⁶⁹

Gerhard Dautzenberg — Urchristliche Prophetie (1975)

Dautzenberg's work was a post-doctoral thesis submitted in 1972 to the Bayerischen Julius-Maximilians-Universität at Würzburg. His method could perhaps best be described as a combination of the historical and the exegetical — he is significantly concerned both with the background to early Christian prophecy in Judaism,⁷⁰ but also with prophecy in 1 Corinthians.⁷¹ Yet he is most closely aligned with the historical method because as we will see, the chapters on historical background often control his exegesis.

In the first part of his work, Dautzenberg examines prophecy from a wide variety of sources that may have had influence on New Testament Christianity: the book of Daniel, Jewish wisdom literature, the Septuagint, literature at Qumran, various pseudepigraphal writings, Josephus and the 'Therapeutae'.⁷² He groups the results of his introductory study into three areas: Offenbarung (revelation), Deutung (interpretation) and Weisheit (wisdom). The emphasis throughout is on prophecy as dark sayings, a revelation of mysteries.⁷³ For Dautzenberg, Paul's experiences of prophecy are both apocalyptic and ecstatic.

The background studies impact heavily on Dautzenberg's work on 1 Corinthians 12-14, even if he himself does not always make the connections explicit. It is hard to criticise someone for wanting to take background seriously, but in Dautzenberg's case, the problem seems to be with his choice of what constitutes background. The literature he examines seems to be chosen solely because of apparent parallels between it and the New Testament, but — as so often in these situations — one man's parallel is another man's contrast. In some key areas, Grudem has demonstrated decisively that several of

⁶⁹ See the similar comments of Forbes, *Prophecy and Inspired Speech*, 32, fn. 38.

⁷⁰ Dautzenberg, *Urchristliche Prophetie*, 43-121.

⁷¹ idem, 122-305.

⁷² The Therapeutae are a somewhat mysterious sect, apparently related in some way to the Essenes, recorded by Philo, and (wrongly?) claimed by Eusebius to be Christians. See Philo, *On the Contemplative Life*, Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History* 2.17 (NPNF² 1:117-119), also Craig A. Evans, 'Therapeutae,' in *DNTB*, ed. Craig A. Evans and Stanley E. Porter (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2000), 1230-1231.

⁷³ See, particularly, Dautzenberg, *Urchristliche Prophetie*, 149-172.

Dautzenberg's parallels do not stand up to scrutiny,⁷⁴ and one is left with the nagging doubt that if Dautzenberg had spent more time with Isaiah (known to be hugely influential on Paul) than on 2 Baruch, his conclusions may well have been different.⁷⁵ The consequence of all this is that Dautzenberg's findings have not been widely accepted. One scholar, perhaps speaking for many, has described his view of early Christian prophecy as 'idiosyncratic'.⁷⁶

Mattie Hart — Speaking in tongues and prophecy (1975)

Shortly after the publication of Crone's thesis, Mattie Elizabeth Hart submitted a similar work to the University of Durham.⁷⁷ Like Dautzenberg, Hart's primary focus is Corinth, yet 'with reference to early Christian usage'. This means that despite considerable exegetical work, her thesis has a strong historical method, hence its inclusion here. Although her work postdates both Engelsen's and (just) Crone's, Hart appears to have no knowledge of either study.

In part one, Hart undertakes an ambitious and very broad survey of religious speech, with a chapter each on paganism, Judaism, Gnosticism, and first and second century 'non-Pauline' Christianity. Parts two and three focus on Corinthians and the other Pauline letters, whilst part four provides some theological reflections.

Like Engelsen, Hart concludes that there are several resemblances between pagan prophets and Corinthian tongue-speakers — though just like Engelsen she does so before she has considered the evidence from Corinth.⁷⁸ She also accepts a pre-Gnostic influence in Corinth.⁷⁹ Hart does not attempt to synthesise her conclusions at the end of part one (surely an impossible task!), but provides separate summaries for each chapter. These summaries highlight just how diverse views on prophecy could be. When considering prophecy in the Old Testament she admits that 'enough exceptions to any pattern exist

⁷⁴ See Grudem, *The Gift of Prophecy in 1 Corinthians*, 263-288 and Wayne A. Grudem, 'A Response to Gerhard Dautzenberg on 1 Cor. 12:10', *BZ*, 22:2 (1978), 253-270.

⁷⁵ Dautzenberg does the opposite, spending more time on 2 Baruch than on Isaiah.

⁷⁶ Thomas W. Gillespie, *The First Theologians: A Study in Early Christian Prophecy* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994), 29.

⁷⁷ See above, fn. 38.

⁷⁸ Hart, 'Speaking in Tongues and Prophecy', 6-14.

⁷⁹ *idem*, 15-20. She does however consider the Corinthian situation too early to be spoken of as Gnostic in any systematic sense.

to hinder our making broad statements'.⁸⁰ She sees understandings of prophecy changing through the Old Testament period, from the ecstatic, 'unusual and irrational behaviour' before the monarchy, through to the delivery of a message from God in the classical period, before prophecy fell out of favour altogether.⁸¹

Hart believes attitudes towards Christian prophecy were equally varied. In asking whether 'non-Pauline' Christianity was charismatic, Hart admits that 'no clearcut yes or no is possible' and that the evidence 'covers vast and complex territory'. She concludes by explaining that she has found evidence of both pro-charismatic and anti-charismatic elements within early Christianity.⁸² However, she believes she is able to define prophecy, at least from Paul's perspective: 'the intelligible proclamation of the word of God for the community, revealed to a believer through the indwelling Spirit of God'.⁸³

Hart's work has been rather overshadowed by that of Crone,⁸⁴ perhaps because it falls between two stools. There is too much concentration on the Corinthian situation to satisfy those from the historical school, but too much emphasis on the situation outside Corinth to be considered an exegetical work. Perhaps Hart's greatest strength is in showing just how many differing views of prophecy there were, and how complex a broad study can quickly become.

David Aune — Prophecy in Early Christianity (1984)

Of all the writers considered in this section, Aune is perhaps the one most committed to the historical method, and of all the works from this school, Aune's is the most comprehensive. In four chapters he deals with prophecy in the Graeco-Roman, Ancient Israelite, and early Judaistic worlds, before spending two chapters on Jesus as a prophet. The remaining five chapters — which are not restricted to the New Testament data — deal with early Christian prophecy: its character, its relationship to the sayings of Jesus, its form and content, and its features. Because of his thoroughness (350 pages plus nearly 100 pages of notes) and careful examination of the evidence, the work has become a benchmark in the field.

⁸⁰ idem, 23.

⁸¹ idem, 24-30.

⁸² idem, 107-109.

⁸³ idem, 361.

⁸⁴ Only Forbes interacts with it at any length.

After detailed examination of Jewish and Graeco-Roman prophecy, Aune concludes that although there is influence from these traditions on Christian prophecy, there are significant features of early Christian prophecy that cannot be found in either tradition. Therefore, Christian prophecy should not be thought of as a Christianised combination of Jewish and Graeco-Roman ideas, but 'is most adequately treated as a distinctively Christian institution'.⁸⁵ However, when considering the differences *within* Christian prophecy, Aune does not feel able to make clear distinctions. Christian prophecy, he says, 'does not readily lend itself to conceptual categorization'.⁸⁶ However, more so than perhaps any other writer, Aune does attempt to synthesise the evidence he has gathered, and concludes his work with a helpful chapter that attempts to delineate Christian prophecy.⁸⁷ He finds that Christian prophecy does not have a distinctive content or form. Rather, what separates prophecy from other forms of Christian speech is its 'supernatural origin'. In Aune's view, this origin cannot be discerned by the hearers, but must be indicated by a 'formal framing device'. Without that device, oracles cannot be recognised.⁸⁸

However, here Aune's methodology appears questionable. Some 90 pages before this conclusion, Aune had set out his criteria for examining the early evidence. He would look for oracles in the New Testament,⁸⁹ using three criteria: (1) Attribution of a saying to a supernatural being, (2) Predictions of future events, and (3) Speech introduced by a formula used to introduce prophetic speech.⁹⁰ If you compare these three criteria with his conclusions in the paragraph above, one is left with the clear impression that Aune found what he set out to find. He looked for speech attributed to a supernatural being, and concluded that prophecy was of supernatural origin. He then looked for speech introduced by a formula, and concluded that prophecy must be formally framed. It is easy to imagine that had his presuppositions been different, his conclusions would have

⁸⁵ Aune, *Prophecy in Early Christianity*, 230.

⁸⁶ *idem.*

⁸⁷ *idem*, 317-338.

⁸⁸ *idem*, 338.

⁸⁹ Primarily in Paul, Acts and Revelation.

⁹⁰ Aune, *Prophecy in Early Christianity*, 247-248. The list is repeated on p. 317, with the addition of two more criteria: reference to the inspiration of the speaker, and claims to be oracular. They could be considered as variations of introductory formulae.

been different too.

Finding what we set out to find is more common in academic research than sometimes we care to admit. It is not necessarily a bad thing, particularly if it is possible demonstrate that the criteria used are unprejudiced. Unfortunately, Aune does not demonstrate this, despite repeatedly describing his criteria as 'objective'. The presupposition behind these criteria is that by definition prophecy must be recognisable by its form, and that prophets must conform 'to the social image of a prophet accepted as legitimate' so that they can be recognised.⁹¹ Would anyone in the ancient world have actually used these criteria themselves? All the documentary evidence suggests they were far less concerned with the 'social image of the prophet' than they were with the genuineness of the inspiration, and it is highly likely that their assessment of that inspiration involved rather more than whether a particular prophet looked and sounded like other prophets. Would not Aune's criteria have been more objective if they were sourced in the ancient world rather than the modern one? Therefore, there is some doubt as to the validity of the criteria for his investigation, and consequently doubt surrounding the validity of his conclusions.

This is a shame, because he has drawn together a huge range of evidence from a wide variety of sources. Yet even if one disagrees with his criteria and definition of prophecy, Aune's insistence that Christian prophecy is distinct from both Graeco-Roman and Jewish forms of prophecy, is not to be taken lightly.

Christopher Forbes — Prophecy and Inspired Speech (1995)

Forbes' book is a revision of his 1987 Macquarie thesis. It has a very definite, but limited aim: to explore the similarities (actually, more often, the *dissimilarities*) between Christian inspired speech (i.e. prophecy and glossolalia), and its Hellenistic counterparts. As Forbes believes that previous generations of scholars have assumed too many similarities, he starts his study with a survey of *Christian* prophecy and leaves consideration of Hellenistic forms of inspired speech until later. Unlike Engelsen and Hart, he appears not to want to assume one form of inspired speech parallels another until he has examined both independently.

This approach means Forbes attempts to define Christian glossolalia and prophecy more

⁹¹ *idem*, 248.

clearly than others who take the historical method. He deals first with glossolalia. In a brief chapter, he argues that Paul and Luke both understood glossolalia as the miraculous ability to speak foreign languages, though Luke saw glossolalia as a type of prophecy, whilst Paul saw it as a separate phenomenon that was related to prophecy.⁹²

In the second half of his work, Forbes turns from glossolalia to prophecy. Unlike others in the historical school, Forbes limits his investigation to Paul and Luke — not because of their canonical status, but because they represent virtually the only evidence from the first century available.⁹³ He argues that the different conceptual frameworks of Greeks and Christians mean that their respective understanding of *prophets* is so distinct as to make meaningful comparisons between the two impossible.⁹⁴ He therefore moves on to discuss whether the Christian and Hellenistic concepts of *prophecy* can be compared instead. He argues that Christian prophecy was not something that could be deduced from other sources, but is the ‘reception and immediately subsequent public declarations of spontaneous, (usually) verbal revelation’.⁹⁵ Turning then to Hellenistic prophecy, Forbes rejects many of the traditional arguments that show a distinction between Christian and Hellenistic prophecy, but erects replacement arguments in their place, concluding that the two forms of prophecy are different in their form, structure, and context.⁹⁶

The strength of Forbes’ work lies therefore not in his consideration of Christian inspired speech, but in his comparison of Christian speech with that of Hellenism. He argues that others from the history-of-religions school have assumed rather than demonstrated parallels between Christian and Hellenistic inspired speech. His firm conclusion (which has been widely, though not universally accepted)⁹⁷ is that:

⁹² Forbes, *Prophecy and Inspired Speech*, 50-51. A second difference is that the hearers Luke portrays were able to understand the languages, whilst those Paul was writing to could not.

⁹³ *idem*, 2.

⁹⁴ *idem*, 188-217.

⁹⁵ *idem*, 236.

⁹⁶ *idem*, 281-308.

⁹⁷ Those who explicitly accept Forbes’ arguments include Carson, *Showing the Spirit*, 81; Philip F. Esler, ‘Glossolalia and the Admission of Gentiles into the Early Christian Community’, *BTB*, 22:3 (1992), 141; Ben Witherington, *Conflict and Community in Corinth: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary on 1 and 2 Corinthians* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995), 282, fn. 228; Clyde M. Woods, ‘Are Tongues for Today?’ (paper

In the case of early Christian glossolalia, I have argued that no convincing parallels whatsoever have been found within the traditions of Graeco-Roman religion, as they were known in the environment of the New Testament, whether it be at the level of terminology, phenomena or concept.⁹⁸

Although Forbes' work has a limited aim (demonstrating the supposed parallels between Christian and Hellenistic inspired speech are false), his comprehensive survey of the evidence produces a compelling argument.

The exegetical method

Contributions employing the exegetical method have appeared fairly regularly through the period under consideration. Following Édouard Cothenet's lengthy essay (1972),⁹⁹ came monographs from David Hill (1979),¹⁰⁰ Wayne Grudem (1982),¹⁰¹ Thomas Gillespie (1994),¹⁰² Victor Massalles (2001),¹⁰³ and Elim Hiu (2010).¹⁰⁴ Technical commentaries (which will be discussed in later chapters) are listed above,¹⁰⁵ with the most comprehensive coming from Fee (1987), Schrage (vol. 3, 1999) and Thiselton (2000).

presented at the National Conference of the Evangelical Theological Society 1996), 12; Robert Zerhusen, 'The Problem Tongues in 1 Cor 14: A Reexamination', *BTB*, 27:4 (1997), 141; Turner, *The Holy Spirit and Spiritual Gifts*, 222; Mark J. Cartledge, 'The Nature and Function of New Testament Glossolalia', *EvQ*, 72:2 (2000), 141-144; David E. Garland, *1 Corinthians* (BECNT; Grand Rapids: Baker, 2003), 586; David Miller, 'Luke's Conception of Prophets Considered in the Context of Second Temple Literature' (Unpublished PhD Thesis, Hamilton: McMaster University, 2004), 12. Gillespie is one of the few who disagrees (Gillespie, *The First Theologians*, 150), noting that 'the results of such investigations... depend entirely upon the assumptions that guide them and the criteria employed'. But this is an unfair criticism of Forbes, who comes to his conclusions regarding tongues as a result of surveying the evidence from a wide variety of sources (something that Gillespie himself does not attempt). Dale Martin also disagrees (Dale B. Martin, 'Tongues of Angels and Other Status Indicators', *JAAR*, 59:3 (1991), 558-559). Martin is right to query whether glossolalia would have sprung spontaneously out of early Christianity itself, but that conclusion does not automatically lead to a Graeco-Roman source.

⁹⁸ Forbes, *Prophecy and Inspired Speech*, 316.

⁹⁹ Édouard Cothenet, 'Prophétisme dans le Nouveau Testament', *DBSup*, 8:1222-1337.

¹⁰⁰ Hill, *New Testament Prophecy*.

¹⁰¹ See above, fn. 14.

¹⁰² See above, fn. 97.

¹⁰³ Victor Masalles, *La Profecía En la Asamblea Cristiana: Análisis Retórico-Literario de 1Cor 14,1-25* (TGST 74; Roma: Editrice Pontificia Università Gregoriana, 2001).

¹⁰⁴ Elim Hiu, *Regulations Concerning Tongues and Prophecy in 1 Corinthians 14.26-40* (Library of New Testament Studies 406; London: T & T Clark, 2010).

¹⁰⁵ See above, fn. 23 and 32.

Édouard Cothenet — Prophétisme dans le Nouveau Testament (1972)

Cothenet's extensive article on prophecy provides an overview of prophecy in the New Testament. Unlike most others using an exegetical method, Cothenet paints with broad brushes, and his article covers intertestamental Judaism, the gospels, the Pauline epistles, and Johannine literature.

He does not begin with a definition of prophecy, preferring instead to warn of the variety of forms prophecy could take, and the dangers of forming a synthetic view through extrapolating from the sporadic data.¹⁰⁶

Cothenet sees Barnabas as a typical prophet in the early church. He discerns the signs of the time, and encourages the saints (Acts 9:23). His prophethood emphasises a link with God, of whom he is a spokesman. His apostleship shows there was originally no difference between the two offices.¹⁰⁷ Stephen is also considered a prophet by virtue of his being filled with the Spirit, pronouncing judgement on Judaism and seeing a vision.¹⁰⁸ The contributions of several other prophets (such as Agabus) are also considered. On Lukan prophecy, he concludes:

On ne saurait parler du prophétisme chrétien sans rappeler que Jésus est le Prophète par excellence; cela implique que toute doctrine doit avoir son enracinement — nous ne disons pas sa formulation explicite — dans la personne de Jésus de Nazareth... Le prophétisme chrétien se rattache à la promesse du Christ d'envoyer l'Esprit divin à ses disciples... La plus grave critique qu'il faut adresser à Bultmann et à son école, c'est d'avoir fait abstraction du rôle des Douze comme témoins privilégiés de la 'sainte tradition de Jésus' ...¹⁰⁹

This is not yet a definition, but unlike many writers, Cothenet is attempting to get at the heart of what makes Christian prophecy distinctive from other forms of prophecy. His answer can be summed up in one word: Jesus. Christian prophecy, says Cothenet, has its

¹⁰⁶ Cothenet, 'Prophétisme dans le Nouveau Testament', 1222-1223.

¹⁰⁷ idem, 1280-1281.

¹⁰⁸ idem, 1281.

¹⁰⁹ idem, 1285. 'They could not speak about Christian prophecy without recalling that Jesus is the Prophet par excellence; this implies that any doctrine must have its rooting - we do not say its explicit formulation - in the person of Jesus of Nazareth... Christian prophecy is linked to the promise of Christ to send the Spirit of God to his disciples... The most serious criticism which it is necessary to direct to Bultmann and his school, is that they have forgotten the role of the Twelve as privileged witnesses of the "holy tradition of Jesus"...'.

roots in the person of Jesus, it is linked with the promise of Jesus, and those who prophesy are witnesses of the tradition of Jesus.

In Paul, Cothenet also identifies different types of prophecy, including apocalyptic and reading men's hearts, but most common is prophecy for edification. Even this is Christ-centred, it is 'l'affermissement dans la certitude que le Christ n'abandonnera aucun de ses fidèles'.¹¹⁰ It is also Spirit-prompted, 'une intervention directe de Dieu'.¹¹¹

Cothenet's work fulfils its purpose as a dictionary article. It is succinct, comprehensive and clear. Cothenet essentially summarises the positions of others rather than putting forward new ideas of his own. Yet in bringing together a largely exegetical study across the entire range of the New Testament corpus, Cothenet has been able to see patterns that others miss. His most important contribution is therefore in his insistence that it is primarily Christ that makes Christian prophecy distinct from other forms of prophecy.

David Hill — New Testament Prophecy (1979)

Hill begins by proposing a working definition for prophecy that is based on an earlier proposal from Boring, slightly modified by Aune.¹¹² This decision is unfortunate in that the definition is given for a *prophet*, rather than for *prophecy*. Hill tries to avoid the error of assuming that all prophecy must be labelled as prophecy, by first determining the essential functions of those labelled prophets, and then looking for those functions in others who do not have the label.¹¹³ This method means making two assumptions. The first is that the main functions of those labelled prophets are in fact prophetic. The second assumption is that there are no prophetic functions other than the main functions of those described as prophets. If either of these assumptions are false, then the method is flawed.

Unfortunately, Hill himself acknowledges that those assumptions are not entirely correct. He explains that Boring's definition is intended to 'mark itself off from three related phenomena in early Christianity which are sometimes regarded as prophetic', the

¹¹⁰ idem, 1299, '...strengthening in the certainty that Christ will leave none of his faithful'.

¹¹¹ idem, 1300.

¹¹² M. Eugene Boring, 'What Are We Looking For?: Toward a Definition of the Term Christian Prophet,' in *Society of Biblical Literature Seminar Papers 1973*, vol. 2, ed. George W. MacRae (Cambridge: Society of Biblical Literature, 1973), 147; Hill, *New Testament Prophecy*, 6. NR: Get Aune, 1974 SBL.

¹¹³ Hill, *New Testament Prophecy*, 3-5.

first of which is:

The general 'prophetic' character which the early Spirit-filled Christian community possessed whereby all members may have been considered as potentially prophets: only prophets in the strict sense of the word... are included in the definition.¹¹⁴

This demonstrates the second assumption is not completely accurate. There *are* prophetic functions other than the main functions of those described as prophets. This immediately limits the value of Hill's study (and alerts us to similar limitations in the studies of Aune and Boring). As Hill recognises, there does seem to be a sense in which prophetic empowerment was widespread in earliest Christianity, and the prophetic speech could go beyond 'prophets in the strict sense of the word'. Indeed, he later admits that 'it cannot be assumed that all inspired speech in the early Christian community emanated from prophets'.¹¹⁵

Thankfully, despite his definition, Hill actually has quite a lot to say about prophecy in this broader sense. After spending two chapters dealing with Jesus as a prophet and the book of Revelation, Hill turns his attention to Luke-Acts, and highlights Luke's interest in the Spirit, which stems from a 'conviction that the New Age has indeed come' and is 'strongly demonstrated by Luke's emphasis on the presence of the Spirit of prophecy throughout his birth narratives'.¹¹⁶ Like Cothenet, Hill believes that the Spirit's work is Christological, and particularly points out that 'the action of the Spirit manifests itself in the christological understanding of the Scriptures'.¹¹⁷

As he moves onto the Spirit's role after Pentecost, Hill argues that the earliest church had a 'conviction that the gift of the Spirit to the Church is its empowering for universal mission... which enables the apostles and other Christians to *communicate* with all people...'.¹¹⁸ Nevertheless, this should not be seen as different from the earlier role of a Christological understanding of Scriptures, because it is the 'same action of the Spirit' which 'underlies and sustains the apostolic witness'.¹¹⁹

¹¹⁴ idem, 6.

¹¹⁵ idem, 167.

¹¹⁶ idem, 94.

¹¹⁷ idem, 95.

¹¹⁸ idem, 95-96, emphasis original.

¹¹⁹ idem, 95.

Central to the gift of the Spirit is the “prophetic” character of the gift,¹²⁰ and Joel 2/Acts 2 are both crucial and clear:

If these passages make one thing clear, it is this: that all believers had received the prophetic Spirit and could be inspired to prophesy...¹²¹ It is assumed in the book of Acts that Christian prophecy, as an eschatological power of the Spirit, is a possibility for any Christian — else what would the fulfilment of Joel’s prophecy mean?¹²²

Hill sees Paul in agreement with Luke in that he understood ‘any Christian... might *on occasion* prophesy’, but sees a smaller group of ‘professional prophets’ operating in Corinth ‘who came to hold a recognised and authoritative position in [the] congregation by reason of their prominent and continuing exercise of the spiritual gift’.¹²³ Hill argues that prophecy is not simply teaching or preaching, but is the declaration of a revelation, and he prefers the designation ‘pastoral preaching’ or exhortation.¹²⁴

Hill also looks at glossolalia, and affirms reasonably confidently that the apostles were speaking known ‘foreign’ languages at Pentecost. This, in his view, makes the situation quite different from that in Corinth. That the languages were ‘real’, not ecstatic, is due to the nature of the Spirit’s work:

Nowhere in Acts (save in 10.46 and 19.6 if these are exceptions) does Luke understand the gift of the Spirit... in any other terms than as the inspiration or power to *communicate to men...* truth from God or about God’s action.¹²⁵

Yet it is far from clear that Hill is confident as to what the *content* of prophecy might actually be, and regarding content says little more than:

through the power of the Spirit he [the prophet] witnesses to the character of his living Lord, who is himself the Prophet of the End-time...¹²⁶

Hill knows that the prophet reveals mysteries, but he seems much less clear on what the

¹²⁰ idem, 96.

¹²¹ idem, 97.

¹²² idem, 99.

¹²³ idem, 121, emphasis original.

¹²⁴ idem, 126-128.

¹²⁵ idem, 98, emphasis original. Hill doubts very much whether the passages cited *are* exceptions.

¹²⁶ idem, 109. This is remarkably similar to Ellis’ definition (‘the Christian prophet manifests in the power of the Spirit the character of his Lord, who is the prophet of the end-time...’, Ellis, *Prophecy and Hermeneutic in Early Christianity*, 144), but no acknowledgement is given.

mysteries actually are. Therefore, although Hill has a more clearly defined pneumatology within which to understand prophecy, he still does not get far in understanding exactly what prophecy is.

At its heart, Hill's work is something of a curate's egg. His definition of a prophet purposefully excludes general prophetic speech — which he then spends a good deal of time discussing, and whilst his definition of 'prophet' is very clear, he says almost nothing about the content of prophecy. Aune probably overstates the case when he accuses Hill of being in a 'methodological muddle', but one can see his point.¹²⁷

Wayne Grudem — The Gift of Prophecy in 1 Corinthians (1982)

Wayne Grudem's 1982 research has become a milestone in an understanding of the gift of prophecy, particularly amongst popular level writers and evangelical academics. For example, Dan McCartney wrote in the *Westminster Theological Journal*:

I can think of no higher honor to give a book in a review than to say that it changed my mind... it certainly has expanded and opened my horizons regarding the gift of prophecy in the NT, and I can now see the tenability of a position which previously seemed without solid scriptural foundation. This gem of a dissertation written for Cambridge is the best discussion of the NT gift of prophecy I have ever read.¹²⁸

This praise has been matched by the work's popularity,¹²⁹ and Grudem's exegetical work in 1 Corinthians certainly broke new ground. Of course, not everyone accepted his conclusions, and many responses to his work were produced.¹³⁰

¹²⁷ Aune, *Prophecy in Early Christianity*, 10. The accusation is grounded largely in Aune's devaluing of anything other than a 'neutral' historical approach.

¹²⁸ Dan G. McCartney, 'Review of "The Gift of Prophecy in 1 Corinthians" by Wayne A. Grudem', *WTJ*, 45:1 (1983), 191.

¹²⁹ Grudem's book was reissued by Wipf & Stock (Eugene: Oregon, 1999), and remains in print. A popular version was also released, now in its second edition (Grudem, *The Gift of Prophecy in the New Testament and Today*). A substantive summary of Grudem's views on prophecy is also part of his very popular *Systematic Theology*, a publication which itself remains in print in an original and condensed form — Wayne A. Grudem, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Bible Doctrine* (Leicester: Inter-Varsity Press, 1994).

¹³⁰ Direct responses include Gentry, *The Charismatic Gift of Prophecy*; F. David Farnell, 'Fallible New Testament Prophecy/Prophets? A Critique of Wayne Grudem's Hypothesis', *MSJ*, 2:2 (1991); R. Fowler White, 'Gaffin and Grudem on Eph 2:20: In Defense of Gaffin's Cessationist Exegesis', *WTJ*, 54:2 (1992); R. Fowler White, 'Richard Gaffin and Wayne Grudem on 1 Cor 13:10: A Comparison of Cessationist and Noncessationist Argumentation', *JETS*, 35:2 (1992); David B. McWilliams, 'Something New under the

Very early in his work Grudem acknowledges the problem that most writers on prophecy meet as they commence their work. That is:

...the fact that NT prophecy does not appear to have been a homogeneous phenomenon. There seem to have been at least two types of Christian prophecy, or perhaps even several slightly different types... So several types of distinctions have been made, distinctions, for instance, in content, form, purpose, frequency, and type of activity.¹³¹

However, Grudem accepts just two types of prophecy: apostolic (authoritative in actual words), and non-apostolic (authoritative only in general content). Grudem starts his work in the Old Testament, though he limits his investigations to just the *authority* of Hebrew prophecy.¹³² This is simply to prepare the way for an extensive discussion on the authority of New Testament prophecy, the study of which actually forms a large part of his thesis. As the title indicates, Grudem's primary concern is 1 Corinthians,¹³³ with less than 40 pages on the rest of the New Testament.¹³⁴ This focus on authority of prophecy (rather than on other aspects), and on 1 Corinthians (rather than other parts of the New Testament), means his investigations into these areas are not much short of exhaustive, but unfortunately it also means aspects of prophecy are not given enough consideration.

Sun?', *WTJ*, 54:2 (1992); Robert L. Thomas, 'Prophecy Rediscovered? A Review of "The Gift of Prophecy in the New Testament and Today"', *BSac*, 149:593 (1992); R. Fowler White, 'Reflections on Wayne Grudem's ETS 1992 Presentation, "The New Testament Gift of Prophecy: A Response to my Friends"' (paper presented at the Evangelical Theological Society Eastern Region Annual Meeting, 1993); W. Norris Wilson, 'Prophecy in the Church Today: An Assessment of the Position of Wayne Grudem in His Book "The Gift of Prophecy in the New Testament and Today"', *RTJ*, 13 (1993); John W. Hilber, 'Diversity of OT Prophetic Phenomena and NT Prophecy', *WTJ*, 56:2 (1994); David Oldham, 'The Gift of Prophecy and Modern Revivals', *RefRev*, 5:1 (1996); K. Neill Foster, 'A Look at the New Prophecy (Contra Wayne Grudem)' (paper presented at the Evangelical Theological Society Eastern Region Annual Meeting, 1999). Its continuing importance to the church and the academy can be demonstrated by dozens of responses and review articles in more popular journals. One popular-level journal, to choose an example almost at random, dealt with the topic often over a ten-year period: e.g. Victor Budgen, 'Prophecy in the New Testament — The Need for a Clear Test Case (Part 2)', *RefT*, 102 (1988); Bob Sheehan, 'Continuing Prophecy: A Response to Wayne Grudem', *RefT*, 157 (1997).

¹³¹ Grudem, *The Gift of Prophecy in 1 Corinthians*, 3-4.

¹³² *idem*, 7-43.

¹³³ He writes, 'Because of this focus on prophecy in 1 Corinthians, I have not dealt in detail with several other related questions, such as prophecy in the history of religions, John the Baptist and Jesus as prophets, or prophecy in early church history outside the NT', *idem*, 4.

¹³⁴ *idem*, 74-111.

Grudem says that his goal is to ‘define in detail the type of prophecy represented in 1 Corinthians’.¹³⁵ After mentioning many times that prophecy has its origin with God, and comes from ‘revelation’ from the Holy Spirit, his definition turns out to be very broad:

... its functions include any kind of speech activity which would be helpful to the hearers... will not include claims to divine authority, ...but will include material which would be thought to have come through revelation and which will edify the congregation. The NT does not lead us to expect to find any distinctive speech forms for prophecy.¹³⁶

In other words, Grudem defines prophecy in terms of where it comes from (the Holy Spirit) and what it does (edify the congregation), suggesting that it is impossible to define prophecy by its content.

Interestingly, Grudem compares Old Testament prophets with New Testament apostles, and asks why apostles were called apostles, and not prophets. One reason is that prophet was no longer a term that could be used to denote a small, select band of men:

Since Joel (2.28) had predicted the outpouring of God’s Spirit on all flesh, resulting in prophecy and related phenomena, and since there was an expectation of wide-spread prophetic experience in the age to come (Num. R. 15.25: ‘In the world to come all Israel will be made prophets’; cf. Num. 11.29: ‘Would that all the Lord’s people were prophets’), προφήται would have been too broad a term to apply to a special, limited group of men such as the apostles.¹³⁷

If Grudem is right about this outpouring that leads to prophecy, it is strange it is the only reference to Joel’s prophecy in his work, and that Peter’s speech at Pentecost is not even considered.¹³⁸ Equally, there is very little discussion on the eschatological nature of prophecy, much more on its authority and edifying nature. However, if Grudem is right, and there was an ‘expectation of wide-spread prophetic experience in the age to come’, would consideration of prophecy as eschatology contribute to a better understanding of the situation at Corinth?

Grudem’s work is very valuable because he tackles head-on the issue of why there appear

¹³⁵ idem, 5.

¹³⁶ idem, 125.

¹³⁷ idem, 46-47.

¹³⁸ Grudem does not believe it relevant because, ‘it seemed to me to have little direct bearing on the question of prophetic authority’, idem, 75.

to be different types of prophecy within the New Testament. If there are weaknesses in his argument, it is because he has a tendency to be more ‘black and white’ than the evidence demands, as the situation is a little more complex than he suggests.

Thomas Gillespie — The First Theologians (1994)

Gillespie’s work is a revision of his 1971 thesis, *Prophecy and Tongues*, which he submitted to Claremont Graduate School. It is largely an exegesis of 1 Corinthians 12-14. Despite its exegetical nature, it shares several features with books that take the historical method, and is a genuine crossover of the two disciplines. That ‘historical’ methodology can be seen as he sets out his purpose ‘to describe rather than resolve the differences between Paul and his opponents in Corinth on the subject of prophetic utterance.’¹³⁹

Unlike most other writers, Gillespie does not begin with prophecy in Graeco-Roman society nor in the Old Testament or Judaism. Instead, he starts with a series of proposals that have been given to describe the content of prophecy: God’s voice, words of the risen Jesus, sentences of holy law, etc., before beginning a detailed exegesis of various Pauline texts.

He concludes that (for Paul, at least) ‘prophecy was a form of gospel proclamation’.¹⁴⁰ He further argues that the discussion in 1 Corinthians 12:1-3 concerning the authenticity of prophetic utterances is the key to understanding the chapters that follow. As the criteria for authenticity concerns the recognised content of the prophetic speech (that Jesus is Lord), Gillespie argues that Paul denies that tongues are valid expressions of prophetic speech, because their unintelligibility means their authenticity cannot be confirmed. Yet this does not mean that tongues-speech is not an authentic work of the Spirit, so Paul creatively defines tongues-speech as ‘a discrete charisma of prayer’ in order to distinguish it from prophecy and give it an appropriate outlet.¹⁴¹

Gillespie’s thesis is unique in two ways. First, in his definition of what prophecy is, he is very focused on the *content* of prophecy, much more so than any other writer. That content is the gospel, the Lordship of Jesus. Second, it is unique in that he fully combines the historical and exegetical methods. Unfortunately though, the result has most of the

¹³⁹ Gillespie, *The First Theologians*, 33-34.

¹⁴⁰ *idem*, 63.

¹⁴¹ *idem*, 164.

weaknesses and few of the strengths of the methods on their own. The exegetical method normally allows a writer to accept a particular view as normative, and to examine it in detail, but Gillespie consciously allows that advantage to slip away. The historical method allows a writer to examine a broad range of data, looking for trends, but again Gillespie turns his back on that possibility, choosing instead just one source of data (1 Corinthians). The result leaves one thinking that perhaps this was a missed opportunity.

Victor Masalles — La Profecía en la Asamblea Cristiana (2001)

Victor Masalles work is a revision of a thesis submitted to the Pontifical Gregorian University. It is a rhetorical-literary analysis of 1 Corinthians 12-14, with a focus on chapter 14. After an introductory chapter outlining the issues and current state of the field, Masalles begins his analysis. He does not attempt to fit 1 Corinthians into one of the established rhetorical-literary classifications,¹⁴² but considers that it contains elements from a variety of Graeco-Roman literary categories.¹⁴³

Chapter 2 deals with the literary structure of 1 Corinthians and of chapters 12-14 in particular. Masalles is particularly concerned with looking for the *propositio* and *dispositio* of the text.¹⁴⁴ Masalles considers there is not one *propositio* but several,¹⁴⁵ and suggests the structure of 12-14 as a chiasm,¹⁴⁶ with each chapter composing a different element in the structure, with chapter 12 giving general instructions about spiritual gifts, chapter 14 giving specific instructions, and chapter 13 offering an important digression about love.

Masalles shows a particular interest in 14:1-25. He suggests a correct definition of *προφητεύω* will be essential for the study, and says it signifies ‘un hablar en modo profético, o sea, un hablar de parte de Dios en modo inteligible a los hombres’,¹⁴⁷ but the

¹⁴² He says ‘No podemos pensar a un Pablo que, liberado de la Ley para vivir bajo el régimen de la gracia, se sometiese estrictamente a esquemas de retórica ya sea de Aristóteles, de Cicerón o de Quintiliano’, Masalles, *La Profecía En la Asamblea Cristiana*, 100. (‘We cannot conceive that Paul, liberated from the Law to live under the administration of grace, should surrender absolutely to rhetorical schemes belonging to Aristotle, Cicero or Quintilian.’)

¹⁴³ *idem*, 111.

¹⁴⁴ That is, the central thesis and the structure of the arguments.

¹⁴⁵ Masalles, *La Profecía En la Asamblea Cristiana*, 121.

¹⁴⁶ *idem*, 133, 137.

¹⁴⁷ ‘To speak in prophetic way, or, to speak on behalf of God in an intelligible way to men.’ An initial definition is given on p. 184, but this slightly longer one is from *idem*, 188. For further definitions of

definition is stated rather than argued. With regard to tongues, he distinguishes clearly between *éxtasis* and *inspiración*,¹⁴⁸ and sees the purpose of tongues as a way of praying and speaking to God.¹⁴⁹ There follows a detailed analysis of the various arguments and sub-arguments of the remainder of the chapter, followed by a theological synthesis. However, Masalles work is not as helpful to the present study as one might hope. There is almost no discussion of context — nothing on Graeco-Roman culture (other than rhetorical categories) or religion, nothing on Judaism, and almost nothing of the Old Testament. Moreover, although there is lots of analysis of *how* Paul argues, there is little critical study of *what* he argues and even less of *why* he argues. Theologically the work is far more descriptive than analytical. The chapter that provides theological synthesis is a theological reflection on the literary analysis of the text, but Masalles rarely uses wider Pauline theology to understand the text better. The result is that 1 Corinthians 12-14 is treated as a stand-alone piece of writing, shorn of any contextualisation.

Perhaps it is unfair to Masalles to criticise him for not doing something he never set out to do. It is certainly the writer's prerogative to determine the limitations of his own study. However, those limitations mean that although Masalles' work might be of value to those studying first-century rhetorical-literal methods, it is of limited use to those wanting to improve their understanding Paul's view of prophecy.

Elim Hiu — Regulations Concerning Tongues and Prophecy in 1 Corinthians 14.26-40 (2010)

Elim Hiu's monograph is a revised version of a ThD thesis submitted to the Australian College of Theology in 2007. Hiu's focus is on Paul's regulations concerning tongues and prophecy, but despite this he spends considerable time on background, with a chapter on possible influences on Corinthian ecstatic speech, and further chapters on both glossolalia and prophecy elsewhere in the New Testament. Hiu examines possible influence on Corinthian views of prophecy from Hellenism, but finds none.¹⁵⁰ On the other hand, he sees the view of prophecy in Judaism as consistent with that in early Christianity, although Christianity claimed a contemporary experience of prophecy that

related words see *idem*, 201-203.

¹⁴⁸ *idem*, 193-194.

¹⁴⁹ *idem*, 194.

¹⁵⁰ Hiu, *Regulations Concerning Tongues and Prophecy in 1 Corinthians 14.26-40*, 2-17.

was rare in the rest of Judaism, for whom a return of prophecy often remained an eschatological hope.¹⁵¹

No formal definition of prophecy is given, although Hiu considers that New Testament prophets were viewed as divinely inspired and spoke with divine authority, and he rejects the arguments of some scholars that certain prophecies had a lower authority.¹⁵² Prophecy is not ‘inspired preaching’ — instead it is spontaneous, and discloses inner secrets.¹⁵³

The second part of Hiu’s work, as the title suggests, is concerned with the regulations concerning prophecy and tongues in the second half of 1 Corinthians 14. Although this is an interesting study, the concentration on regulations means that Hiu has to assume a great deal about prophecy itself — including those crucial questions of definition.¹⁵⁴ For example, he considers both prophecy and glossolalia to be ecstatic ‘because they result from the displacement of the rational mind’,¹⁵⁵ which is a bold statement, particularly when it is found in the opening paragraph of the book, and without supporting argumentation.

As a book about New Testament prophecy, then, Hiu’s work is a frustrating read. It is frustrating because Hiu shows a genuine commitment to understand the background and context to prophecy and glossolalia (more so than in many other works), and yet the focus on the regulations in 1 Corinthians 14 means that he does not have the space required to satisfactorily complete the task. This matters, because if Hiu has not convinced the reader he has correctly understood the nature of prophecy and tongues, then he will not be able to convince them he has properly understood Paul’s regulations. This means that the greatest value in Hiu’s work for the present study is that it serves as a reminder of the importance of theological context for properly understanding the nature of New Testament prophecy.

¹⁵¹ idem, 38, 103.

¹⁵² idem, 103.

¹⁵³ idem, 96-99.

¹⁵⁴ See the criticisms in Lars Kierspel, ‘Review of *Regulations Concerning Tongues and Prophecy in 1 Corinthians 14.26-40: Relevance Beyond the Corinthian Church* by Elim Hiu’, *RBL*, (2012).

¹⁵⁵ Hiu, *Regulations Concerning Tongues and Prophecy in 1 Corinthians 14.26-40*, 1.

The theological method

The theological method has a somewhat less distinguished history in relation to New Testament prophecy than the earlier two methods. Just as some New Testament scholars are unhappy with a history-of-religions method to prophecy, so some are unhappy with a theological method that appears to put theological presuppositions or church dogma ahead of New Testament evidence. As a result, theological methods are not common. The theological method can be divided into two sub-methods. The first could be seen as similar to the historical method outlined earlier. What matters in the investigation are historical and ecclesiastical issues. Niels Hvidt (2007) is explicit in this.¹⁵⁶ His interest is not with New Testament prophecy, but with the ‘post-biblical tradition’. Consequently, his work is a history of interpretation of prophecy within Catholicism, and a discussion of where the doctrine fits within Catholic dogma, with almost no discussion of any first-century texts.

However, the second method is quite different. It is much closer to the exegetical method. Take David Farnell (1990),¹⁵⁷ for example. Farnell has strong confessional convictions based on his interpretation of the Old and New Testaments. He considers prophecy from within those convictions, and does so largely through exegesis (though an exegesis that is significantly shaped by his own particular hermeneutic). Critics argue that the confessional hermeneutic of Farnell and others distorts their findings. Supporters argue that if their theological framework matches that of the New Testament writer, then their studies should be more accurate, not less. Better to be up-front about your presuppositions, they would say, than to pretend that you have an entirely open mind.

David Farnell — The New Testament Prophetic Gift (1990)

Farnell’s thesis was presented to Dallas Theological Seminary as part of his ThD. As such, it is representative of the dispensational¹⁵⁸ and cessationist¹⁵⁹ response to recent work on

¹⁵⁶ See above, fn. 24.

¹⁵⁷ F. David Farnell, ‘The New Testament Prophetic Gift: Its Nature and Duration’ (Unpublished ThD Thesis, Dallas Theological Seminary, 1990).

¹⁵⁸ Dispensationalists suggest that God works with mankind in distinct dispensations through history, and emphasise the literal interpretation of the Bible, and particularly of Bible prophecy.

¹⁵⁹ Cessationists argue that miraculous spiritual gifts were a special sign of apostolic authority, and ceased

prophecy.

The first hundred pages of Farnell's work are a word-study of the Hebrew and Greek words for prophecy, though they also include a lengthy discussion as to whether prophecy ceased during the intertestamental period. He argues that whilst *claims* for prophecy continued throughout the intertestamental period, *true* prophecy ceased.¹⁶⁰ The true prophet was a spokesman for God, and spoke authoritatively:

Even the secular meaning of προφήτης as 'spokesman for the god' strongly implies that the individual's prophecy was considered authoritative and accurate because he was such a spokesman for the deity — he spoke authoritatively because he was in unique communication with the deity. By the very nature and meaning of προφήτης, both secular and sacred forms referred to someone who was specifically and directly in tune with deity as the spokesman proclaiming the will of the god.¹⁶¹

Although the data used for such a definition has come from Graeco-Roman culture and the Septuagint, Farnell is happy for that definition to have universal application, even into the New Testament. This means his conclusions about the role and authority of any prophet (Greek, Jewish or Christian) are based almost entirely on the etymology of the προφήτης word-group in pre-Christian usage. Despite acknowledging that more than etymology is required, when dealing with New Testament prophecy later in his work he still feels able to say, 'by definition, it has been seen that the genuine prophet is God's unique spokesman'.¹⁶²

Farnell proposes three guidelines that he will follow: (1) determine the function(s) of a prophet from the biblical data, (2) describe the characteristics of prophecy, and (3) review the church fathers.¹⁶³ In doing so Farnell follows Hill in starting with looking at

with the end of the apostolic age. B. B. Warfield, *Counterfeit Miracles* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1972 [1918]) is often considered the archetypal cessationist — see, for example, Jon Ruthven, 'On the Cessation of the Charismata: The Protestant Polemic of Benjamin B. Warfield', *Pneuma*, 12 (1990); L. Philip Barnes, 'Miracles, Charismata and Benjamin B. Warfield', *EvQ*, 67:3 (1995); Gary Steven Shogren, 'Christian Prophecy and Canon in the Second Century: A Response to B. B. Warfield', *JETS*, 40:4 (1997). However, the cessationist argument has moved on since Warfield and no longer relies solely on the dogmatic and historical assertions of the past — see the critique of Warfield by cessationist John J. Murray, 'Have Miraculous Gifts Ceased? A Review Article', *SBET*, 3:1 (1985).

¹⁶⁰ Farnell, 'The New Testament Prophetic Gift', 60-66.

¹⁶¹ *idem*, 104.

¹⁶² *idem*, 237, emphasis added.

¹⁶³ *idem*, 184.

a *prophet* rather than at *prophecy*, and he later commends Hill's definition as the most helpful of those proposed elsewhere.¹⁶⁴ Farnell then looks at the similarities between Old and New Testament gifts.¹⁶⁵ He notices many similarities, one of which is that there is 'continuity between Old Testament and New Testament prophecy', by which he means primarily that:

Acts 2:17-21 with reference to Joel 2:28-29 ('your sons and daughters shall prophesy' would indicate that the New era of prophetic expression was predicated upon the predictions from the Old). The revival of New Testament prophetic activity was directly grounded and based in the Old Testament promises regarding a reoccurrence of prophetic activity as initiated by the Spirit of Yahweh in the last days. The same prophetic Spirit of Yahweh which motivated the great prophets of the Old Testament was promised to be poured out again in a tremendous revival of prophetic activity.¹⁶⁶

Whilst it is gratifying to see attention given to Joel's prophecy, this statement leaves a great deal to be desired. It is true that the new era of prophetic expression was grounded in the old, but even to the casual observer it appears that Joel is saying that prophecy would be similar *and* different in the New Age — different at least in the range of those who would prophesy. However, Farnell repeatedly emphasises the similarities, and plays down the differences, noting twelve of the former and just three of the latter, most of which are carefully qualified.

For example, Farnell accepts that New Testament prophets were not 'chief spokesman for the Lord' as Old Testament prophets were,¹⁶⁷ yet dismisses any difference in prophetic authority.¹⁶⁸ He accepts that the evaluation process for prophecy was different in the New Testament, and puts this down to the increased prophetic activity promised in Joel 2/Acts 2,¹⁶⁹ and argues that both Old and New Testament prophets were 'subject to evaluation by those to whom they spoke their messages'.¹⁷⁰ The final difference he notes is that in the New Testament there were no oracular formulae, and prophecies tend to be

¹⁶⁴ *idem*, 342-343.

¹⁶⁵ Though *gift* of prophecy is a New Testament term, not an Old Testament one.

¹⁶⁶ Farnell, 'The New Testament Prophetic Gift', 194.

¹⁶⁷ *idem*, 269-270.

¹⁶⁸ *idem*, 235-269.

¹⁶⁹ *idem*, 203, 206, 212.

¹⁷⁰ *idem*, 197.

oral rather than written.¹⁷¹ He also admits that according to Joel ‘anyone was a potential prophet’,¹⁷² which would seem to be a significant difference between Old and New, but he does not explicitly recognise it as such.

Farnell therefore sees one type of prophecy in the whole of the Old and New Testaments. His argument is weak, however, because ten of the similarities between Old and New prophecy he lists are found only in the prophesying of Jesus, the apostles (particularly Paul and John), or Agabus. There are only two exceptions. The first exception is the ‘ability to perceive the thoughts and motives of others’.¹⁷³ 1 Corinthians 14:24-25 is proposed as showing that in operation: if an unbeliever hears prophecy, the secrets of his heart are disclosed. The second exception is ‘a similarity in prophetic characteristics’,¹⁷⁴ which include admonition, exhortation, interpretation and teaching. It means very few of the examples of similarity can be demonstrated in the most extant passage regarding prophecy, 1 Corinthians 12-14. In two cases, ‘mediation by the spirit of God’,¹⁷⁵ and ‘ecstasy’,¹⁷⁶ Farnell admits that this seems to go *against* Paul’s teaching in 1 Corinthians.

Ultimately, Farnell’s work is something of a disappointment. It is based too heavily on etymology, it fails to do any sustained exegesis, and it does not give sufficient consideration to Pauline texts. Moreover, he relies heavily on Aune, without seeming to recognise the incompatibility of Aune’s methodology with his own. Max Turner has written that the cessationist ‘answer’ to the question of spiritual gifts ‘is entirely unacceptable to serious NT scholarship and to that of Early Church history’,¹⁷⁷ and Farnell’s work seems to demonstrate that.

Niels Christian Hvidt — Christian Prophecy (2007)

Hvidt’s thesis was presented to the Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome, in 2001. It is

¹⁷¹ idem, 270-272.

¹⁷² idem, 203.

¹⁷³ idem, 212-214.

¹⁷⁴ idem, 215-228.

¹⁷⁵ idem, 228-230.

¹⁷⁶ idem, 230-234.

¹⁷⁷ Turner, *The Holy Spirit and Spiritual Gifts*, xii. Turner later describes Farnell’s work (amongst others) as paying ‘rather scant respect to the historical and linguistic considerations of what was meant by prophecy in the first-century world’ (p. 184).

written from a Roman Catholic perspective, indeed the preface is written by Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, now Pope Benedict XVI. Hvidt's concern is to present prophecy as a continuing phenomenon within the church. He is rightly critical that the 'notion of Christian prophecy... has been watered down',¹⁷⁸ and notes that 'many phenomena come close to Christian prophecy, without deserving that designation in its fullest sense'. This means that descriptions of these quasi-prophetic experiences are '*applications* of the term, not full treatments of the original phenomenon itself'. As a result, Hvidt's stated purpose is 'to investigate Christian prophecy in this immediate and original form'.¹⁷⁹

However, the subtitle of Hvidt's book is 'The Post-biblical Tradition', which betrays the fact that he is not interested in Christian prophecy in its 'immediate and original form', but in its form after the first century. Yet more surprisingly, he shows no interest in rooting the post-biblical tradition with the biblical one. As a result, whilst many of the previous works have had long chapters concerning prophecy in the Old Testament, or Jesus as prophet, Hvidt deals with the former in five pages, the latter in just two. Prophecy in Acts is treated in just one paragraph, and in Hvidt's extensive bibliography of more than 500 works, only two are commentaries on the biblical text.¹⁸⁰

Consequently, Hvidt's work is of little help to those studying new covenant prophecy in its New Testament context. However, its inclusion here serves as a useful reminder that not all theological method is appropriate for the task. The problem is not that Hvidt's work is of poor quality, just that its preoccupation with later dogma makes it unsuited to meet our needs in understanding first-century thought.

Another contribution: The 'Spirit of prophecy' debate

In addition to the three methods examined above, much of the recent work on prophecy has been undertaken as part of a larger debate, which might be called the 'Spirit of prophecy' debate. The debate began as part of a discussion of the Spirit's role in conversion-initiation, and how that is related to (Spirit-)baptism.

¹⁷⁸ Hvidt, *Christian Prophecy*, 7.

¹⁷⁹ idem, 9, emphasis original.

¹⁸⁰ David Aune's three volume commentary on Revelation (mentioned only descriptively, and only in an endnote, idem, 321-322), and Charles Talbert's *Reading Corinthians: A Literary and Theological Commentary on 1 and 2 Corinthians*, which is cited just once, in reference to prophecy in the post-apostolic church (idem, 51).

Its roots can be traced back to the publication in 1970 of James Dunn's *Baptism in the Holy Spirit*,¹⁸¹ which was one of the first monographs written by an established biblical scholar which seriously interacted with the theology of the burgeoning Pentecostal movement. In it, Dunn challenged the traditional Pentecostal view that baptism in the Spirit was an experience subsequent to conversion, arguing instead that Spirit-baptism always occurred at conversion.

The relevance of this discussion to the question of prophecy was not immediately apparent. Indeed, *Baptism in the Holy Spirit* barely touched on prophecy. Even Dunn's later *Jesus and the Spirit*, which was a broader study of pneumatology, devoted only a handful of pages to the gift of prophecy.¹⁸² However, the seed was sown in a single remark in *Baptism in the Holy Spirit*. There, in relation to Luke 1-2, Dunn says, 'the Spirit is pre-eminently the Spirit of prophecy',¹⁸³ and in *Jesus and the Spirit* the phrase 'Spirit of Prophecy' had become a section heading.¹⁸⁴

Because Dunn's initial work defended a position at odds with a fundamental Pentecostal belief, it was no surprise to find several Pentecostal scholars seeking to counter his argument. The principle Pentecostal actors in this debate were Harold Hunter,¹⁸⁵ Howard Ervin,¹⁸⁶ Roger Stronstad,¹⁸⁷ James Shelton¹⁸⁸ and Robert Menzies.¹⁸⁹ The debate was later vigorously joined by Max Turner (who, partly because of his studies, is no longer a Pentecostal).¹⁹⁰ It was the arguments of these men (particularly Stronstad, Shelton,

¹⁸¹ James D. G. Dunn, *Baptism in the Holy Spirit* (London: SCM, 1970).

¹⁸² Dunn, *Jesus and the Spirit*, 170-176, 227-233.

¹⁸³ Dunn, *Baptism in the Holy Spirit*, 31-32.

¹⁸⁴ Dunn, *Jesus and the Spirit*, 170.

¹⁸⁵ Harold Hunter, *Spirit-Baptism: A Pentecostal Alternative* (Lanham: University Press of America, 1983) (a revision of his 1979 Fuller Seminary doctoral thesis).

¹⁸⁶ Howard Ervin, *Conversion-Initiation and the Baptism in the Holy Spirit: A Critique of James D.G. Dunn, Baptism in the Holy Spirit* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1984).

¹⁸⁷ Roger Stronstad, *The Charismatic Theology of Saint Luke* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1984).

¹⁸⁸ James B. Shelton, *Mighty in Word and Deed: The Role of the Holy Spirit in Luke-Acts* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1991).

¹⁸⁹ Robert P. Menzies, *The Development of Early Christian Pneumatology with Special Reference to Luke-Acts* (JSNTSup 54; Sheffield: JSOT, 1991); Robert P. Menzies, *Empowered for Witness: The Spirit in Luke-Acts* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1994).

¹⁹⁰ See the brief biographical note in the preface of Turner's major work on the topic: Max Turner, *Power*

Menzies and Turner) that made this debate on Spirit-baptism one of central importance to the discussion of prophecy.

Broadly speaking, Dunn's Pentecostal dialogue partners accepted that it was hard (if not impossible) to see support for subsequent Spirit-baptism within the Pauline literature. Nevertheless, they argued that Dunn had been guilty of reading Luke-Acts through a Pauline lens, and that contrary to Dunn's claims, Luke did consider Spirit-baptism to be subsequent to conversion. They did this by arguing that Luke saw the Spirit primarily as the 'charismatic' Spirit, that is the Spirit of prophecy. In other words, for Luke, the Spirit's work was not primarily soteriological, but empowerment for mission.¹⁹¹ This meant that Spirit baptism did not occur at conversion, but subsequently, in order to provide this empowerment.

Not all Pentecostal writers are in complete agreement as to the exact nature of the Spirit's role. Stronstad, Shelton, and Menzies all argue that this is one of Luke's distinct (even unique)¹⁹² contributions to New Testament pneumatology, and all three provide detailed accounts of the 'empowering' nature of the Spirit's work throughout Luke and Acts. Both Stronstad and Menzies (but not Shelton) also place significant emphasis on the Spirit in the Old Testament and/or within intertestamental literature.¹⁹³ However, it is Menzies alone who so emphasises the Spirit's role as 'the Spirit of prophecy', that he virtually denies any soteriological function at all. He states clearly, 'Luke does not view the gift of the Spirit as a necessary element in conversion... Luke viewed the gift as a prophetic endowment granted to the converted'.¹⁹⁴ This, he argues, is exactly in line with the expectations of rabbinic Judaism, which 'equated experience of the Spirit with prophetic inspiration'.¹⁹⁵ Max Turner, on the other hand, comes to quite different conclusions, though his methodology is very similar to that of Menzies. Turner has spent more than thirty years writing about the Holy Spirit and spiritual gifts, particularly in

from on High: The Spirit in Israel's Restoration and Witness in Luke-Acts (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996), 11.

¹⁹¹ Stronstad, *The Charismatic Theology of Saint Luke*, 52, 63-73, 80-81.

¹⁹² Shelton, *Mighty in Word and Deed: The Role of the Holy Spirit in Luke-Acts*, 4-13.

¹⁹³ Stronstad, *The Charismatic Theology of Saint Luke*, 13-32; Menzies, *Empowered for Witness*, 47-102.

¹⁹⁴ Menzies, *Empowered for Witness*, 224.

¹⁹⁵ *idem*, 83.

Luke.¹⁹⁶ Like Menzies, he argues that the most widespread understanding of the Spirit in Judaism was as the Spirit of prophecy,¹⁹⁷ but he goes on to say that the designation has been misunderstood in much of the literature, usually by interpreting it too narrowly,¹⁹⁸ and this is something he is particularly concerned about in the argument of Menzies. He argues (*contra* Menzies) that there were a variety of ‘prototypical’ gifts expected of the Spirit in Judaism. The Spirit was to bring prophecy, certainly, but the Spirit was also expected to bring miraculous power, moral regeneration, ethical influence and even ‘salvation’.¹⁹⁹

So is charismatic empowerment the *only* role of the ‘Spirit of prophecy’? Turner and Dunn argue against Menzies and other Pentecostals that even in Luke-Acts the Spirit had a vital soteriological function, and I find their arguments compelling.²⁰⁰ Nevertheless the insistence of Dunn,²⁰¹ Shelton, Stronstad and Menzies (against Turner),²⁰² that prophecy was expected to be universal in the eschatological age, is also a view that I consider to be supported by the evidence of Luke-Acts. It is apparent, therefore, that it is Dunn’s position that I find most convincing, and it should therefore not come as a surprise that I also value Dunn’s emphasis on the ‘end-times’ as the context within which to best understand the Spirit’s work in the New Testament.²⁰³ These are all questions that deserve much more attention than this brief treatment, and the issue of prophetic expectation and fulfilment will feature in many of the pages to come. But of even more interest in the debate is the area that all sides agree on –that empowerment for

¹⁹⁶ Both his PhD thesis and *Power from on High* focus on Lukan pneumatology: Max Turner, ‘Luke and the Spirit: Studies in the Significance of Receiving the Spirit in Luke-Acts’ (Unpublished PhD Thesis, Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1980), and Turner, *Power from on High*.

¹⁹⁷ Turner, *The Holy Spirit and Spiritual Gifts*, 7.

¹⁹⁸ See, particularly, Turner, *Power from on High*, 86-137.

¹⁹⁹ *idem*, 401-427.

²⁰⁰ Turner and Dunn do not define this soteriological function in quite the same way, with Turner often referring to salvation in inverted commas, preferring instead the term ‘restoration’.

²⁰¹ Dunn, *Jesus and the Spirit*, 170.

²⁰² Max Turner, ‘Every Believer as a Witness in Acts? — in Dialogue with John Michael Penney’, *ATJ*, 30 (1998); Max Turner, ‘Does Luke Believe Reception of the “Spirit of Prophecy” Makes All “Prophets”? Inviting Dialogue with Roger Stronstad’, *JEPTA*, 20 (2000).

²⁰³ See Dunn, *Baptism in the Holy Spirit*, 38-54 for a detailed account of his view of the significance of Pentecost as the inauguration of the age of the church and the beginning of the age of the Spirit. Turner’s alternative view can be found in Turner, *Power from on High*, 318-347.

witness/prophecy/inspired speech is a vital part of the Spirit's New Testament role – and a further discussion of that subject will form the bulk of this study.

Over the decades, the 'Spirit of prophecy' debate has matured into a larger discussion around Luke's contribution to New Testament pneumatology. The Old Testament and intertestamental concepts of the 'Spirit of prophecy' continue to be an important part of that discussion,²⁰⁴ even while the discussions around the original themes continue to rumble on.²⁰⁵

The 'Spirit of prophecy' debate was never intended to describe exactly what prophecy is, and it would be unfair to judge how well it has answered that question when those within the discussion have other concerns primarily in mind. Nevertheless, the whole debate is of significant interest to a study on New Testament prophecy. First, it suggests there is strong evidence that both first-century Judaism and New Testament Christianity considered prophecy as a vital part of the Spirit's work. Second, it reminds us that the Old Testament has much to say about the Spirit (particularly in its eschatological hope). Third, it insists that the New Testament writers came from first-century Judaism, who tended to link Spirit and prophecy very closely together. Finally it emphasises the need to guard against homogenising Luke and Paul's pneumatologies (and of course John's), as they may have distinct pneumatological perspectives.

²⁰⁴ E.g. Archie Hui, 'The Spirit of Prophecy and Pauline Pneumatology', *TynBul*, 50:1 (1999); Matthias Wenk, *Community-Forming Power: The Socio-Ethical Role of the Spirit in Luke-Acts* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2000); Ju Hur, *A Dynamic Reading of the Holy Spirit in Luke Acts* (JSNTSup 211; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2001); Youngmo Cho, *Spirit and Kingdom in the Writings of Luke and Paul: An Attempt to Reconcile These Concepts* (PBM; Carlisle: Paternoster, 2005).

²⁰⁵ Max Turner, 'The Spirit of Prophecy and the Power of Authoritative Preaching in Luke-Acts: A Question of Origins', *NTS*, 38:1 (1992); James D. G. Dunn, 'Baptism in the Spirit: A Response To Pentecostal Scholarship on Luke-Acts', *JPT*, 1:3 (1993); Max Turner, "'Empowerment for Mission"? The Pneumatology of Luke-Acts: An Appreciation and Critique of James B. Shelton's *Mighty in Word and Deed*', *VE*, 24 (1994); John Christopher Thomas, 'Max Turner's *The Holy Spirit and Spiritual Gifts: Then and Now* (Carlisle: Paternoster Press, 1996): An Appreciation and Critique', *JPT*, 6:12 (1998); Max Turner, 'The "Spirit of Prophecy" as the Power of Israel's Restoration and Witness,' in *Witness to the Gospel: The Theology of Acts*, ed. I. Howard Marshall and David Peterson (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998); Turner, 'Every Believer as a Witness in Acts?'; Robert P. Menzies, 'The Spirit of Prophecy, Luke-Acts and Pentecostal Theology: A Response to Max Turner', *JPT*, 7:15 (1999); Stronstad, *The Prophethood of All Believers*; Max Turner, 'The Spirit and Salvation in Luke-Acts,' in *The Holy Spirit and Christian Origins: Essays in Honor of James D. G. Dunn*, ed. Graham N. Stanton, Bruce W. Longenecker and Stephen C. Barton (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004).

The present study

Each of the three methods considered above (and the ‘Spirit of prophecy’ debate) have both strengths and weaknesses — but which approach is most suited to the present study? We noted earlier²⁰⁶ that the distinct nature of new covenant prophecy was often not adequately defined, and therefore the most important task of this study is to attempt to answer the question ‘What is New Testament prophecy?’. That might suggest the most obvious methodology to adopt would be the exegetical model, as this directs us back to the text of the New Testament itself.

However, an exegetical study divorced from history is unlikely to be fruitful. Those taking an historical approach have rightly pointed out that reading twentieth or twenty-first century presuppositions into the first-century texts can distort our understanding. On the other hand, historical and cultural insights from the period provide invaluable context that may prove crucial in correctly understanding first-century Christian prophecy. Those writing from an historical perspective have brought together a mass of useful information which it would be foolish to ignore, even if we have identified shortcomings in the method when it is used in isolation.

The theological method is perhaps more controversial than either the exegetical or historical. Yet I have argued that the lack of theological engagement is one of the key shortcomings of the historical method. In this I agree with Wayne Grudem, who argues that David Aune’s rejection²⁰⁷ of the theological method:

...prevents Aune from correctly understanding the nature of early Christian prophecy. In Aune’s view a truly ‘historical’ study must exclude any reference to the work of God or the Holy Spirit as if it were a historical reality or as if we could know anything about it...²⁰⁸

Let us assume for a moment — just for the sake of argument — that the basic world view presented in Scripture is in fact true: i.e., that God exists, that he acts as Scripture says he acts, and that the Holy Spirit inspires true prophets in the Old

²⁰⁶ See above, p. 2.

²⁰⁷ See, for example, Aune’s criticism of Friedrich’s understanding of the consciousness of inspiration within the Corinthian congregation, because it ‘is a theological rather than a historical statement’. Aune, *Prophecy in Early Christianity*, 6.

²⁰⁸ Wayne A. Grudem, ‘Review of “Prophecy in Early Christianity and the Ancient Mediterranean World” by David E. Aune’, *EvQ*, 59:4 (1987), 351.

Testament and the New Testament... If these things are in fact true... then Aune's monumental effort has simply missed the point.²⁰⁹

If Aune does not consider Paul's (or Luke's) theology, he can never understand why Paul believes what he does, and he might even fail to understand fully what Paul believes. Turner speaks of an earlier generation that 'in its very search for a detached stance... [was] profoundly resistant to the claims of New Testament writings'.²¹⁰ One wonders if the description would also apply to Aune and one or two of the others using the historical method. Aune criticises Guy for arguing 'on the basis of how twentieth-century biblical scholars read the OT, rather than on the conceptions... which were current in late Second Temple Judaism'. Yet he himself makes no attempt to read the New Testament on the basis of the theological worldview which was current in the earliest Christianity (that God speaks through his prophets), and instead reads it through his own twentieth-century worldview (that prophecy can be explained sociologically, not theologically).²¹¹

One can argue for neutrality and the need to be dispassionate, but ultimately 'there are no "neutral" observation posts, and the search for the view from nowhere leads us nowhere'.²¹² Every writer comes to the text with presupposed conceptions of the subject matter and its framework, and it is better to acknowledge those conceptions as a theological framework than pretend they do not exist at all.²¹³

Having said that, if the question is 'What is *New Testament* prophecy?', there is no particular value in studying a Roman Catholic, Pentecostal, or Cessationist understanding of prophecy, unless those traditions reflect accurately the position of the New Testament itself. If the theological method is to be useful to this study, the theological basis must be *New Testament* theology, or if this proves impossible at least Lukan, Pauline or Johannine theology. A methodology that takes theology seriously is therefore vital to the quest, not as an end unto itself, but as prolegomena to the exegetical and historical methods that have already been discussed. If it is possible to think as Paul and Luke and John thought, it may then be possible to exegete their texts

²⁰⁹ idem, 353-354.

²¹⁰ Turner, *The Holy Spirit and Spiritual Gifts*, 138. Turner has in view representatives of the 'history of religions' school, such as F. C. Baur, William Wrede and Wilhelm Bousset.

²¹¹ See Engelsen, 'Glossolalia', 1 and Ellis, *Prophecy and Hermeneutic in Early Christianity*, 43.

²¹² See Turner, *The Holy Spirit and Spiritual Gifts*, 140.

²¹³ idem, 137.

on their own terms, without reading in twenty-first century presuppositions.

Of course, we need to consider what an appropriate theological framework may look like, and the ‘Spirit of prophecy’ debate has demonstrated the importance of the Jewish context of the New Testament, and provides a useful reminder that although the cultural and historical context of the New Testament was often Graeco-Roman, the theological context was largely Jewish.

It seems, therefore, that an ideal approach for the present study would be one that combines the best of all four approaches, that it:

- Is concerned about the historical and cultural context of the first century.
- Focuses on the text of the New Testament.
- Takes seriously the theological framework of the New Testament writers.
- Recognises the Jewish background to much New Testament thought.

Attempting to combine the best of a variety of methodologies, whilst also dealing with the New Testament as a whole, will inevitably mean sacrificing some depth for breadth. But the sacrifice can be justified, particularly because we have seen that other studies have already focused on individual books or writers, and it is perhaps time to see whether the fruits of those studies can be integrated into a broader New Testament theology of prophecy, or whether Luke and Paul’s conceptions of the Spirit and prophecy are quite distinctive.

With this in mind, it possible to outline the aims of the study:

1. To undertake a detailed exegesis of relevant New Testament texts that concern contemporary or future prophecy, or shed light on the early Christians’ understanding of the eschatological Spirit.
2. To analyse the similarities and/or differences between the views of prophecy expressed by different New Testament writers, particularly between Luke and Paul.
3. To develop a New Testament theology or theologies of prophecy, ensuring that these theologies are informed by and consistent with the writers’ historical, cultural and theological context.
4. To suggest a clear definition for New Testament prophecy.

As these aims involve analysing the similarities and/or differences between the views

expressed by various New Testament writers, it will be important to examine individual authors independently from one another before, before any attempt at synthesis or differentiation. That suggests a helpful structure for the study would be to work our way through each of the gospels, then Acts, 1 Corinthians, and finally the rest of the New Testament, examining each body of writing on its own merits. But as the aim is also to take the theological, historical and cultural background to the New Testament seriously, we need to examine that background. The first task, therefore, is to consider the background to the New Testament as a whole, and to ask ‘what influenced the New Testament writers’ views of prophecy?’.²¹⁴

²¹⁴ In addition to this general question, there may also be specific influences on particular writers or their audiences. As well as examining the general background to the New Testament at the outset, we will therefore also need to examine the specific contexts of individual writings when we first approach them.

2) Towards a New Testament Theology of Prophecy

At the end of the literature review, we concluded that this study must take the background to the New Testament seriously, and the first task was to ask, ‘what influenced the New Testament writers’ views of prophecy?’

Writers on New Testament prophecy who are concerned about questions like this usually look to one or more of four areas to provide a background to New Testament pneumatology: (i) Graeco-Roman religion and culture; (ii) intertestamental Judaism, (iii) the Hebrew Bible, or (iv) the experience of early Christians.¹ (These four possible influences are not four separate influences, but are overlapping circles of influence. It is certainly possible to study Judaism and Graeco-Roman culture independently from one another, but in Hellenistic Judaism, and particularly in the writings of Philo, these two ‘worlds’ collide. Whilst it may be possible to separate these four influences out from one another in theory, it would not have been possible in practice, and we will need to bear this in mind when we reach our conclusions.)

In this chapter, we will examine each of these four possible influences on the pneumatology of New Testament writers. As we do so, I will attempt to (a) assess how significant the influence is likely to have been on New Testament theology, and (b) determine how certain we can be concerning this assessment.

The Graeco-Roman Context

The world in which the New Testament was produced was a world saturated with Graeco-

¹ The use of ‘Christian’ to describe the first followers of Jesus is somewhat anachronistic, given that Luke tells us that the disciples were not called Christians until Acts 11, and only then in Antioch. But even though the term was not in use before this time, it is one that can be appropriately applied to all Jewish and Gentile followers of the risen Jesus.

Roman ideas.² These ideas undoubtedly influenced Judaism, sometimes significantly, though the very fact that scholars make the distinction between ‘Hellenistic’ and ‘Palestinian’ Judaism demonstrates that the influence was not uniform.

The New Testament itself is rooted in the Graeco-Roman world, and perhaps we ought therefore to be surprised to find barely any mention of other Graeco-Roman texts or philosophers within its pages. In fact there are probably only three direct citations of Graeco-Roman literature,³ and the only other reference to Graeco-Roman philosophers is the brief mention of the Epicurean and Stoic schools of philosophy in Athens.⁴ Indeed, Paul explicitly distances himself from both Graeco-Roman rhetoric, and Graeco-Roman philosophy.⁵

Despite this, it is sometimes argued that aspects of Pauline thought are distinctly Graeco-Roman.⁶ Whether one accepts this or not, it is relatively easy to point out parallels between New Testament literature and that of the wider Graeco-Roman world,⁷ though there is often intense debate as to whether those parallels are intentional, unintentional, or merely coincidental. But even if it were possible to argue that all such parallels are simply coincidental, it must be remembered that Christianity was actively looking to engage the Graeco-Roman world. Even if the New Testament’s writers were not card-carrying Graeco-Romans, many of its readers were.

So the relationship between the New Testament and the Graeco-Roman world is a complex one. In some areas the influence may be quite strong, whilst in other areas it

² See, among many other examples, David E. Aune, ed., *Graeco-Roman Literature and the New Testament: Selected Forms and Genres* (SBL SBL 21; Atlanta: Scholar’s Press, 1988); James S. Jeffers, *The Graeco-Roman World of the New Testament Era: Exploring the Background of Early Christianity* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1999); Hans-Josef Klauck, *The Religious Context of Early Christianity: A Guide to Graeco-Roman Religions*, trans. Brian McNeil (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2003 [1996]); Luke Timothy Johnson, *Among the Gentiles: Graeco-Roman Religion and Christianity* (ABRL; New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009).

³ Acts 17:28, Titus 1:12 and 1 Corinthians 15:33.

⁴ Acts 17:18.

⁵ E.g. 1 Corinthians 1-2. See Johnson, *Among the Gentiles*, 3.

⁶ Suggestions of significant Graeco-Roman influence have been made, for example, of Paul’s theology of adoption and of atonement. See, as representatives, Francis Lyall, ‘Roman Law in the Writings of Paul – Adoption’, *JBL*, 88:4 (1969); David Seeley, *The Noble Death: Graeco-Roman Martyrology and Paul’s Concept of Salvation* (JSNT Sup 28; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1990).

⁷ This was particularly true of the continental ‘history of religions’ school.

may not exist at all. This diversity means that when considering the Graeco-Roman influence on New Testament prophecy or pneumatology, we cannot extrapolate from general principles. It would be fallacious to suggest that because there was Graeco-Roman influence over one aspect of Paul's theology, there must be equal influence over his pneumatology. As a consequence, we must look carefully at the evidence that pertains particularly to pneumatology and prophecy.

It is almost universally recognised that there are significant differences between New Testament and pagan Greek concepts of *pneuma*.⁸ There are some parallels, inevitably. But they count for little compared with the differences — in terms of both the origin and the essence of the idea.⁹ This is true within both classical Graeco-Roman and with those elements of Hellenistic Judaism that have been most influenced by Graeco-Roman thought. For example, it is hard to see anything in the way of parallels between the New Testament and Philo's concept of the divine spirit as an angelic being.¹⁰

Nonetheless, a generation or two ago it was still often suggested that whilst the New Testament concept of Spirit owed little to the Graeco-Roman world, the concept of *prophecy* was largely shared.¹¹ However the publication of Christopher Forbes' *Prophecy and Inspired Speech*¹² in 1995 brought that argument into considerable doubt. In a comprehensive study, Forbes examined the alleged parallels between New Testament and Graeco-Roman ideas on prophecy. He concludes that Christian and non-Christian understanding of a προφήτης was 'substantially different'; at the level of terminology, very many of the crucial Hellenistic terms (e.g. μάντις, πρόμαντις, and κατοχή) 'are simply not used by the early Christians'; and as the example of Simon Magus shows, the earliest Christians were 'in conflict with divination and miracle-working in their environment'. This meant that the Christians 'differentiated themselves as clearly as

⁸ Terence Paige, 'Who Believes in "Spirit"? πνεῦμα in Pagan Usage and Implications for the Gentile Christian Mission', *HTR*, 95:4 (2002), 417-436 esp. 433.

⁹ Eduard Schweizer et al., 'πνεῦμα, πνευματικός, πνέω, ἐμπνέω, πνοή, ἐκπνέω, θεόπνευστος', *TDNT*, 6:357-359, Isaacs, *The Concept of Spirit*, 15-17.

¹⁰ See John R. Levison, 'The Prophetic Spirit as an Angel According to Philo', *HTR*, 88:2 (1995).

¹¹ For a typical example see Terrance Callan, 'Prophecy and Ecstasy in Greco-Roman Religion and in 1 Corinthians', *NovT*, 27:2 (1985), 125-140.

¹² See above, pp. 17f.

possible' from their Graeco-Roman counterparts.¹³

Forbes' consistent message is that Christian pneumatology, and therefore Christian views of prophecy, were far closer to those of Judaism than to those of the non-Judaeo-Christian Graeco-Roman world. His arguments have been widely accepted,¹⁴ and the vast majority of writers on New Testament prophecy adopt similar methodology.¹⁵

Although a minority dissent from this view, no substantial work has challenged Forbes' main conclusions. (Some continue to suggest that the *Corinthians'* view of prophecy was influenced by Graeco-Roman religion,¹⁶ still more that New Testament views of glossolalia have roots there.) At a theological level, therefore, there seems to be little Graeco-Roman influence on the pneumatology of New Testament writers, even if we have to be open-minded for the time being regarding the pneumatology of some New Testament readers.

Intertestamental Judaism

There can be no doubt that Judaism is a very significant background to New Testament theology. When it comes to Judaism, 'Jesus and the early community of his believers fit into this very picture... It is meaningless and grossly anachronistic to picture Jesus, Peter or Paul as debating with "Judaism" or its representatives, as if they themselves were outside and represented something else, a non-Jewish position'.¹⁷ Jesus and the earliest Christians *were* Jews, they saw themselves as Jews, and they worshipped (initially at least) within the Jewish community.

In recent decades the precise nature of first-century Judaism has been an area of significant debate, and it is impossible to examine the impact of Judaism on New

¹³ All three points are from Forbes, *Prophecy and Inspired Speech*, 308.

¹⁴ See fn. 97, p 18.

¹⁵ See, for example, Dunn, *Jesus and the Spirit*, 228; Hill, *New Testament Prophecy*, 9-11; Turner, 'The Spirit of Prophecy and the Power of Authoritative Preaching in Luke-Acts: A Question of Origins', 67; Gordon D. Fee, 'Gifts of the Spirit', *DPL*, 346; Witherington, *Jesus the Seer*, 307-308; Eckhard J. Schnabel, 'Urchristliche Glossolalie', *JETH*, 12 (1998), 79-80; Hiu, *Regulations Concerning Tongues and Prophecy in 1 Corinthians 14.26-40*, 17.

¹⁶ E.g. Aune, *Prophecy in Early Christianity*, 17.

¹⁷ Oskar Skarsaune, *In the Shadow of the Temple: Jewish Influences on Early Christianity* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2002), 107.

Testament pneumatology without briefly touching on some of the debated issues. Rather than examine every disputed point — a hopeless task — I instead intend to attempt to illustrate the issues by providing a brief overview of one major part of the discussion, namely the different ways scholars handle diversity within intertestamental Judaism.¹⁸

In the early twentieth century, George Foot Moore published a detailed and influential study on the relationship between Judaism and Christianity.¹⁹ His view on the variety within Judaism was that these were divergent trends from what he called ‘normative’ Judaism. Normative Judaism persevered across the centuries, whilst other innovations perished along the way.²⁰

Two generations later, E. P. Sanders published his famous *Paul and Palestinian Judaism*.²¹ At one level, Sanders’ methodology was similar to Moore’s — he emphasises a monolithic view of Judaism as a whole. But unlike Moore, Sanders does not consider a single ‘normative view’, with divergent views as evolutionary dead-ends. Instead, Sanders attempted to produce a synthesis of variety of views with Judaism, what he calls the ‘pattern of religion’, a ‘more or less homogeneous... entity’.²² When describing his methodology, Sanders acknowledges that ‘there could be numerous patterns of religion which are reflected in Palestinian Jewish literature’.²³ Indeed, he treats Tannaitic literature, the Dead Sea Scrolls, and the Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha separately from one another. In his conclusions, he accepts there is no ‘uniformity of systematic theology’, yet insists that here is ‘a basic consistency in the underlying pattern of

¹⁸ The diversity is undisputable. For example, one document from Qumran (4QMMT) contains a list of no less than twenty topics where the text’s authors disagree with the temple authorities.

¹⁹ George Foot Moore, *Judaism in the First Centuries of the Christian Era: The Age of the Tannaim*, 3 vols. (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1927-1930).

²⁰ For a similar view from outside New Testament studies, see Ephraim E. Urbach, *The Sages: Their Concepts and Beliefs* (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1975 [1969]).

²¹ E. P. Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism: A Comparison of Patterns of Religion* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1977). Sanders’ most significant conclusion was his much-debated idea of ‘covenantal nomism’ — that is, he argued that Second Temple Judaism was not the legalistic religion of works-righteousness that was often caricatured. This argument had a profound effect on Pauline studies, particularly on Paul’s understanding of justification, but that doctrine need not concern us here.

²² See particularly *idem*, 14-18.

²³ *idem*, 18.

religion'.²⁴ Specifically, his findings are:

...a generally prevalent and pervasive pattern of religion... found in Rabbinic literature...

...the general pattern of religion which we found earlier in Rabbinic literature is also present in Qumran...

...within the framework of apocalyptic, we find much the same pattern of religion as we found in the Rabbis...

...we simply find that in the various literary remains there is a common 'pattern of religion'...²⁵

The Judaism described by Sanders could therefore be defined as a 'lowest-common-denominator' Judaism that draws together several different theologies, and describes what is common:²⁶

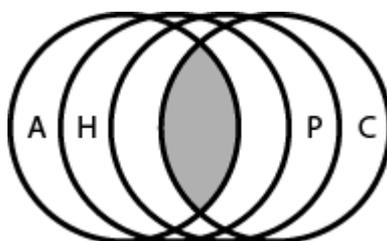


Figure 1: Lowest Common Denominator Judaism

Although Sanders' work has had a very significant influence on Pauline studies, several scholars have pointed to what they believe is a flaw at the heart of his methodology. They argue that the picture Sanders paints of first-century Judaism is not one they actually recognise — it does not represent any of the competing forms of Judaism accurately. Jacob Neusner expresses the criticism particularly clearly, arguing that Sanders has 'come up with a Judaism that did not exist in the first or any other century of antiquity... it never existed in any one time, place or circumstance except in the harmonizing and homogenizing work of Sanders himself'.²⁷

²⁴ idem, 423.

²⁵ idem, 236, 320, 362, 424.

²⁶ See particularly E. P. Sanders, *Judaism: Practice & Belief 63BCE - 66CE* (London: SCM Press, 1992), 45-303. The circles in the diagram represent different 'currents' of Judaism. The diagram is merely schematic, so the labels for these circles are not really important.

²⁷ Jacob Neusner, *Rabbinic Literature and the New Testament: What We Cannot Show, We Do Not Know* (Valley Forge: Trinity Press International, 1994), 106. See also Jacob Neusner, *Judaic Law: From Jesus to the*

Neusner himself therefore refuses to speak of Judaism, and instead refers to many different Judaisms (note the plural). His view is represented by Figure 2, below:

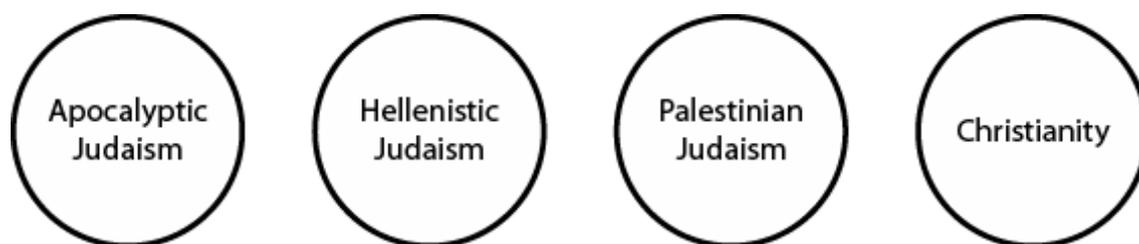


Figure 2: Distinct Judaisms

Neusner is correct to warn against ‘lowest common denominator’ Judaism, and there is a certain common-sense in speaking of ‘Judaisms’ instead of just ‘Judaism’. But whilst describing and analysing multiple Judaisms is a very appropriate task for a scholar of Judaism, the task of a New Testament scholar is somewhat different. When comparing religions (as Sanders was doing), it is not unreasonable to examine the doctrines at the heart of one religion, and compare them with the doctrines at the heart of another. Some nuances might be lost in that process, but some general principles may well be discovered that would otherwise be missed. The New Testament specialist therefore does not necessarily need to know every possible belief within any part of Judaism at any period,²⁸ but only those beliefs which have an impact on what is of primary interest, namely New Testament studies.

So if New Testament specialists do not need to know every possible belief within every part of Judaism at every period, what do they need to know? For a study in new covenant prophecy, we can say that (1) Chronologically, of most importance are the ideas current in the first century, before A.D. 70. (2) Theologically, of most importance is pneumatology, and more specifically revelation (how God speaks). Given our earlier findings regarding Graeco-Roman influence, we can also say that the Judaism that has been most heavily influenced by Graeco-Roman ideas are likely to be of least importance. (3) Geographically, both Palestinian and Diaspora Judaism could prove important given our concern with post-Pentecost Christianity.

Therefore in examining the Judaistic background to new covenant prophecy, we will not

Mishnah: A Systematic Reply to Professor E. P. Sanders (Atlanta: Scholar’s Press, 1993).

²⁸ This is a point made forcibly by Neusner himself, Neusner, *Rabbinic Literature and the New Testament*, 1-17, though for different reasons from the ones expounded here.

examine every facet of Judaism, but concentrate on early- to mid- first-century Jewish pneumatology.

The Spirit in Early Judaism

When one examines Judaistic literature, it is immediately apparent that there was a vast range of perceptions regarding 'spirit'. This is partly due to the wide lexical range of both $\pi\nu\epsilon\tilde{\upsilon}\mu\alpha$ and $\kappa\alpha\tau\alpha\rho\upsilon\chi\eta$, but it is more than that. John Levison attributes the diversity to the confluence of Israelite, Jewish, and Graeco-Roman views which significantly influenced perceptions of the Spirit within Judaism.²⁹ Of these three converging views, we have already considered the Graeco-Roman context, and I intend to examine Israelite perceptions of the Spirit under the heading 'The Hebrew Bible', below.³⁰ So far as it is possible to separate out the various views, that means we now need to consider what Levison calls the 'Jewish' perception.

In recent debate, several scholars have equated the divine Spirit in Judaism with the 'Spirit of prophecy',³¹ and there is certainly evidence that 'Spirit of prophecy' was a preferred term for the divine Spirit in Judaism, in much the same way that 'Holy Spirit' is a preferred term in the New Testament. Some scholars (for example, Robert Menzies and Eduard Schweizer) take this to mean that Judaism believed the Spirit's role was almost exclusively restricted to prophecy.³² However, others understand 'Spirit of prophecy' more broadly.³³ Craig Keener views the Spirit both as the 'Spirit of prophecy' and the 'Spirit of purification'.³⁴ Max Turner suggests several roles: one is broadly similar to Keener ('inspiration of ethical renewal'), several others could be accommodated under Menzies' heading of 'prophecy',³⁵ but there is also the further addition of 'the source of acts of power',³⁶ which Keener explicitly rejects.³⁷ Levison agrees that the Spirit is

²⁹ Levison, *The Spirit in First Century Judaism*, 235-236. See also John R. Levison, 'Holy Spirit', *DNTB*, NR.

³⁰ See pp 66ff.

³¹ See above, pp 35ff. Turner traces the origin of the thought back to Leisegang (1919 and 1922).

³² Menzies, *Empowered for Witness*, 56, 94, 101, 270, Schweizer et al., *TDNT*, 6:409.

³³ See the criticisms of Menzies in John R. Levison, 'Review of 'The Development of Early Christian Pneumatology with Special Reference to Luke-Acts' by Robert P. Menzies', *JBL*, 113:2 (1994), 344.

³⁴ Keener, *The Spirit in the Gospels and Acts*, 6,8-13.

³⁵ 'Charismatic revelation and guidance', 'charismatic wisdom', 'invasively inspired prophetic speech', 'invasively inspired charismatic praise or worship'.

³⁶ Turner, *The Holy Spirit and Spiritual Gifts*, 8-19, which represents a slight development of his earlier

portrayed as a source of power, but sees that as an overarching category that includes both prophecy and other acts of power such as military might.³⁸

Turner and Keener have marshalled enough evidence from the Jewish literature to reinforce their claims that Judaism saw the Spirit as more than the Spirit of prophecy, particularly regarding purification or ethical renewal, and Menzies himself is forced to admit that IQH and Wisdom are exceptions to his scheme.³⁹ Nevertheless, even if there is a breadth of perceptions of the Spirit, it is still necessary to establish the relevant emphases of these different views. Levison makes little attempt to determine which of the views has a greater claim to be normative, preferring instead to emphasise the sheer variety of conceptions. Menzies, as we have seen, considers prophecy to be almost the only view, and although Turner disagrees with him on this point, Turner still argues that ‘the Spirit in intertestamental Jewish literature was above all the “Spirit of prophecy”’.⁴⁰ Keener concurs, though with the twin caveats that this was less true in earlier Judaism, and that even in rabbinic Judaism perhaps ‘modern scholars have overemphasized the identity of the Spirit as the Spirit of prophecy’.⁴¹ So how important was the Spirit in first-century Judaism?⁴² And what was the relative importance of prophecy, purity and possibly miraculous power? To try and answer that question, we will consider the surviving documents of four ‘currents’ of Judaism: apocalyptic Judaism, Qumran, Hellenistic Judaism and rabbinic Judaism, and examine how they used רוח and πνεῦμα.

In *apocalyptic Judaism* ‘spirit’ most often refers to angelic and demonic spirits, or the human spirit, rather than the Spirit of God.⁴³ When this latter concept is mentioned, it is

thinking.

³⁷ Keener, *The Spirit in the Gospels and Acts*, 8-9.

³⁸ Levison, *The Spirit in First Century Judaism*, 220-226.

³⁹ Menzies, *Empowered for Witness*, 58, 79-80.

⁴⁰ Turner, *The Holy Spirit and Spiritual Gifts*, 20.

⁴¹ Keener, *The Spirit in the Gospels and Acts*, 10,13.

⁴² As a consequence of this diversity of perceptions, I will refer to the Spirit of God as simply ‘the Spirit’, rather than ‘the Spirit of prophecy’, or indeed ‘the Holy Spirit’.

⁴³ Dunn gives the ratio of 6:3:1, James D. G. Dunn, ‘Spirit, Holy Spirit’, *NBD*³, 1127. A complete list can be seen in D. S. Russell, ‘Appendix II: Spirit in Apocalyptic Literature,’ in *The Method & Message of Jewish Apocalyptic*, ed. D. S. Russell (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1964), 396-405.

often in regard to the past, not the present.⁴⁴

This is not so true in the *Dead Sea Scrolls*, where greater prominence is given to ‘spirit’ as a present reality. This is most clearly seen in the ‘two spirits treatise’ where the spirit of truth opposes the spirit of deceit.⁴⁵ However even in Qumran there is still not a clear sense of spirit as the Spirit of God, despite the expression ‘holy spirit’ being used fairly frequently. The holy spirit can be part of an individual,⁴⁶ and also a purifying or strengthening power of God.⁴⁷ But it is not used in the personal sense with which it came to be understood in New Testament Christianity.⁴⁸

In *Hellenistic Judaism*, Wisdom seems to have supplanted the spirit, to the extent that Wisdom is also the giver of prophecy. It is Wisdom, not the Spirit, that ‘passes into holy souls and makes the friends of God, and prophets’. It is Wisdom that ‘will again pour out teaching like prophecy’.⁴⁹ And even in Philo, where the spirit does have a prominent role, Philo’s understanding of the spirit owes as much to Graeco-Roman ideas as to traditionally Judaistic ones.⁵⁰

As we have already seen, in *rabbinic Judaism* the spirit is almost exclusively considered to be the spirit of prophecy. The rabbinic philosophy was that with the Spirit, came prophecy. Where there was no prophecy, there was no Spirit.⁵¹ Yet when the Spirit is mentioned in the rabbinic literature, it is once again most likely to be in reference to the past, not the present.⁵²

This brief summary illustrates both the unity and diversity within Judaism. There are certain similarities between each of these ‘currents’ — so generally speaking, the Spirit of

⁴⁴ e.g. 1 Enoch 68:2, 70:2, 91:1, 4 Ezra 14:22, Martyrdom of Isaiah 51:4.

⁴⁵ 1QS 3:13-4:26, esp. 3:18-19.

⁴⁶ CD 5:11, 7:3-4.

⁴⁷ 1QH^a 8:21, 15:7.

⁴⁸ F. F. Bruce, ‘Holy Spirit in the Qumran Texts’, *ALUOS*, 6 (1966-1968), 49-55; Barry D. Smith, “‘Spirit of Holiness’ as Eschatological Principle of Obedience,” in *Christian Beginnings and the Dead Sea Scrolls*, ed. John J. Collins and Craig A. Evans (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2006), 75-99.

⁴⁹ Wisdom 7:27, Sirach 24:33 (NRSV).

⁵⁰ See Levison, ‘The Prophetic Spirit as an Angel According to Philo’, particularly 195-206.

⁵¹ Tosephta Soṭah 13:2, Seder Olam Rabbah 30.

⁵² Keener, *The Spirit in the Gospels and Acts*, 15-17.

God does not play a prominent role,⁵³ and the role that is described owes more to the past than the present. As Aune says, ‘most Palestinian Jews of the late Second Temple period... [thought] prophecy was a phenomenon which belonged either to the distant past or to the eschatological future’.⁵⁴ But each form of Judaism makes this portrayal in different ways. Apocalyptic Judaism rarely mentions the spirit of God, Qumran ‘de-personalises’ the Spirit, Hellenistic Judaism relegates the spirit below Wisdom, whilst rabbinic Judaism elevates Torah interpretation above the Spirit’s work.

But this survey is not useful only to demonstrate the similarities and differences between these four forms of Judaism, it also gives us an opportunity to quickly compare these findings with New Testament Christianity:

1. The Spirit (i.e. the Spirit of God) occupies a prominent position throughout the New Testament — far more prominent than in the extant texts of any other form of Judaism. Russell counts 39 references to the Spirit of God in 16 books of Jewish apocalyptic,⁵⁵ compared to 13 in the one New Testament apocalyptic book, around 57 in the book of Acts, and around 245 in the New Testament as a whole.
2. In percentage terms, approximately 65% of the occurrences of πνεῦμα in the New Testament refer to the Spirit of God, rather than the human spirit, or evil spirits and so on. Outside of the gospels it is 70%.⁵⁶ By way of comparison, the figure for רִיחַ in the Hebrew Bible is 21%,⁵⁷ in Jewish apocalyptic it is around 10%⁵⁸ and in Qumran

⁵³ See Dunn, ‘Spirit, Holy Spirit’, 1126.

⁵⁴ Aune, *Prophecy in Early Christianity*, 81.

⁵⁵ Russell, ‘Appendix II: Spirit in Apocalyptic Literature,’ 402. He includes Daniel, 1 & 2 Enoch, Sibelyine Oracles, Testaments of the Patriarchs, Jubilees, Psalms of Solomon, Martyrdom of Isaiah, 2 Baruch, 2 Esdras, Apocalypse of Moses, Apocalypse of Abraham, Testament of Daniel, Testament of Abraham, Life of Adam and Eve, and the Assumption of Moses.

⁵⁶ The figures were calculated by conducting an electronic search in the New Testament texts of Logos Bible Software 4. Two searches were done: one for each occasion the word πνεῦμα was tagged with the Louw-Nida domain 12.18, compared to some other domain; the other where various English translations capitalised the ‘S’ of ‘Spirit’ compared with when they did not. The results were then compared, checked for discrepancies, and any necessary corrections made. The results are affected by ambiguity in less than half-a-dozen occurrences, and the final counts are approximately: 245 from a total of 379 (NT) and 195 from a total of 277 (Acts-Revelation).

⁵⁷ 80 from a total of 378 using the second method noted above, in the ESV.

⁵⁸ See above, footnote 43.

it may be as low as 7%.⁵⁹

Most of the time the Spirit is described in the New Testament it is in regard to the Spirit's work in the present, not the past. As examples, in Matthew's gospel 75% of references to the Spirit of God relate to the Spirit's work in the present.⁶⁰ In Acts it is 95%,⁶¹ in Romans it is 100%, except for one ambiguous reference.⁶² Yet in the Babylonian Talmud,⁶³ the reverse is true: there are around 40 references to the Spirit of God, and 73% refer specifically to the Spirit in the Old Testament period.⁶⁴

We can see therefore that there is a quantitative difference between Christianity and other forms of Judaism, with Christianity giving much more emphasis to the Spirit of God and on the present work of the Spirit than other forms of Judaism. So despite the similarities the various currents of non-Christian Judaisms have with one another, on this analysis, each holds more in common with the others than any do with Christianity. If we were to plot them on a graph, where the distance between each point is indicative

⁵⁹ John Pryke, "'Spirit' and 'Flesh' in the Qumran Documents and Some New Testament Texts', *RevQ*, 5 (1965), 345, cited by Keener, *The Spirit in the Gospels and Acts*, 10. Pryke gives the count as 7 from 97.

⁶⁰ 9 from 12: Matthew 22:43 (past); 1:18, 20, 3:16, 4:1, 12:18, 28, 31, 32, 28:19 (present); 3:11, 10:20 (future).

⁶¹ 54 from 57: Acts 1:16, 4:25, 28:25 (past); 1:2, 5, 8, 2:4(x2), 17, 18, 33, 38, 4:8, 31, 5:3, 9, 32, 6:3, 5, 10, 7:51, 55, 8:15, 17, 18, 19, 29, 39, 9:17, 31, 10:19, 38, 44, 45, 47, 11:12, 15, 16, 24, 28, 13:2, 4, 9, 52, 15:8, 28, 16:6, 7, 19:2(x2), 6, 21, 20:22, 23, 28, 21:4, 11 (present).

⁶² Romans 1:4, 5:5, 7:6, 8:2, 4, 5(x2), 6, 9(x3), 10, 11(x2), 13, 14, 15, 16, 23, 26(x2), 27, 9:1, 14:17, 15:13, 16, 29, 30 (present); 2:29 (ambiguous). In each of these examples, I am using the word 'past' to refer to the ancient past, not the immediate past.

⁶³ The Babylonian Talmud is rather late for a comfortable comparison with the New Testament, and as a consequence, this comparison should be given significantly less weight than the two earlier comparisons. However, I found it impossible to find an earlier source in Judaism where I could undertake this comparison. The nature of the Jewish apocrypha means that the concept of 'in the past' does not really apply there — that is, whilst the texts might well speak about the Spirit in the 'present', the 'present' is frequently set in the ancient past. Neither did the Qumran documents or the early rabbinic documents readily lend themselves to a comparison, as the number of references to the Spirit of God is simply too small for statistical analysis. For example, the Mishnah only mentions the Spirit of God on three occasions (*m. Soṭah* 9:6, 9:15[x2]).

⁶⁴ References to the Spirit in the Old Testament are: *b. Ber* 1:1, 1:2, *b. Pesah.* 10:5[x8]; *b. Yoma* 1:1, 3:11; *b. Meg.* 1:4[x6], 1:13, *b. Soṭah* 1:8[x2], 5:1, 9:7, 9:11, *b. B. Bat* 8:3, *b. Sanh.* 1:1, 8:1, *b. Mak.* 3:15, *b. 'Arak.* 3:5. Two references relate to the intertestamental period: *b. 'Erub.* 6:2, *b. Yoma* 1:8; and four more are contemporary or timeless: *m. Soṭah* 9:14[x2], *b. 'Abod. Zar.* 1:8a[x2]. A number of further references are ambiguous (*b. Yoma* 7:5, *b. Soṭah* 9:11[x2], *b. Sanh.* 1:1[x2]), including the story of Rabbis Hillel and Samuel the Small who were worthy to receive the Holy Spirit but did not receive it.

of the extent of the differences, it would look something like this:

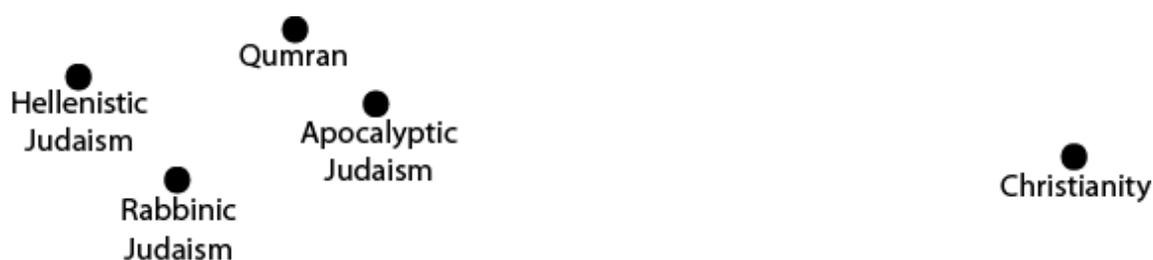


Figure 3: Differences in use of 'Spirit' between forms of Judaism

It appears therefore that Christianity represents not merely a continuation, but a significant *development* of first-century Judaistic beliefs. But why? Why did Christian pneumatology diverge more quickly and more fundamentally from other forms of Judaism than (say) Rabbinic Judaism did? This is an important question, to which we must return more fully later. But we can begin to answer that question by taking a more detailed look at Jewish views on prophecy.

Prophecy in first-century Judaism

Perhaps the greatest problem in surveying prophecy in Judaism is determining what we mean by 'prophecy' in a first-century Jewish context. In several of the works on early Christian prophecy, the writer begins with a definition for prophecy. One example would be, 'an intelligible verbal message believed to originate with God, and to be communicated through an inspired human intermediary'.⁶⁵ Could this simply be borrowed to define prophecy in Judaism? Not really. Although it is a helpful start, if prophecy in first-century Judaism was distinctive from prophecy elsewhere, we should be able to formulate a definition (or definitions) of first-century Judaistic prophecy that draws out those distinctions. In form, for example, prophecy in Judaism is 'considerably different from that of classical OT prophecy':⁶⁶

Many of the more characteristic formal features of OT prophecy are almost entirely absent from the various kinds of early Jewish revelatory speech and writing... Prose, not poetry, becomes the rule. Prophetic speeches in the first-person singular attributed to God are very rare. The various formulaic introductory and concluding phrases, such as the messenger formula, the commission formula, the proclamation

⁶⁵ Turner, *The Holy Spirit and Spiritual Gifts*, 184. Turner presents it not as a definition of prophecy but instead a description of what stereotypical prophecy looks like.

⁶⁶ Aune, *Prophecy in Early Christianity*, 104.

formula, the divine oracle formula, and the oath formulas, are almost entirely absent. Many of the basic forms of OT prophetic speech are also strikingly absent from early Jewish sources: the announcement of judgment, the announcement of salvation, the oracle of divine self-disclosure, the judicial speech, and reports of symbolic actions... Perhaps the most interesting feature of early Jewish prophecy in comparison with its OT prototypes is the general absence of the tendency to imitate OT prophetic formulas and speech forms... the integrity of the various forms of early Jewish prophecy is revealed most clearly in its independence from OT prototypes.⁶⁷

So ideally we should be able to articulate a definition of prophecy that describes most of first-century Judaism, without also describing prophecy that is not from that setting. Unfortunately, considerably less attention has been given to defining early Judaistic prophecy than has been given to early Christian prophecy,⁶⁸ which has been the subject of several monographs and other studies. This lack of attention to first-century Jewish views on prophecy means that borrowing an existing definition, or even an existing methodology is just not possible. However, we can save a little time by applying the lessons learnt by students of early Christian prophecy to prophecy in Judaism.

In defining early Christian prophecy, the procedure often adopted is that proposed by M. Eugene Boring back in 1973.⁶⁹ Boring looked first at the occurrence of words in the προφήτης word-group, and built up a picture of activities that could be described as prophetic. Once this was done, the sources were searched once more, this time for similar activities attributed to people not described as prophets.

However, no scholar uses this method to assess prophecy in Judaism. There are several claims in the intertestamental literature that various leaders have received the Spirit. There are many more claims of insight into future events. This is frequently true of Josephus (who also regarded the Essenes as having the same insight),⁷⁰ of Qumran, of apocalyptic Judaism, and even some of the rabbis. Yet despite that, 'contemporary seers

⁶⁷ idem, 106.

⁶⁸ Though see Martin Hengel, *The Zealots: Investigations into the Jewish Freedom Movement in the Period from Herod I until 70 A.D.* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1989 [Die Zeloten]) and Jürgen Becker, *Johannes Der Täufer und Jesus Von Nazareth* (BibS 63; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1972), 44-60.

⁶⁹ Boring, 'What Are We Looking For?: Toward a Definition of the Term Christian Prophet,' 142-151.

⁷⁰ Louis H. Feldman, 'Prophets and Prophecy in Josephus,' in *Prophets, Prophecy, and Prophetic Texts in Second Temple Judaism*, ed. Michael H. Floyd and Robert D. Haak (Library of Hebrew Bible/Old Testament Studies 427; London: T & T Clark, 2006), 222-227.

are never called προφήτης' by Josephus,⁷¹ for example, and 'with one possible exception... the name "prophet" is attributed to no person after Malachi in the entire literature of the intertestamental period'.⁷²

The possible exception is Josephus, who twice uses προφήτης to speak of contemporary prophets.⁷³ However, one usage refers to those whom Josephus evidently regards as false prophets.⁷⁴ The second appears in Josephus' quotation of a Gentile (Alexander Polyhistor),⁷⁵ though Aune suggests that Josephus 'concurred in the significance of that appellation'.⁷⁶ Whether these anomalies can be explained, in some senses does not matter. This passage is exceptional, and Josephus' restriction of προφητης 'almost exclusively to figures from the past does seem to be significant', and shows he makes 'some sort of distinction between his own age and the age when the great prophets had lived...'.⁷⁷ One or two disputed exceptions across the entire corpus of intertestamental literature does not negate this observation. As Blenkinsopp puts it, Josephus 'makes a distinction between inspired, canonical history, the writing of which was entrusted only to the prophets, and later records of which his own was one...'.⁷⁸

In *Qumran*, the situation is similar. The group were anticipating the renewal of prophecy, but despite engaging in activity that some today would call prophecy, they spoke of no prophets amongst themselves. Despite their emphasis on the spirit in a contemporary setting, discussion of eschatological prophecy is rare in *Qumran*,⁷⁹ with just a few hints at

⁷¹ Jannes Reiling, 'The Use of Ψευδοπροφήτης in the Septuagint, Philo and Josephus', *NovT*, 13:2 (1971), 156.

⁷² Hill, *New Testament Prophecy*, 22.

⁷³ For the importance of the biblical prophets to Josephus, see Feldman, 'Prophets and Prophecy in Josephus (2006)', 211-216. None of those characterised by P. W. Barnett as 'Jewish sign prophets' are called 'prophets' by Josephus. See P. W. Barnett, 'The Jewish Sign Prophets — A.D. 40-70: Their Intentions and Origin', *NTS*, 27:5 (1981), 679-697.

⁷⁴ *War* 6.286.

⁷⁵ *Antiquities* 1.240.

⁷⁶ David E. Aune, 'The Use of Προφήτης in Josephus', *JBL*, 101:3 (1982), 421.

⁷⁷ Gray, *Prophetic Figures*, 24, 26. See also Louis H. Feldman, 'Prophets and Prophecy in Josephus', *JTS*, 41:2 (1990), 400-402.

⁷⁸ Joseph Blenkinsopp, 'Prophecy and Priesthood in Josephus', *Journal of Jewish Studies*, 25:2 (1974), 240. See also Hill, *New Testament Prophecy*, 30; Feldman, 'Prophets and Prophecy in Josephus (1990)', 400-407 and Turner, *The Holy Spirit and Spiritual Gifts*, 195.

⁷⁹ James E. Bowley, 'Prophets and Prophecy at Qumran,' in *The Dead Sea Scrolls after Fifty Years: A*

eschatological prophet(s),⁸⁰ and even fewer unambiguous references.⁸¹ The situation regarding contemporary prophecy is even less clear. Howard Teeple argues that the community accepted the cessation of prophecy, but treated the Teacher of Righteousness as a prophet.⁸² George J. Brooke takes a more nuanced position, arguing that nobody ‘dared’ to describe the Teacher as a prophet, despite his prophet-like behaviour, and speculates this may have been to ensure that those who rejected contemporary prophecy were not therefore prevented from belonging the movement.⁸³ Millar Burrows agrees that the Teacher was not considered a prophet, and argues that ‘inspired interpretation’, not prophecy, was the Qumran way,⁸⁴ a position also held by G. Brin.⁸⁵ On the other hand James Bowley argues that as Josephus regarded the Essenes as prophetic,⁸⁶ and some of their texts appear prophetic,⁸⁷ then that is sufficient evidence to confirm prophetic

Comprehensive Assessment, vol. 2, ed. Peter W. Flint and James C. Vanderkam (Leiden: Brill, 1999), 354, 366.

⁸⁰ Scholars suggest a number of figures in a variety of texts, including the ‘anointed one’ in 11Q13 (11QMelchizedek) and 4Q521 (4QMessianic Apocalypse), and Elijah in 4Q558 (4QVision^b). See George J. Brooke, ‘Prophets and Prophecy in the Qumran Scrolls and the New Testament,’ in *Text, Thought, and Practice in Qumran and Early Christianity*, ed. Ruth A. Clements and Daniel R. Schwartz (Studies on the Texts of the Desert of Judah 84; Leiden: Brill, 2009), 32-41, esp. 38-39.

⁸¹ 4Q175 (4QTestimonia) 5 quotes Deuteronomy 18:18-19, ‘I would raise up for them a prophet...’. 1QS 9:11 in context this reads: ‘When these exist in Israel in accordance with these rules in order to establish the spirit of holiness in truth eternal... men of the Community [shall] began to be taught until the prophet comes, and the Messiahs of Aaron and Israel.’

⁸² Howard M. Teeple, *The Mosaic Eschatological Prophet* (JBLMS 10; Philadelphia: Society of Biblical Literature, 1957), 52.

⁸³ George J. Brooke, ‘Was the Teacher of Righteousness Considered to Be a Prophet?’, in *Prophecy after the Prophets? The Contribution of the Dead Sea Scrolls to the Understanding of Biblical and Extra-Biblical Prophecy*, ed. Kristin De Troyer and Armin Lange (Contributions to Biblical Exegesis and Theology 52; Leuven: Peeters, 2009), 95. See also George J. Brooke, ‘Prophecy and Prophets in the Dead Sea Scrolls: Looking Backwards and Forwards,’ in *Prophets, Prophecy, and Prophetic Texts in Second Temple Judaism*, ed. Michael H. Floyd and Robert D. Haak (Library of Hebrew Bible/Old Testament Studies 427; London: T & T Clark, 2006), 151-165, esp. 158-163.

⁸⁴ Millar Burrows, ‘Prophecy and the Prophets at Qumrân,’ in *Israel’s Prophetic Heritage*, ed. Bernhard W. Anderson and Walter Harrelson (The Preacher’s Library; London: SCM Press, 1962), 224-226.

⁸⁵ G. Brin, ‘תפיסת הנבואה המקראית בכתבי קומראן,’ in *‘Sha’Arei Talmon’: Studies in the Bible, Qumran, and the Ancient Near East Presented to Shemaryahu Talmon*, ed. Michael Fishbane and Emmanuel Tov (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1992), 101-112.

⁸⁶ Wars 2.159; Antiquities 13.311, 15.373-379.

⁸⁷ He cites 4Q410 (4QVision and Its Interpretation) 1:7-9, a fragment not easy to decipher, but which speaks of oracles and a vision.

activity.⁸⁸

Alex Jassen has undertaken the most detailed analysis of prophecy at Qumran, and in doing so has come to essentially the same conclusion as Burrows and Brin. He argues that the Teacher of Righteousness is not to be identified with the eschatological prophet, but affirms that prophecy was an important activity within the Qumran community. Their prophecy was not the same as that in the Hebrew Bible however, but rather had been transformed, particularly into what might be termed a re-interpretation of Biblical texts, or ‘revelatory exegesis’.⁸⁹ Many of Jassen’s arguments are persuasive, and it seems likely that what he calls ‘revelatory exegesis’ was viewed as both a successor to ancient prophecy and as a pre-cursor to eschatological prophecy. Yet given the reluctance of the Qumran community to describe their own people as prophets or sometimes even their own activities as prophetic, did they really view this exegesis as truly prophetic as he claims? For now, that is a question that remains unanswered.

Hill’s observation, in Qumran and elsewhere, that perhaps no-one living after the time of Malachi was described as a prophet by a Jewish writer, means that if Boring’s methodology for understanding early Christian prophecy was applied to prophecy in Judaism, then the inevitable conclusion is that there was no prophecy in Judaism. But there are alternative methodologies. For example, as he cannot look at the activities of those named as prophets, David Aune begins by defining prophecy in a very general sense (‘intelligible messages from God in human language through inspired human mediums’),⁹⁰ and then finds Judaistic speech or writing that fit this criteria – regardless of whether they were uttered by those recognised as prophets within Judaism, or were described as prophecies at the time. This, perhaps inevitably, means that Aune’s definition includes much that those in the first century did not consider prophetic. For example, Aune equates the *bat qōl* with prophecy,⁹¹ but it was never described as such at the time, and Crone rightly argues that it ‘was not respected as an immediate expression

⁸⁸ Bowley, ‘Prophets and Prophecy at Qumran,’ 371-376.

⁸⁹ Alex P. Jassen, *Mediating the Divine: Prophecy and Revelation in the Dead Sea Scrolls and Second Temple Judaism* (STDJ 68; Leiden: Brill, 2007).

⁹⁰ Aune, *Prophecy in Early Christianity*, 103.

⁹¹ The *bat qōl* (literally ‘daughter of the voice’, or echo) comes up frequently in Rabbinic literature as a means by which God could communicate to the rabbis.

of the spirit of God'.⁹² Crone goes on to suggest that the rabbis knew 'among themselves activities which we would term prophetic'.⁹³ The emphatic 'we' added by Crone is important. As he later emphasises, it is not 'to be assumed that every activity which we might term prophetic was considered so by the first and second century rabbis',⁹⁴ and what applies to the rabbis applies equally to other currents of Judaism. What they would call prophetic would not necessarily match what we would call prophetic.⁹⁵

This in turn suggests another problem with Aune's definition. He defines prophecy as being 'from God', but this objective criteria can only be assessed subjectively. How does one know whether a message is from God or not? One man's prophet is another man's false prophet. This is not a problem to Aune — he merely accepts all claims to prophecy on equal terms, considering that as he is an historian not a theologian, it is not for him to decide between true and false.⁹⁶ However, there are several references to false prophets in the first-century literature,⁹⁷ and sometimes those specifically refer to prophets *within Judaism*. This is also true of the New Testament where false prophecy is viewed as a problem of the past,⁹⁸ the present,⁹⁹ and the future.¹⁰⁰ One first-century 'prophet' is even specifically described as a 'Jewish false prophet'.¹⁰¹

⁹² Crone, *Early Christian Prophecy*, 64.

⁹³ idem, 66. Ulrich Luz takes a similar position with regard to *Christian* prophecy: 'I will limit myself to those phenomena that were explicitly interpreted by the early Christians as 'prophetic'. The basis of my sketch will not be a modern — my modern — idea of what prophetism could or should be. I will not deal with a more or less homogeneous religious phenomenon 'prophecy' (according to my definition), but with a variety of different, however related experiences and activities which the early Christians themselves interpreted as prophetic experiences in the light of the Bible.' Ulrich Luz, 'Stages of Early Christian Prophecy', *SacS*, 5:1 (2007), 48, emphasis original.

⁹⁴ Crone, *Early Christian Prophecy*, 68.

⁹⁵ John Barton, *Oracles of God: Perceptions of Ancient Prophecy in Israel after the Exile* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), 109-111.

⁹⁶ Aune, *Prophecy in Early Christianity*, 222.

⁹⁷ E.g. Josephus, *Antiquities* 8.236, 241-242, 318, 402-409, 9.133-134, etc. *Wars* 2.261, 285, etc.; *Philo Special Laws* 4.51.

⁹⁸ Luke 6:26, 2 Peter 2:1.

⁹⁹ 1 John 4:1, Revelation 2:20.

¹⁰⁰ Matthew 7:5, 24:11, 24; Mark 13:22; Revelation 16:13, 19:20, 20:10.

¹⁰¹ Acts 13:6. Bruce suggests that he was described as a false prophet because 'he claimed falsely to be a medium of divine revelation', F. F. Bruce, *The Book of the Acts* (NICNT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988²),

The fact that these ‘false’ prophecies are captured within Aune’s definition is not entirely surprising. After all, it can be very difficult to separate the counterfeit from the genuine. But Aune’s description of prophecy is not only intended to *describe* all apparently prophetic phenomena, it is *derived from* all apparently prophetic phenomena, including what is considered ‘false’ by some in the first century. This is worrying. If examples of prophecy are going to be used to form a definition for prophecy, then it is imperative that only genuine examples are used.

So why do scholars struggle to come up with a simple definition of prophecy in early Judaism that is both specific and derived using first-century evidence? The obvious answer is that the evidence is so slender. There is substantial evidence of first-century affirmation of the classical prophecy in the Hebrew Scriptures. There is a reasonable amount of first-century speech or writing that seems to fit modern criteria of prophecy and which *may* have been considered prophetic by some at the time. But there is no speech or writings recorded as coming from prophets, and almost none that is described definitively as prophecy.

Had prophecy ceased by the first century?

The paucity of evidence for first-century prophecy begs the question whether Jews believed that prophecy had ceased. It is one thing to state that there is little definite evidence for prophecy, but it would be an argument from silence to assume that must mean that prophecy had ceased. Yet despite that, historically, most scholars have argued that within first- and second- century Judaism, prophecy had indeed ceased.¹⁰² The classic statement apparently demonstrating the ‘cessation’ of prophecy is in Tosefta Soṭah 13:2:¹⁰³

249. See also Ben Witherington, *The Acts of the Apostles: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 396; Richard I. Pervo, *Acts: A Commentary* (Hermeneia; Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2009), 325. The use of the word μάγος suggests that he could do more than merely speak, however. A μάγος had ‘supernatural knowledge *and ability*’, or could exercise magical arts, Gerhard Delling, ‘μάγος’, *TDNT*, 4:357, emphasis added.

¹⁰² For a review of scholarship on the cessation of prophecy see L. Stephen Cook, *On the Question of the ‘Cessation of Prophecy’ in Ancient Judaism* (TSAJ 145; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2011), 3-45.

¹⁰³ Dating documents (particularly rabbinic ones), is not straightforward, and it is not wise to assume that later documents reflect earlier thinking. Nevertheless, as this text is cited by some to support the argument that prophecy had ceased, it is important we examine it here. The dating of the Tosefta is not certain, but it is likely to be later than the Mishnah (probably late third century).

When Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi, the last of the prophets, died, the Holy Spirit ceased in [from] Israel. Nevertheless, a Bath Qol was heard by them: It once happened that the sages entered a house in Jericho and they heard a Bath Qol, saying, 'There is a man here who is worthy of the Holy Spirit, but there is no one in his generation righteous.' Thereupon, they set their eyes upon Hillel...¹⁰⁴

Several writers use this text hoping to demonstrate that the Rabbis believed prophecy had ceased.¹⁰⁵ Aune, however points out that the reference also shows that 'divine revelation continued in Judaism, though in a different form',¹⁰⁶ and Levison is also right to note that neither this text nor others like it,¹⁰⁷ show that prophecy had *permanently* withdrawn from Israel. As Levison suggests, this passage shows the belief that there was a temporary withdrawal of the Spirit [of prophecy] between the time of Malachi and of Hillel. Levison goes on to accuse New Testament scholars of reading into the text what they wanted to find,¹⁰⁸ and he argues that Hillel does receive the Spirit, it is only the rest of his generation that does not.¹⁰⁹ Concluding that Hillel did not receive the Spirit is wrong, he says, because 'it violates the straightforward principle this text is intended to illustrate'.¹¹⁰ The principle that Levison refers to is expressed in 10:1, 'When a righteous person comes into the world, good comes into the world... and when the righteous person leaves the world, retribution comes into the world...'.¹¹¹ For example (*t. Soṭah* 12:5-6), when Elijah was present the Holy Spirit was commonplace, after his departure, it too departed.¹¹² But despite Levison's arguments, the historic position is, in my view, a stronger one.¹¹³ Hillel and Samuel the Small were *deserving* of the Spirit, but despite their

¹⁰⁴ The translation is from John R. Levison, 'Did the Spirit Withdraw from Israel? An Evaluation of the Earliest Jewish Data', *NTS*, 43 (1997), 46, square brackets original.

¹⁰⁵ E.g. John J. Penney, 'The Testing of New Testament Prophecy', *JPT*, 5:10 (1997), 45-46.

¹⁰⁶ Aune, *Prophecy in Early Christianity*, 104.

¹⁰⁷ E.g. 'the prophets have fallen asleep... we have nothing now save the Mighty One and His law' (2 Baruch 85:3). 2 Baruch is generally dated to the late first century A.D.

¹⁰⁸ Levison, 'Did the Spirit Withdraw from Israel?', 35-57.

¹⁰⁹ He says 'the renewal is not widespread' (idem, 55). He also receives support from Turner, *The Holy Spirit and Spiritual Gifts*, 190.

¹¹⁰ Levison, 'Did the Spirit Withdraw from Israel?', 47.

¹¹¹ Levison's translation, from idem.

¹¹² idem, 48.

¹¹³ See John Bowman, 'Prophets and Prophecy in Talmud and Midrash', *EvQ*, 22 (1950), 262; W. D. Davies, *Paul and Rabbinic Judaism* (London: SPCK, 1962), 207-210; Blenkinsopp, 'Prophecy and Priesthood in

deserving status, the gift was not given. This fits into the context of the surrounding chapters and the principle of 10:1 ('when a righteous person comes into the world, good comes into the world'). It fits, because as Levison rightly points out, in these chapters the Tosefta is describing mounting loss.¹¹⁴ Earlier in the passage (11:8f) some of the losses incurred through the death of the righteous were later regained (principally through Moses). But as history continues, the losses are not made up, and by 15:3-5¹¹⁵ more and more good is disappearing from Israel, in a rather depressing fashion. The purpose of the passage regarding Hillel and Samuel the Small seems to be to demonstrate the poverty to which Israel has fallen. In earlier generations when men of the righteousness of Hillel arose, they were given the Holy Spirit. But by the time of Hillel's day, the nation had sunk so low that the good brought to the world by man as righteous as Hillel was much diminished. Once a Hillel-type figure would have been given the Spirit — but such is the decline by his day that the gift does not come to him, despite his deserving status. Understanding the passage in the traditional way makes better sense of the context than Levison admits (though Levison is right in his observation that the passage describes only the present absence of prophecy, not necessarily its permanent cessation).

Before we move on from the Tosefta, we should note that it appears the third-century rabbis did not think it at all a contradiction to hear a *bat qōl* explaining the absence of prophecy. Clearly, in this literature, prophecy is not the only form of divine communication,¹¹⁶ and therefore not all divine communication should be considered prophetic.

Josephus', 256, fn. 277; Hill, *New Testament Prophecy*, 34; Bruce Chilton and Jacob Neusner, *Types of Authority in Formative Christianity and Judaism* (London: Routledge, 1999), 76-77; James H. Charlesworth, 'The Dead Sea Scrolls and the Historical Jesus,' in *Jesus and the Dead Sea Scrolls*, ed. James H. Charlesworth (Anchor Bible Reference Library; New York: Doubleday, 1992), 22.

¹¹⁴ Levison, 'Did the Spirit Withdraw from Israel?', 48-49.

¹¹⁵ 'When R. Eliezer died, the glory of the Torah ceased. When R. Joshua died, men of counsel ceased, and reflection ended in Israel. When R. Akiba died, the arms of Torah were taken away, and the springs of wisdom ceased. When R. Eleazar b. Azariah died, the crown of wisdom ceased, for, "The crown of the wise is their riches." When Ben Azzai died, conscientious students ceased. When Ben Zoma died, exegetes died. When R. Hanna b. Dosa died, wonder-workers died out in Israel. When Abba Yose b. Qitnit of Qatanta died, piety became small in Israel...'

¹¹⁶ Chilton and Neusner, *Types of Authority in Formative Christianity and Judaism*, 77.

Summary

Where does all this leave us? The evidence seems to be that in most Judaisms there was a strong sense that God was still speaking in their day. Yet at the same time there was also an acknowledgement (perhaps even a regret) that God was not speaking in their day in the way that he once spoke. The way that he once spoke was certainly called ‘prophecy’, but generally speaking that was not the word that first-century Jews used to describe the way God spoke in their own day. Such speech meets many twenty-first century definitions of prophecy, but Cook rightly warns that ‘lumping together all forms of pneumatic activity under the one term “prophecy”... runs the risk of obscuring what Second Temple Jews themselves thought’.¹¹⁷

It is impossible to find any individual who was widely recognised as a prophet, nor any text which was widely described as prophetic. This is true not just of first-century texts, but also of later writings that look back to the period. Where it occurred at all, acknowledgement of prophetic figures and prophetic activity was localised.¹¹⁸ Yet having said all that, there is equally little evidence for the suggestion that there was a widespread belief in Judaism that prophecy had ceased *for good*. As well as there being no evidence of definitive statements to that effect, in several strands of Judaism, particularly in apocalyptic literature and at Qumran there was an expectation of a future eschatological prophet.

How does this help us in our quest towards a New Testament theology of prophecy? First, we need to exercise caution in pronouncing definitive statements about what first-century Jews believed regarding prophecy. The situation was varied and complex, and the documentary evidence not as firm as perhaps we would like. Second, we have learned that some of the Jewish readers of the New Testament may well have been open to a belief in contemporary prophecy, perhaps even keen to see prophecy in action. Prophecy was part of some Jews’ eschatological hope, and was being increasingly linked to the Spirit’s activity.¹¹⁹ Third, we have discovered that Christianity was significantly more

¹¹⁷ Cook, *On the Question of the ‘Cessation of Prophecy’ in Ancient Judaism*, 191.

¹¹⁸ For an overview see Rudolf Schnackenberg, ‘Die Erwartung des ‘Propheten’ Nach Dem Neuen Testament und Den Qumran-Texten,’ in *Studia Evangelica: Papers Presented to the International Congress on ‘The Four Gospels in 1957’ Held at Christ Church, Oxford, 1957*, ed. Kurt Aland, et al. (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1959), 622-629.

¹¹⁹ Cook, *On the Question of the ‘Cessation of Prophecy’ in Ancient Judaism*, 63-64.

interested in the work of the Spirit and prophecy (both contemporary and eschatological) than any other form of Judaism whose records we have examined.

The Hebrew Bible

There is widespread acceptance that Paul (and to a lesser extent Luke) owe their understanding of prophecy far more to the old covenant scriptures¹²⁰ than to any other influence.¹²¹ Therefore, most of those writing about prophecy in the New Testament do examine the old covenant scriptures, though some suggest it is methodologically inappropriate.¹²² It is certainly beyond dispute that the New Testament writers had a high regard for the old covenant scriptures — the nearly four hundred citations and countless allusions make that clear enough.¹²³ As Barnabas Lindars put it, ‘the Old Testament is the greatest single influence on the formation of New Testament theology’.¹²⁴ Yet questions relating to the New Testament use of the Old Testament are incredibly complex. We therefore need to begin with some brief reflections on methodology.

Our approach to the Hebrew Bible

It is worth reminding ourselves that the purpose of this enquiry is to establish a New

¹²⁰ When referring to the Hebrew Bible from the perspective of New Testament Christianity, I prefer the term ‘old covenant scriptures’, as more closely resembling the New Testament writers’ own testimony than either ‘Hebrew Bible’, ‘Jewish Scriptures’ or ‘the Old Testament’. γραφή is a common term used in the New Testament, and ‘scripture’ is almost always used by English Bibles to translate it. Yet Peter’s reference to Paul’s writings and ‘the other Scriptures’ suggests that as we near the end of the period during which the New Testament was written, some qualification of the term ‘scripture’ was necessary if the writer wished to refer only to pre-Christian Scripture. Paul supplies that qualification in 2 Corinthians 3:14 (cf. v6), where he speaks of the writings of Moses as ‘the old covenant’, read in Jewish synagogues. ‘Old covenant’ scriptures therefore refers to those scriptures that are a product of the period of the old covenant.

¹²¹ See, for example, Ellis, *Prophecy and Hermeneutic in Early Christianity*, 27-28, 63, 130.

¹²² See Thomas, ‘Max Turner’s *The Holy Spirit and Spiritual Gifts*’, 13-14. Thomas is right to be concerned about an overuse of late rabbinic materials, but there is still great value in examining early and influential texts (i.e. the Hebrew Bible).

¹²³ The fact that this high view of the old covenant scriptures is also seen in letters to churches that had a high proportion of Gentile believers also suggests that the New Testament writers believed the Hebrew Bible was a vital foundation for all Christians — not merely for Jewish Christians.

¹²⁴ Barnabas Lindars, ‘The Place of the Old Testament in the Formation of New Testament Theology: Prolegomena’, *NTS*, 23:1 (1976). NR.

Testament theology of prophecy, and to do so we are attempting to view the old covenant scriptures through the eyes of the New Testament writers. As a consequence I do not intend to get caught up in a complex discussion of canon, as that question is not one that appears to have vexed the New Testament writers themselves,¹²⁵ and it is beyond the scope of this survey. That said, the only rabbi the New Testament writers are concerned with is Jesus, and the only prophets that interest them are the ancient prophets of Israel and the earliest Christian prophets. We will follow their lead.

Our sole purpose at this point is to consider the ways in which the old covenant scriptures may have influenced New Testament pneumatology. In examining the literature of first-century Judaism, we have already become aware of the dangers of examining ancient texts with a twenty-first century mindset. This is equally true when it comes to the old covenant scriptures, and if we are to understand the old covenant scriptures as a background to New Testament theology, we will need to drop some modern critical questions in favour of the issues relevant in the first century.

Scholars of the old covenant scriptures are often keen to point out the differences between modern and ancient approaches to the text. Joseph Blenkinsopp, for example, describes three main views of prophecy in the Hebrew Bible. These are the modern critical scholarly view (in many different forms), the traditional Christian view (espoused by New Testament writers and those that followed them), and the traditional Jewish view.¹²⁶ Blenkinsopp is right to note these differences, and it needs to be underlined that in this section we are not considering the old covenant scriptures using a modern critical scholarly view. As John Barton says:

The great insights of modern critical study... [were] more or less unavailable to people in New Testament times; and, as we have now seen, the image of a 'prophet' for them was much more likely to conform to just the picture which modern Old Testament study has been at pains to correct.¹²⁷

Our concern is how the New Testament authors viewed the old covenant scriptures.

¹²⁵ As Hengel says, 'If we consider the use of Old Testament Scriptures by the earliest Christian authors in the New Testament itself, it becomes evident how remote they are from any question about the canon and its limits'. Martin Hengel, *The Septuagint as Christian Scripture: Its Prehistory and the Problem of its Canon*, trans. Mark E. Biddle (London: T & T Clark, 2002), 105.

¹²⁶ Joseph Blenkinsopp, *A History of Prophecy in Israel* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1996²), 16-26.

¹²⁷ Barton, *Oracles of God*, 131-132.

There may be some modern insights which are a rediscovery of assumptions and techniques used by New Testament authors, and if so, those insights will be useful in this study. But any modern critical insights that were or would have been disavowed by the New Testament authors will *not* be used here.

This therefore opens up the thorny issue of how New Testament writers understood and used the Old Testament. This is not the place for a full discussion of that topic, so instead I will content myself with four simple principles:

First, **New Testament writers claimed their doctrine was perfectly in line with the old covenant scriptures.**¹²⁸ Luke describes Paul, for example, as ‘believing everything laid down by the Law and written in the Prophets’, and ‘saying nothing but what the prophets and Moses said would come to pass’.¹²⁹ All of the New Testament writers frequently cite or allude to the old covenant scriptures to support their arguments.

Second, **New Testament writers considered that the prophets of the old covenant spoke on behalf of God.** When we look at the old covenant scriptures through New Testament eyes, we find many passages that reinforce this. It can be easily seen through introductory formulae such as ‘what the Lord had spoken by the prophet’.¹³⁰ So when the prophets spoke, God spoke — prophecy revealed God and his will.¹³¹ When the people rejected the prophets, they rejected God.¹³²

Third, **New Testament writers viewed the Hebrew prophets as inspired by the Spirit of God.**¹³³ This is clear from texts such as ‘what the prophet said by [or in or through] the Holy Spirit’.¹³⁴ It is also specifically taught in passages such as Acts 3:18, 21, possibly Ephesians 3:5, and of course Hebrews 1:1, 1 Peter 1:10-12 and 2 Peter 1:19-21. All this

¹²⁸ For a brief example of how this might be shown particularly in regard to pneumatology, see Willem A. VanGemeren and Andrew Abernethy, ‘The Spirit and the Future: A Canonical Approach,’ in *Presence, Power and Promise: The Role of the Spirit of God in the Old Testament*, ed. David G. Firth and Paul D. Wegner (Leicester: Apollos, 2011), 344-345.

¹²⁹ Acts 24:14, 26:22, *cf.* Romans 1:2, 3:21, 16:26, etc.

¹³⁰ Matthew 1:22, 2:15, *cf.* Romans 1:2, James 5:10.

¹³¹ Hebrews 1:1, James 5:10, 2 Peter 1:21.

¹³² See, for example, Acts 3:23, 7:51-52.

¹³³ For evidence of this in Judaism, see, for example, Crone, *Early Christian Prophecy*, 56; Ellis, *Prophecy and Hermeneutic in Early Christianity*, 27-28; Forbes, *Prophecy and Inspired Speech*, 252-253.

¹³⁴ Acts 4:25 (*cf.* Matthew 22:43 and parallels); Acts 1:16, 28:25; Hebrews 3:7.

echoes the old covenant scripture's own teaching.¹³⁵

Fourth, **the New Testament writers believed that the old covenant scriptures pointed unambiguously to Jesus, the Messiah.** Central to the New Testament writers' view of prophecy was the thought that the prophecy of the old covenant scriptures had been fulfilled in Jesus. They did not put this fulfillment down to a happy accident or mere coincidence. As far as they were concerned, as God spoke through the prophets, his purpose was to point to Jesus:

And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures *the things concerning himself*.

You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is they that bear witness about me...

Isaiah said these things because he saw his glory and *spoke of him*.

To him all the prophets bear witness that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name.

...the prophets who prophesied... predicted the sufferings of Christ and the subsequent glories.¹³⁶

This flies in the face of much contemporary scholarship of the old covenant scriptures, as the Christological significance of old covenant prophecy is rarely attested in modern scholarship, and many are reluctant to accept it. It is hard to find monographs concerning Old Testament theology that have much to say about Messianic hope,¹³⁷ and some Jewish scholars reject even the concept of a Messiah within the Hebrew Bible.¹³⁸ But surely the message of the New Testament is this:

Paul holds that the old covenant scriptures anticipate Christ, bear witness to him, prophesy of his coming and of his death and resurrection, and all that flows from it... In other words, Christ (and all that flows from him) is properly thought of as

¹³⁵ See, for example, Numbers 11:24-30, 1 Samuel 10:6-10, 19:20-24, Nehemiah 9:30, Joel 2:28, and Zechariah 7:12.

¹³⁶ Luke 24:27; John 5:39, 12:41; Acts 10:43; 1 Peter 1:10-11. Emphasis added in each case. See also Luke 24:44-47, John 1:45, Acts 3:18, 24, Acts 26:22-23, 28:23, Romans 1:1f, 16:25f.

¹³⁷ See Ronald E. Clements, *Old Testament Prophecy: From Oracles to Canon* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1996), 50.

¹³⁸ See, for example, William Scott Green and Jed Silverstein, 'Messiah', *EJm*, 2:874-875.

fulfilment of antecedent revelation.¹³⁹

Many other scholars express similar sentiments. Gerald Hawthorne says, 'For the Evangelists, and Matthew in particular, the message of the prophets concerned Jesus'.¹⁴⁰ James Dunn argues that 'central to their [the first Christians] convictions and apologetic regarding Jesus was the claim that he had fulfilled the prophetic hope of Israel',¹⁴¹ George Beasley-Murray that, 'the Scriptures were given by God to witness to the Christ',¹⁴² and Larry Hurtado that it is clear that 'Jesus was prophesied in the Old Testament... [was] part and parcel of first-century Christian proclamation'.¹⁴³ But it is Carson again who puts it most clearly:

What is at stake is a comprehensive hermeneutical key. By predictive prophecy, by type, by revelatory event and by anticipatory statute, what we call the Old Testament is understood to point to Christ, his ministry, his teaching, his death and resurrection... the Scriptures, rightly understood, point away from themselves to Jesus.¹⁴⁴

When the New Testament writers read their Hebrew Bibles, they interpreted them Christologically and eschatologically. This is in contrast to much of Judaism, and in contrast to much contemporary scholarship. The closest comparison would be Qumran,¹⁴⁵ yet as Vanderkam points out, the Qumranites and New Testament writers did not exegete the same texts with the same results. Whilst both the New Testament and the Qumran community had an eschatological hermeneutic, they had significantly different eschatologies — the Qumranites hoped-for Messiah was coming soon, the New

¹³⁹ Don A. Carson, 'Mystery and Fulfillment: Toward a More Comprehensive Paradigm of Paul's Understanding of the Old and the New,' in *The Paradoxes of Paul*, ed. Don A. Carson, Peter T. O'Brien and Mark A. Seifrid (Justification and Variegated Nomism 2; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2004), 397.

¹⁴⁰ Gerald F. Hawthorne, 'Prophets, Prophecy', *DJG*, 638. He cites Matthew 1:22, 2:15, 17, 23, 4:14, 8:17, 12:17, 13:35, 21:4, 26:56 and 27:9.

¹⁴¹ James D. G. Dunn, 'Biblical Concepts of Divine Revelation,' in *Divine Revelation*, ed. Paul Avis (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1997), 12.

¹⁴² George R. Beasley-Murray, *John* (WBC 36; Dallas: Word, 1999²), 79.

¹⁴³ Larry W. Hurtado, *At the Origins of Christian Worship: the Context and Character of Earliest Christian Devotion* (Carlisle: Paternoster, 1999), 566.

¹⁴⁴ Don A. Carson, *The Gospel According to John* (PNTC; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991), 263-264. Although Carson is referring directly to John's gospel, he cites both the Synoptics and Paul in holding this view.

¹⁴⁵ See James C. Vanderkam, *The Dead Sea Scrolls Today* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994), 180-181; F. F. Bruce, 'The Holy Spirit in the Acts of the Apostles', *Int*, 27 (1973), 172-174.

Testament's Messiah had already come. That means that:

the uniqueness of the early Christian faith lies... in its central confession that the son of a humble woman and a carpenter from Nazareth in Galilee was indeed the messiah and son of God who taught, healed, suffered, died, rose, ascended, and promised to return in glory to judge the living and the dead.¹⁴⁶

The word 'uniqueness' is important. The view that the old covenant scriptures were fulfilled in Jesus was unique, and it set New Testament Christianity apart from other first-century Judaisms (and from some modern-day scholars of the Hebrew Bible).

My purpose here is not to attempt to demonstrate that the New Testament writers were 'right' and that other first-century Jews and some contemporary scholars are 'wrong', nor vice versa. My task is much simpler — I simply want to demonstrate that the New Testament writers thought of old covenant prophecy as bearing witness to Jesus, and that any construction of a New Testament theology of prophecy needs to take this very seriously. It is difficult, if not impossible, to understand the New Testament writers' view of old covenant prophecy outside this hermeneutic. Although, in the eyes of the New Testament writers, witness to Jesus may not have been the *only* purpose of ancient prophecy, it was the *main* purpose from their perspective. As Gerd Schunack puts it, 'the prophetic witness [of the Hebrew Bible] concerns essentially the gospel of Christ'.¹⁴⁷

In affirming this, we have not yet discussed whether the understanding the New Testament writers held was actually the one that the original authors *intended* future readers to have.¹⁴⁸ Original intent is an essential component in contemporary discussions regarding hermeneutics, and on the New Testament use of the Old, in particular. But I do not intend here to enter that discussion. For our purposes whether the New Testament writers were correct in their understanding of the old covenant scriptures is not of primary interest. Our concern is only in their conclusions, namely that:

1. New Testament writers claimed their doctrine was perfectly in line with the old covenant scriptures.
2. New Testament writers considered that the prophets of the old covenant spoke on behalf of God.

¹⁴⁶ Vanderkam, *The Dead Sea Scrolls Today*, 184.

¹⁴⁷ Gerd Schunack, 'δηλώω', *EDNT*, 1:295. Schunack's comments are in the light of 1 Peter 1:10-12.

¹⁴⁸ Many scholars of the Hebrew Bible think not.

3. New Testament writers viewed the Hebrew prophets as inspired by the Spirit of God.
4. New Testament writers believed that the old covenant scriptures pointed unambiguously to Jesus, the Messiah.

Other groups in Judaism also thought that their own doctrine was in line with the old covenant scriptures, but Christianity was naturally the only group that thought Christian doctrine was compatible. The middle two elements are shared with Judaism, the final one is also distinctive to Christianity.

This means that in examining old covenant pneumatology as a background to New Testament theology, we need to ensure we are applying the principles outlined above, which is not the standard scholarly approach to the Hebrew Bible. David Firth and Paul Wegner's method is typical:

it seems preferable in terms of exegesis to interpret the OT passages as their authors would have intended and not through the lens of their subsequent development in the NT¹⁴⁹

But given the principles outlined above, that method is not appropriate here. Our concern is not with how the old covenant scriptures were understood by their original readers, but with how those Scriptures were seen by the authors of the New Testament. Therefore, so far as we are able, we will interpret the old covenant passages as they were understood by the New Testament writers, whether or not that was how they were intended to be read by their original authors, and whether or not more recent scholarship or theological development affirms their understanding.

The old covenant scriptures as background to new covenant prophecy

Until recently there was a surprising lack of research on the Holy Spirit in the Hebrew Bible,¹⁵⁰ with just a handful of monographs published in the twentieth century.¹⁵¹ More

¹⁴⁹ David G. Firth and Paul D. Wegner, eds., *Presence, Power and Promise: The Role of the Spirit of God in the Old Testament* (Leicester: Apollos, 2011), 18.

¹⁵⁰ Walter Kaiser wrote, 'very, very few have studied in depth the ministry of the Holy Spirit in the Old Testament', Walter C. Kaiser, *The Christian and the "Old Testament"* (Pasadena: William Carey Library, 1998), 220.

¹⁵¹ Lloyd Rudolph Neve, 'The Spirit of God in the Old Testament' (Unpublished ThD Thesis, New York:

recently we have seen a slim volume by Wright,¹⁵² a collection of essays,¹⁵³ and two monographs concentrating on the pneumatology of particular books of the Hebrew Bible.¹⁵⁴

Having said all this, our purpose is not simply to consider how the New Testament writers viewed the old covenant scriptures in a general sense. Rather, we are concerned with the background that the old covenant scriptures may have provided on the specific subject of *Christian* prophecy, or as I prefer to call it, new covenant prophecy. But whilst many of the major works on new covenant prophecy do look at prophecy within the Hebrew Bible, with only a few exceptions¹⁵⁵ they do not look specifically at what the old covenant scriptures might say about prophecy *in the new covenant*.¹⁵⁶

Union Theological Seminary, 1967) was revised and issued in 1972 in Tokyo by Seibunsha, but I have been unable to obtain the revised work. Other monographs include Paul Volz, *Der Geist Gottes und die Verwandten Erscheinungen im Alten Testament und im Anschliessenden Judentum* (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1910); Daniel Lys, *'Rûach', le Souffle dans l'Ancien Testament* (EHPH; Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1962); Montague, *The Holy Spirit*; Leon J. Wood, *The Holy Spirit in the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1976); Manfred Dreytza, *Der Theologische Gebrauch Von Ruah im Alten Testament: Eine Wort- und Satzsemantische Studie* (TVM 358; Basel: Brunnen, 1990); Robert Koch, *Der Geist Gottes im Alten Testament* (Bern: Peter Lang, 1991) and Wilf Hildebrandt, *An Old Testament Theology of the Spirit of God* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1995).

¹⁵² Christopher Wright, *Knowing the Holy Spirit through the Old Testament* (Oxford: Monarch Books, 2006).

¹⁵³ Firth and Wegner, eds., *Presence, Power and Promise*.

¹⁵⁴ Wonsuk Ma, *Until the Spirit Comes: The Spirit of God in the Book of Isaiah* (JSOTSup 271; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999); James Robson, *Word and Spirit in Ezekiel* (LHB/OTS 447; New York: T & T Clark, 2006).

¹⁵⁵ E.g. O. Palmer Robertson in a slim, small-format volume, aimed primarily at church leaders. It contains a short section headed 'Prophecy about Prophecy in the Old Testament', but deals with the Old Testament (Joel 2:28-32 only) in little more than a page. See O. Palmer Robertson, *The Final Word: A Biblical Response to the Case for Tongues and Prophecy Today* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1993), 11-12. Elsewhere he adds, 'If a definitive answer is to be found for trouble among God's new covenant people, it must be sought in the authoritative documents of God's old covenant people'. O. Palmer Robertson, 'Tongues: Sign of Covenantal Curse and Blessing', *WTJ*, 38:1 (1975), 43. The more general works on spiritual gifts do fare better. Carson, for example, has a few helpful pages on the subject (Carson, *Showing the Spirit*, 151-158), where he seeks to demonstrate the biblical-theological framework for spiritual gifts. Turner also devotes his first chapter to the Spirit in the Old Testament (Turner, *The Holy Spirit and Spiritual Gifts*, 4-20). Ellis also has a paragraph, E. Earle Ellis, 'Prophecy in the New Testament Church — and Today,' in *Prophetic Vocation in the New Testament and Today*, ed. J. Panagopoulos (Supplements to Novum Testamentum 45; Leiden: Brill, 1977), 48.

¹⁵⁶ This is also true of pneumatology generally. Wilf Hildebrandt writes, 'the OT background to the NT pneumatology is often neglected or only briefly surveyed', Hildebrandt, *An Old Testament Theology of the*

Yet central to early Christianity's understanding of itself is the realisation that Jesus Christ had ushered in the long hoped-for eschatological age. 'The one who is to come',¹⁵⁷ has come. Within the Hebrew Bible and much intertestamental literature there was hope for an eschatological prophet or prophets who would lead the people and deliver them from oppression.¹⁵⁸ The New Testament itself testifies to widespread hope of a prophetic deliverer in first-century Judaism, and affirms this in a number of different ways. Matthew records popular conceptions of Jesus as 'Elijah... Jeremiah, or one of the prophets'. In Luke, the crowd think Jesus is 'a great prophet'. John records the priests and Levites asking the Baptist, 'Are you Elijah?... Are you the Prophet?', and some think Jesus is 'the prophet'.¹⁵⁹ As far as the New Testament writers were concerned, Jesus was the prophet like Moses.¹⁶⁰ The Gospel writers also viewed John the Baptist as an eschatological prophet, but are consistent in seeing him not as the One, but as a forerunner to the One.¹⁶¹

However, the prophet to come is only one form of the eschatological hope of pre-Christian Judaism. There is also a second form that is very relevant to this study — a number of texts in the Hebrew Bible suggest a resurgence in prophecy in the eschatological future. Some said so directly,¹⁶² whilst others spoke of an outpouring of the

Spirit of God, xvi.

¹⁵⁷ Matthew 11:3, 14; Luke 7:19-20.

¹⁵⁸ Deuteronomy 18:15, 18; Isaiah 61, cf. 1 Qs 9:11, 4Q175. See also Crone, *Early Christian Prophecy*, 69-72; R. Steven Notley, 'The Kingdom of Heaven Forcefully Advances,' in *The Interpretation of Scripture in Early Judaism and Christianity*, ed. Craig A. Evans (London: T & T Clark, 2000), 286-290; Sukmin Cho, *Jesus as Prophet in the Fourth Gospel* (NTM 15; Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2006), 77-94. For a more sceptical view see Richard A. Horsley, "'Like One of the Prophets of Old": Two Types of Popular Prophets at the Time of Jesus', *CBQ*, 47:3 (1985), 437-443 who suggests that eschatological prophets were not expected, but non-eschatological prophets had already arrived. Horsley's work usefully points out some of the differences between streams of Judaism, but resorts to special pleading to conclude that eschatological hope in a prophet was unimportant. Thus in his view expectation of Elijah (pp. 440-441) does not mean there was expectation of an eschatological prophet; evidence from Qumran is dismissed as inconclusive (pp. 441-442); and evidence of prophetic hope amongst the Samaritans is taken to demonstrate prophetic hope was a fringe view (pp. 442-443) shunned by the mainstream.

¹⁵⁹ Matthew 16:14 (cf. Mark 6:15, 8:27); Luke 7:16; John 1:21, 6:14, 7:40. For more on the Johannine texts see Cho, *Jesus as Prophet in the Fourth Gospel*, 172-229.

¹⁶⁰ Acts 3:22, 7:37. See Max Turner, 'Jesus and The Spirit in Lucan Perspective', *TynBul*, 32:1 (1981), 26-28.

¹⁶¹ Notley, 'The Kingdom of Heaven Forcefully Advances,' 294.

¹⁶² Numbers 11:26-29, and Joel 2:28-32.

Spirit,¹⁶³ which many Jews concluded would bring a resurgence of prophecy.

In the New Testament, the eschatological age is often described in terms of the Spirit's presence or work: most notably by Luke in Acts 2, but also by Paul,¹⁶⁴ and John.¹⁶⁵ This present work of the Spirit is considered a fulfilment of several ancient prophecies regarding the eschatological age,¹⁶⁶ where the Spirit is accompanied by the gift of prophecy.¹⁶⁷ As we trace the line of fulfilment we see a clear progression: the coming of Jesus ushers in the Eschatological Age, this in turn means the eschatological presence of the Spirit, of which the inevitable consequence is prophecy. It is therefore no surprise that at Pentecost, the manifestation of prophecy causes Peter to declare that the Holy Spirit has been poured out 'in these last days' by Jesus the Christ. It should also come as no surprise to discover that it is to the old covenant scriptures that Peter turns to understand and explain that phenomenon.

As we turn to those same Scriptures, our task is to consider how those Scriptures may have formed a background to a New Testament theology of eschatological prophecy. We must begin with Joel 2:28-32,¹⁶⁸ given its crucial place in Acts 2. Two themes are apparent in that text – the hope of a pouring out of the Spirit of God, and the hope for a universal prophecy, which flows from it. Other old covenant scriptures also contribute to these important themes: Isaiah 32:15-18, 44:3-5, Ezekiel 39:29 and Zechariah 12:10 in the first case, and Numbers 11:26-29 and Isaiah 59:21 in the second. But the same old covenant hopes are also expressed in other ways, particularly with regard to the hope of a new Spirit given to God's people, in Ezekiel 36:25-28 and 37:14.¹⁶⁹ This hope is both an effect of the outpouring, and a cause of the prophecy. This gives us three themes to examine: the hope for universal prophethood, the hope of a pouring out of Yahweh's Spirit, and the hope of a new Spirit within Yahweh's people.

¹⁶³ Including Isaiah 32:15, 44:3-5, 59:21; Ezekiel 36:25-28, 37:14, 39:29.

¹⁶⁴ See Romans 7:6, 8:1-16; 1 Corinthians 2:6-16; Galatians 3:2-5, 5:5, etc.

¹⁶⁵ John 7:39, 14:26, 15:26, 16:13, 20:22.

¹⁶⁶ On the Spirit as eschatological fulfilment, see Fee, *God's Empowering Presence*, 803-826.

¹⁶⁷ Acts 2:17-18, 19:6; Ephesians 3:5.

¹⁶⁸ Joel 3:1-5 in the MT/LXX. I will use the versification which has been adopted by most English translations.

¹⁶⁹ For the similarities between Yahweh 'pouring' his Spirit, and 'giving' his Spirit, see Robson, *Word and Spirit in Ezekiel*, 258-262.

The hope for universal prophethood

Numbers 11:26-29

Now two men remained in the camp, one named Eldad, and the other named Medad, and the Spirit rested on them... and so they prophesied in the camp.... And Joshua... said, 'My lord Moses, stop them.' But Moses said to him, 'Are you jealous for my sake? Would that all the Lord's people were prophets, that the Lord would put his Spirit on them!'

This is the first passage in the old covenant scriptures — and the only one in the Pentateuch — that links prophecy with the reception of the Spirit. Later in the Hebrew Bible this link occurs frequently.¹⁷⁰ The link was widely recognised in intertestamental period, and remained important in the New Testament. Its importance probably stems from the significance of the context — it immediately precedes a passage which confirms Moses' place as the greatest of the prophets, and also gives the classic description of the prophetic mode of revelation.¹⁷¹

Few scholars of the Hebrew Bible see any great significance in the words,¹⁷² but its presence suggests that even at this earliest stage of Israelite tradition, there is an embryonic desire for universal eschatological prophethood, and an expectation that when the Spirit comes, prophecy will follow. There is some evidence to suggest that this passage may have influenced Judaism and the New Testament writers. The book of Numbers is quoted in the New Testament only in 2 Timothy 2:19,¹⁷³ but some commentators see allusions to Numbers 11 in Luke 9:49-50, 10:1 and parallels.¹⁷⁴ Others

¹⁷⁰ See 1 Samuel 10:5-13, 19:20-24, Joel 2:28, Nehemiah 9:30, Zechariah 7:12, and, in the negative, Ezekiel 13:3.

¹⁷¹ Numbers 12 (especially v6), cf. Deuteronomy 34:10. See John R. Levison, 'Prophecy in Ancient Israel: The Case of the Ecstatic Elders', *CBQ*, 65:4 (2003).

¹⁷² Most commentators view Moses' comments as more of a wistful remark than a prophecy, though see Hildebrandt, *An Old Testament Theology of the Spirit of God*, 205; Roger Cotton, 'The Pentecostal Significance of Numbers 11', *JPT*, 10 (2001), 3.

¹⁷³ Though see also John 19:36 and Matthew 5:33.

¹⁷⁴ Bovon says it is 'undeniable' that Numbers 11 'exercised a literary influence on Luke 9:49-50', François Bovon, *Luke 1: A Commentary on the Gospel of Luke 1:1-9:50*, trans. Christine M. Thomas (Hermeneia; Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 2002), 396. For a similar view see John L. Nolland, *Luke 9:21-18:34* (WBC 35b; Dallas: Word, 1993), 525; David W. Pao and Eckhard J. Schnabel, 'Luke,' in *CNTUOT*, ed. Gregory K. Beale and Don A. Carson (Leicester: Apollos, 2007), 313, 316, and also Ben Witherington, *The Gospel of Mark: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001), 271.

see Numbers 11 deliberately alluded to in 1 Corinthians 14:5.¹⁷⁵ There are also obvious parallels with Acts 2:2 (though the lack of verbal parallels means it is impossible to be sure Acts is dependent on Numbers). Stepping outside the New Testament, D. A. Garrett argues that Joel saw his prophecy as a fulfilment of Moses' prayer,¹⁷⁶ and Erika Moore that the LXX of Joel 2 was influenced by Numbers 11.¹⁷⁷ Within later Judaism, Midrash Rabbah claims, 'In the world to come all Israel will be made prophets' on the basis of Numbers 11.¹⁷⁸ C. K. Barrett points out that the Tanhuma makes a similar claim on two occasions, and believes that Numbers 11:29 was influential in this.¹⁷⁹ So whilst the evidence is not conclusive, it is at least possible that Numbers 11:26-29 formed part of the background to New Testament pneumatology, and possible that some New Testament writers saw their own experience partly as a fulfilment of Moses' hope.

Joel 2:28-32

And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, and your young men shall see visions. Even on the male and female servants in those days I will pour out my Spirit...¹⁸⁰

Peter's citation of Joel in Acts 2 forces it to the forefront of the minds of everyone who considers the influence the Hebrew Bible may have had on the New Testament's understanding of eschatological prophecy. Leslie Allen claims it 'gripped the minds of the early Church',¹⁸¹ yet despite this, the passage does not have the prominence that one might expect. For example, David Hill says that 'the passages in Malachi and Joel which promise the return of the prophet Elijah (Mal. 4.5-6) and of the prophetic spirit (Joel 2.28-

¹⁷⁵ Simon J. Kistemaker, *Exposition of the First Epistle to the Corinthians* (NTC; Grand Rapids: Baker, 1993), 481, Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 1097.

¹⁷⁶ Duane A. Garrett, *Hosea, Joel* (NAC; Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1997), 368.

¹⁷⁷ Erika Moore, 'Joel's Promise of the Spirit,' in *Presence, Power and Promise: The Role of the Spirit of God in the Old Testament*, ed. David G. Firth and Paul D. Wegner (Leicester: Apollos, 2011), 249 fn. 217.

¹⁷⁸ Num. R. 11:25. See Grudem, *The Gift of Prophecy in 1 Corinthians*, 46, and Blenkinsopp, 'Prophecy and Priesthood in Josephus', 261.

¹⁷⁹ C. K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, 2 vols. (ICC; Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1994), 137.

¹⁸⁰ Joel 2:28-32 in the LXX (3:1-5, MT).

¹⁸¹ Leslie C. Allen, *The Books of Joel, Obadiah, Jonah, and Micah* (NICOT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1976), 38.

29)... *should not be overlooked* in any study of the phenomenon of prophecy'.¹⁸² Yet Hill then promptly leaves both Malachi and Joel, returning to Joel only some 75 pages later to announce that it was 'an oracle to which late Judaism gave little importance'.¹⁸³ H. A. Guy even dismisses Joel's prophecy as 'a somewhat pathetic hope'.¹⁸⁴ It is no wonder that some scholars have found new covenant prophecy somewhat difficult to understand.

The prophecy of 2:28-32 is to happen 'afterward', which in the context clearly points to an eschatological setting.¹⁸⁵ The 'after' follows a time when Yahweh identifies with his people, and makes his presence known amongst them (2:26-27). Yahweh's presence will be accompanied by a pouring out of his Spirit, and his presence with his people will be demonstrated by the 'charismatic flow of a divine spirit of prophecy' through the nation.¹⁸⁶ (The 'afterward' does not function to separate verse 28 from the preceding verses, but rather to join the two pericopes in that the latter is a further development of the former.¹⁸⁷ The timing of the two events is of secondary importance — what matters is that both will occur.)

Despite all the blessings in chapter 2, the only gift directly associated with the Spirit in Joel is prophecy¹⁸⁸ — and what is particularly clear is the universality of the prophetic gift.¹⁸⁹ Dillard suggests that Joel's democratising statement should be read in contrast

¹⁸² Hill, *New Testament Prophecy*, 21-22, emphasis added.

¹⁸³ *idem*, 96.

¹⁸⁴ Guy, *New Testament Prophecy*, 25.

¹⁸⁵ Allen, *Joel, Obadiah, Jonah, and Micah*, 97; Douglas Stuart, *Hosea — Jonah* (WBC 31; Dallas: Word, 1987), 260; James L. Crenshaw, *Joel: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB; New York: Doubleday, 1995), 165. For a more detailed analysis see Harold Hosch, 'The Concept of Prophetic Time in the Book of Joel', *JETS*, 15:1 (1972), especially 37-38, and Walter C. Kaiser, 'The Promise of God and the Outpouring of the Holy Spirit: Joel 2:28-32 and Acts 2:16-21,' in *The Living and Active Word of God: Studies in Honor of Samuel J. Schultz*, ed. Morris A. Inch and Ronald F. Youngblood (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1983), 115-116.

¹⁸⁶ Allen, *Joel, Obadiah, Jonah, and Micah*, 98.

¹⁸⁷ In that sense, at least, VanGemeren is right: Willem A. VanGemeren, 'The Spirit of Restoration', *WTJ*, 50:1 (1988), 84-90. See also Moore, 'Joel's Promise of the Spirit,' 250.

¹⁸⁸ Moore, 'Joel's Promise of the Spirit,' 248-249.

¹⁸⁹ It has long been noted that this is the only example anywhere in the Hebrew Bible of a slave receiving the Spirit, C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament*, 10 vols. (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1866-91), 10:140. See also Wilhelm Rudolph, *Joel - Amos - Obadja - Jona* (KAT; Gütersloh: Gerd Mohn, 1971), 73.

with a Jewish prayer: 'I thank you God that I was not born a Gentile, a slave, or a woman'.¹⁹⁰ The Spirit will be poured out on 'all flesh', though the 'everyone who calls on the name of the LORD' and the 'those whom the LORD calls' qualify it.¹⁹¹ Allen captures brilliantly the intensity of Joel's words in the light of the other prophecies in the Hebrew Bible, 'The promise takes up the wistful longing of Moses... and stamps it as a definite part of Yahweh's program for the future. It is comparable with Jeremiah's great prophecy of the new covenant...'.¹⁹²

Joel emphasises not just the 'output' of these new Spirit-filled people (i.e. prophecy), but also the 'input' (i.e. dreams and visions). There are strong echoes from Numbers 11 in v28a,¹⁹³ which bring Numbers 12 to mind in v28b,¹⁹⁴ and the classical statement defining prophecy given in Numbers 12 finds an echo here: 'If there is a prophet among you, I the Lord make myself known to him in a vision; I speak with him in a dream'.¹⁹⁵ Joel's concern is not merely with the mechanics of inspiration, but rather that prophetic inspiration demonstrates the revelation of Yahweh to his people.¹⁹⁶ In these eschatological days, Yahweh makes himself known in a way that is reminiscent of Jeremiah's new covenant

¹⁹⁰ Raymond Bryan Dillard, 'Joel,' in *The Minor Prophets: An Exegetical and Expository Commentary*, ed. Thomas Edward McComiskey (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1992), 295. Although the prayer can only be positively dated from 150 A.D., many New Testament scholars believe it was known in the first-century. See, for example, F. F. Bruce, *The Epistle to the Galatians* (NIGTC; Exeter: Paternoster, 1982), 187.

¹⁹¹ See Hans Walter Wolff, *Joel and Amos*, trans. Waldermar Janzen, S. Dean McBride and Charles A. Muenchow (Hermeneia; Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1977), 67; VanGemeren, 'The Spirit of Restoration', 90-91 and Jörg Jeremias, *Die Propheten Joel, Obadja, Jona, Micha* (ATD 24,3; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2007), 41-42. Kaiser argues that Joel had the Gentiles in mind, as 'all flesh' can be a synonym for 'nations', Kaiser, 'The Promise of God and the Outpouring of the Holy Spirit: Joel 2:28-32 and Acts 2:16-21,' 119-120. Barton points out that in the old covenant scriptures 'all flesh' almost always means 'all people' (rather than 'all Israel'), and if it had that meaning here, it would be 'unparalleled... one of the most "universalistic" in the Old Testament', John Barton, *Joel and Obadiah* (OTL; Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001), 96.

¹⁹² Allen, *Joel, Obadiah, Jonah, and Micah*, 99.

¹⁹³ The echoes are conceptual rather than verbal — the Spirit being put/poured out, prophecy as an immediate consequence, and the desire/reality that this would be universal.

¹⁹⁴ Again the echoes are through common concepts, this time the link of prophecy with seeing visions and dreaming dreams.

¹⁹⁵ Palmer Robertson also sees the strong links between Joel 2 and Numbers 12 (though Robertson's concern is with the mode of inspiration). See Robertson, *The Final Word*, 12.

¹⁹⁶ Sylvain Romerowski, *Les Livres de Joël et D'Abdias* (Vaux-sur-Seine: Éditions de la Faculté de Théologie Évangélique, 1989), 140-141.

prophecy, 'they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, declares the LORD'.¹⁹⁷ As Carson puts it:

Joel's concern is not simply with a picky point — more people will prophesy some day — but with a massive, eschatological worldview. What was anticipated was an entirely new age, a new relationship between God and his people, a new covenant; and experientially this turns on the gift of the Spirit.¹⁹⁸

What will change is not merely the number of prophets, but the relationship between Yahweh and his people. What Douglas Stuart calls a 'direct encounter and interaction with a living God' was only possible for a small number of select individuals who received prophetic inspiration. In the eschaton that encounter will become possible for every individual.¹⁹⁹

There can be no question that Joel 2 was influential in the thinking of at least some of the New Testament writers. The experience of Pentecost was considered a fulfilment of these prophecies, and the eschatological age of which Joel wrote is affirmed by several New Testament writers as having come to pass. It seems likely that, if the New Testament writers believed they were living in the last days that Joel spoke of, then they would also believe that they should see this new relationship between God and his people, manifested through God's presence with all of his people in prophecy.

Isaiah 59:21

'And as for me, this is my covenant with them,' says the LORD: 'My Spirit that is upon you, and my words that I have put in your mouth, shall not depart out of your mouth, or out of the mouth of your offspring, or out of the mouth of your children's offspring,' says the Lord, 'from this time forth and forevermore.'

Although Isaiah does not mention prophecy directly in this verse, he can scarcely be referring to anything else.²⁰⁰ The phrase 'my words that I have put in your mouth' is deliberately reminiscent of Deuteronomy 18:18 ('I will raise up for them a prophet... And I

¹⁹⁷ Jeremiah 31:34, cf. *Idem*, 141.

¹⁹⁸ Carson, *Showing the Spirit*, 153. Hans Wolff makes the same point: 'It is the relationship to God, then, which has become completely new in the new creation through the pouring out of the spirit', Wolff, *Joel and Amos*, 66.

¹⁹⁹ Stuart, *Hosea — Jonah*, 230. See also Crenshaw, *Joel*, 165.

²⁰⁰ See Ma, *Until the Spirit Comes*, 133-134.

will put my words in his mouth'), and many other similar passages.²⁰¹ As Hildebrandt says, 'This prophecy points to the expectation of the realization of the prophetic word for all Israel'.²⁰² This means that other than Joel 2:28-32, Isaiah 59:21 provides perhaps the strongest link in the old covenant scriptures between the Spirit, prophecy and the eschatological age. Oswalt's comments on the verse are particularly apposite:

This is surely the covenant of the prophet, in which the Spirit of God comes on the people as a whole (cf. Num. 11:29) to empower them to speak his Word... It is hardly coincidental that the first result of the coming of the Holy Spirit on the church was that people from all the nations heard the gospel message.²⁰³

Scholars of the Hebrew Bible are often reluctant to draw too many lines between the two testaments, so it is perhaps surprising to find Oswalt referring so readily to Acts 2 here. But he is right — the themes present in Isaiah 59:21 are the very same themes that are prominent in Joel 2:28-32 (and therefore Acts 2): Spirit, prophecy, covenant and relationship, holiness, and the word of God.²⁰⁴ The integration of these themes (which come together at several places in the Hebrew Bible) serve as a reminder that new covenant prophecy is tightly integrated into Israelite eschatology. The strong suggestion made by Isaiah 59:21 is that the new covenant will be a time when all of God's people receive Yahweh's Spirit and speak Yahweh's words.

Paul cites directly from this verse in Romans 11:26-27 (although he omits the reference to the Spirit and replaces it with a reference to forgiveness of sin from Isaiah 27:9).²⁰⁵ This citation, the significance of Isaiah in the New Testament (particularly for Paul), and the possibilities for Christological interpretation of 59:20 makes it extremely likely that this

²⁰¹ e.g. Exodus 4:15-16; Numbers 22:38, 23:5, 16; 1 Kings 17:24; 2 Chronicles 36:21-22; Ezra 1:1; Isaiah 51:16; and Jeremiah 1:9.

²⁰² Hildebrandt, *An Old Testament Theology of the Spirit of God*, 94. See also Ma, *Until the Spirit Comes*, 134.

²⁰³ John N. Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah: Chapters 40-66* (NICOT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 531.

²⁰⁴ The sustained treatment of the Gentiles' place in the new covenant in the verses that follow ('Nations shall come to your light... the wealth of nations shall come to you... and shall bring good news, the praises of the Lord...') is another common theme which makes the links between this passage and Acts 2 even stronger.

²⁰⁵ However, Mark Seifrid suggests Paul's exposition 'echoes the very text of Isa. 59:21 that he omits', Mark A. Seifrid, 'Romans,' in *CNTUOT*, ed. Gregory K. Beale and Don A. Carson (Leicester: Apollos, 2007), 677. See also James D. G. Dunn, *Romans 9-16* (WBC 38b; Dallas: Word, 1988), 684. As Ma notes (Ma, *Until the Spirit Comes*, 135), the disappearance of prophets is a sign of punishment and judgement. It would be expected therefore that true forgiveness would be accompanied by a return of the prophetic word.

passage was known by, and influenced New Testament writers.

The hope of a pouring out of Yahweh's Spirit

Joel 2 is not the only passage that refers to a pouring out of Yahweh's Spirit, but Isaiah 32:15-18, 44:3-5, Ezekiel 39:29 and Zechariah 12:10 are equally relevant.²⁰⁶ Various words are used to mean 'pour': שָׁפַךְ (ἐκκέχω in the LXX) in Joel 2:28-29, Ezekiel 39:29 and Zechariah 12:10, עָרַה (ἐπέρχομαι) in Isaiah 32:15, and יָצַק (δίδομι) in Isaiah 44:3, but although the vocabulary is different, the essential meaning is the same.²⁰⁷

Despite there being only these five passages in the Hebrew Bible that speak of an outpouring of the Spirit, this promise of outpouring is 'a central facet of the OT hope',²⁰⁸ because the other eschatological blessings promised throughout the prophets cannot be brought about by any other means. Throughout early Judaism there was a view that in the age to come the Spirit of God would be poured out and all Israelites would prophesy,²⁰⁹ which suggests these few passages had significant influence within Judaism. And within the earliest Christianity that influence was significantly strengthened by their belief that the Spirit had actually come. Therefore despite none of these verses being cited in the New Testament, most commentators believe they provide an important background to New Testament pneumatology.²¹⁰

Isaiah 32:15-18

...until the Spirit is poured upon us from on high, and the wilderness becomes a fruitful field, and the fruitful field is deemed a forest. Then justice will dwell in the

²⁰⁶ Isaiah 29:10 speaks of 'a spirit of deep sleep' being poured out, but it seems clear that this has a different sense to the other passages mentioned (see Daniel I. Block, 'The View from the Top: The Holy Spirit in the Prophets,' in *Presence, Power and Promise: The Role of the Spirit of God in the Old Testament*, ed. David G. Firth and Paul D. Wegner (Leicester: Apollos, 2011), 202).

²⁰⁷ Daniel I. Block, 'The Prophet of the Spirit: The Use of רָחַם in the Book of Ezekiel', *JETS*, 32:1 (1989), 47.

²⁰⁸ John N. Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah: Chapters 1-39* (NICOT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1986), 587.

²⁰⁹ Aune, *Prophecy in Early Christianity*, 193.

²¹⁰ See, amongst many other examples, Darrell L. Bock, *Luke*, 2 vols. (BECNT; Grand Rapids: Baker, 1994-1996), 1:322; Hans Conzelmann, *Acts of the Apostles*, trans. James Limburg, A. Thomas Kraabel and Donald H. Juel (Hermeneia; Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1987 [1972]), 7, fn. 19; Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *The Acts of the Apostles: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB 31; New York: Doubleday, 1998), 259; Nolland, *Luke 1:1-9:20*, 152; I. Howard Marshall, 'Acts,' in *CNTUOT*, ed. Gregory K. Beale and Don A. Carson (Leicester: Apollos, 2007), 529; Pao and Schnabel, 'Luke,' 255, 260, 279, 402; David G. Peterson, *The Acts of the Apostles* (PNTC; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009), 106, 111; Moisés Silva, 'Galatians,' in *CNTUOT*, ed. Gregory K. Beale and Don A. Carson (Leicester: Apollos, 2007), 810.

wilderness... My people will abide in a peaceful habitation, in secure dwellings, and in quiet resting places.

When Wonsuk Ma began his monograph *Until the Spirit Comes*, he did so with a citation from Isaiah 32:15. Those in Isaiah's day, he argued, were sandwiched between two eras: a past era where the Spirit came on many leaders, and a future one where the Spirit would come in abundance on the whole community.²¹¹ For Ma, Isaiah 32:15 encapsulates the pneumatological promise in Isaiah, that the coming Spirit would be given in large measure, and that this would be 'a characteristic of the new age'.²¹² That said, the promise is still in an early form in 32:15.²¹³ Despite the association between the outpouring of the Spirit and prophecy in Judaism, there appears to be no thought of prophecy in this passage. Instead the focus is on the Spirit's work in moral and social renewal.²¹⁴ If prophecy is an important component in the outpouring of the Spirit, then Isaiah 32:15 must suggest that the Spirit's work is not one that is restricted *only* to prophecy.²¹⁵ It seems that those who will come to speak God's words, must learn to walk in God's ways, and the outpouring of Yahweh's Spirit will empower them to do both.²¹⁶

Isaiah 44:3-5

For I will pour water on the thirsty land, and streams on the dry ground; I will pour my Spirit upon your offspring, and my blessing on your descendants. They shall spring up among the grass like willows by flowing streams. This one will say, 'I am the Lord's,' another will call on the name of Jacob, and another will write on his hand, 'The Lord's,' and name himself by the name of Israel.

Remarkably Isaiah 44:3-5 is barely mentioned in any of the standard works on new covenant prophecy. Farnell alone refers to the passage, and then only in a footnote.²¹⁷ Like 32:15, there is no explicit reference to prophecy, but many of the themes that find

²¹¹ Ma, *Until the Spirit Comes*, 13.

²¹² *idem*, 80.

²¹³ Hans Wildberger, *Isaiah 28-39*, trans. Thomas H. Trapp (CC; Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2002 [1982]), 260.

²¹⁴ See Wright, *Knowing the Holy Spirit through the Old Testament*, 120-123.

²¹⁵ See Max Turner, 'The Spirit of Prophecy and the Ethical/Religious Life of the Christian Community,' in *Spirit and Renewal: Essays in Honor of J. Rodman Williams*, ed. Mark W. Wilson (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1994), 173-186.

²¹⁶ VanGemeren and Abernethy, 'The Spirit and the Future,' 333.

²¹⁷ Farnell, 'The New Testament Prophetic Gift', 123.

strong expression in Ezekiel, Jeremiah, and Joel, are found here in nascent form. Certainly, the passage is one of many in exilic and postexilic writings that speaks 'of the gift of the spirit to the whole people... as a permanent gift'.²¹⁸ And already, the promises of 32:15 are being expanded and made clearer, the blessings long-promised will come through the outpouring of the Spirit.²¹⁹

The blessings mean that Yahweh's people will identify with him in a new way, as the presence of the Spirit brings a renewed relationship with Yahweh, a common theme in eschatological hope.²²⁰ Whilst prophecy is not always mentioned in conjunction with this renewed relationship, there is often a link between a close relationship with Yahweh and prophecy. For example, in Numbers 12 the magnitude of Moses' prophetic gift is linked to the intensity of Yahweh's relationship with him, which is much more intimate than between Yahweh and his other prophets: 'With him I speak mouth to mouth... and he beholds the form of the LORD'.²²¹ This link can also be expressed in negative terms, so when the prophet's (or people's) relationship with Yahweh was impaired, Yahweh withdrew his prophetic voice.²²² After Saul's rejection by Yahweh, he laments, 'God has turned away from me and answers me no more, either by prophets or by dreams'.²²³ When Yahweh is close, prophecy is frequent and/or intense; when he is distant, prophecy is absent or impaired.

So whilst Isaiah 44:3-5 does not speak of prophecy, the events it does predict may well have been viewed as significantly increasing the likelihood of prophecy.

Ezekiel 39:29

And I will not hide my face anymore from them, when I pour out my Spirit upon the house of Israel, declares the Lord God.

A textual problem raises the question as to whether Ezekiel 39:29 would have contributed

²¹⁸ Friedrich Wilhelm Horn, 'Holy Spirit', *ABD*, 3:263.

²¹⁹ Robert A. Pyne, 'The "Seed," the Spirit, and the Blessing of Abraham', *BSac*, 152:606 (1995), 219. Likewise Oswalt describes this passage as promising 'the very fulfillment of the Abrahamic promises', Oswalt, *Isaiah 40-66*, 164.

²²⁰ See Ezekiel 36:28, 37:5-14, 39:29, Jeremiah 31:33-34, and perhaps Zechariah 12:10 and 13:9.

²²¹ Numbers 12:8.

²²² J. Lindblom, *Prophecy in Ancient Israel* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1962), 202.

²²³ 1 Samuel 28:16 (*cf.* 28:6), and 15:26. See also Lamentations 2:9, Psalm 74:9, Ezekiel 7:26, Amos 8:11-12, and Micah 3:7.

to the background of the New Testament in the same way as the verses already cited. The LXX has ἀνθ' οὗ ἐξέχεα τὸν θυμὸν μου ἐπὶ τὸν οἶκον Ἰσραὴλ ('I poured out my wrath'). We will not concern ourselves with the arguments as to whether the LXX or the MT better reflect the original text,²²⁴ our interest is restricted to how the verse was known to the New Testament writers, and without the evidence from a specific citation, it is impossible to know which form was known to them, though it is perhaps more likely they knew the LXX variant. That said, there is little suggestion that if this proved not to be true it would radically alter our overall perspective. It is therefore probably best to pass over this reference and say simply that if it was known in the LXX form it probably had no influence on New Testament pneumatology, and if it was known in the MT form to the New Testament writers, it would continue the link between a pouring out of Yahweh's Spirit and a permanent renewed relationship with him.²²⁵

Zechariah 12:10

And I will pour out on the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem a spirit of grace and pleas for mercy...

Zechariah 12:10 is cited in John 19:37, and likely alluded to in Matthew 24:30,²²⁶ Revelation 1:7,²²⁷ and possibly in Luke 21:27²²⁸ and Hebrews 10:28²²⁹. The verse was well-

²²⁴ Though see Robson, *Word and Spirit in Ezekiel*, 254-256.

²²⁵ Block calls it a 'sign of divine ownership', Zimmerli a 'final irrevocable union of Yahweh with his people'. Block, 'The Prophet of the Spirit', 46-48; Walther Zimmerli, *Ezekiel 2: A Commentary on the Book of the Prophet Ezekiel, Chapters 25-48*, trans. James D. Martin (Hermeneia; Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1983 [1969]), 321.

²²⁶ See, for example, Don A. Carson, 'Matthew,' in *EBC*, vol. 8, ed. Frank E. Gaebelin (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1984), 504-505; Ulrich Luz, *Matthew 21-28*, trans. James E. Crouch (Hermeneia; Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2005), 201; John L. Nolland, *The Gospel of Matthew* (NIGTC; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005), 984; R. T. France, *The Gospel of Matthew* (NICNT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007), 923-925.

²²⁷ See, for example, Jürgen Roloff, *The Revelation of John*, trans. John E. Alsup (CC; Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993), 27; David E. Aune, *Revelation 1-5* (WBC 52a; Dallas: Word, 1997), 52; Robert H. Mounce, *The Book of Revelation* (NICNT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998²), 50-51; Gregory K. Beale, *The Book of Revelation* (NIGTC; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), 196; Grant R. Osborne, *Revelation* (BECNT; Grand Rapids: Baker, 2002), 41, 68.

²²⁸ Unlike the previous verses cited, there is some disagreement as to whether there is a deliberate allusion here. Joel B. Green, *The Gospel of Luke* (NICNT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 815 is confident there is, and the possibility is also suggested by I. Howard Marshall, *The Gospel of Luke* (NIGTC; Carlisle: Paternoster Press, 1978), 776.

²²⁹ Suggested by William L. Lane, *Hebrews 9-13* (WBC 47b; Dallas: Word Books, 1991), 294. See also Harold W.

known to early Christians, and it is highly likely to have been known to New Testament writers. But whether Zechariah 12:10 would have helped formed the background to the New Testament pneumatology (as opposed to their Christology) is not certain. If we accept the allusion in Hebrews 10:28, that would provide some evidence, but that allusion is not clear. It is therefore impossible to say for certain that Zechariah 12:10 contributed to the background of New Testament pneumatology, although it may have had some influence, perhaps in reinforcing the importance of the 'poured out' theme in Isaiah, Ezekiel and Joel.

The hope of a new Spirit within Yahweh's people

Given the significance of Pentecost, and Peter's citation of Joel 2, prophecies that concern a universal prophethood and the pouring out of Yahweh's Spirit would seem the most likely to form part of the background to a New Testament view of eschatological prophecy. However, there are other themes in the old covenant scriptures that are strongly related, perhaps none more so than the theme of a new Spirit within Yahweh's people, particularly in Ezekiel.

Ezekiel 36:25-28

I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean from all your uncleannesses, and from all your idols I will cleanse you. And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules. You shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers, and you shall be my people, and I will be your God...

There is undoubtedly a strong similarity between Ezekiel 36:25-27 and Isaiah 44:3-5. Both have the same eschatological focus. Both speak of the Spirit, and of water. Both emphasise relationship,²³⁰ and covenant fulfilment.²³¹ Yet whilst Isaiah concentrates on the blessings of the eschatological age, Ezekiel is more concerned with the cleansing nature of the Spirit's work in producing holiness.²³² His message is that the work of the

Attridge, *Hebrews* (Hermeneia; Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1989), 295.

²³⁰ 'You shall be my people, and I will be your God', v28b.

²³¹ 'You shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers', v28a.

²³² See Robson, *Word and Spirit in Ezekiel*, 252. With regard to God's work in producing holiness Menzies claims that in Rabbinic literature 36:26 is 'almost always [cited] without reference to the activity of the Spirit'. Menzies, *Empowered for Witness*, 96. But this does not remove Ezekiel's clear reference to the

Spirit will cause the word of Yahweh to become more significant in the lives of the people,²³³ a theme which Jeremiah will expand in a very similar context.²³⁴ This can happen only through the re-making of their entire being:

...so that they marched to the music of the covenant terms that expressed Yahweh's nature and will. Only thus could the covenant relationship become a living actuality rather than a doctrinal truth.²³⁵

Again, there is no direct suggestion of prophecy in these verses, once more indicating that the eschatological Spirit would do more than bring prophecy. The focus here is on the Spirit's work in life-giving renewal, and of the presence of Yahweh and his identification with his people. But, as the strong parallels with Jeremiah 31 show,²³⁶ thoughts of prophecy are by no means absent.

It has been suggested that Ezekiel 36:25-28 is alluded to in John 3:5.²³⁷ Whether or not the text of John 3:5 does deliberately allude to Ezekiel, most commentators are agreed that Ezekiel 36:25-28 contains the clearest reference in the Hebrew Bible to what Jesus expected Nicodemus to understand (John 3:10). If Jesus expected Nicodemus to know of Ezekiel 36:25-28 before Pentecost, it seems that the New Testament writers would be expected to know about the passage after Pentecost. That being the case, it probably does form part of the background to their pneumatology, and would help to reinforce the view that Yahweh's Spirit was to be given to all believers in the eschaton.

Ezekiel 37:14

And I will put my Spirit within you, and you shall live, and I will place you in your own land. Then you shall know that I am the Lord; I have spoken, and I will do it, declares the Lord...²³⁸

Spirit in the very next verse.

²³³ 'I will... cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules', v27.

²³⁴ See Jeremiah 31:33, below. Such are the similarities between the two passages that Daniel Block takes the view that Ezekiel was influenced by Jeremiah 31. Daniel I. Block, *The Book of Ezekiel: Chapters 25-48* (NICOT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 356.

²³⁵ Leslie C. Allen, *Ezekiel 20-48* (WBC 29; Dallas: Word, 1990), 179.

²³⁶ See below.

²³⁷ Carson, *John*, 195; Andreas J. Köstenberger, *John* (BECNT; Grand Rapids: Baker, 2004), 434.

²³⁸ For another brief reflection on these passages from Ezekiel and the earlier ones in Isaiah, see John D. W. Watts, "'The Spirit' in the Prophets: Three Brief Studies," in *Spirit and Renewal: Essays in Honor of J. Rodman Williams*, ed. Mark W. Wilson (Journal of Pentecostal Theology Supplement 5; Sheffield:

Like Ezekiel 36:25-28, this verse emphasises the new life that the Spirit will bring. It seems unlikely that the reference contributed directly to the New Testament writers' understanding of eschatological prophecy, but may certainly have again reinforced the vital need for Yahweh's Spirit in the eschaton. There can be no doubt from Ezekiel 36-37 that the gift of Yahweh's Spirit would be absolutely necessary for all who would own the name of Yahweh.

The hope of a new covenant

The themes outlined above of Israel's eschatological hope bring to mind another key Old Testament promise, that of Jeremiah's new covenant (Jeremiah 31:31-34).²³⁹ The clear links between Jeremiah 31 and some of the verses already considered means that it would be helpful to also consider this passage before we begin to draw conclusions.

Jeremiah 31:31-34

Behold, the days are coming, declares the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah, not like the covenant that I made with their fathers on the day when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, my covenant that they broke, though I was their husband, declares the LORD. But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the LORD: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts. And I will be their God, and they shall be my people. And no longer shall each one teach his neighbor and each his brother, saying, 'Know the LORD,' for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, declares the LORD. For I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.

Again this passage draws together the now familiar themes: covenant and relationship, and the word of God. It is these themes, so bound up with both prophecy and Spirit, that justifies examining this text, when neither prophecy nor Spirit are directly mentioned.

Of particular importance in this passage is the concept of a 'new covenant'.²⁴⁰ This was important not only to the earliest Christians (who tended to emphasise the covenant's

Sheffield Academic Press, 1994), 84-87.

²³⁹ Blenkinsopp suggests that Ezekiel had Jeremiah's prophecy 'almost certainly in mind' in Ezekiel 36, Joseph Blenkinsopp, *Ezekiel* (Int; Louisville: John Knox Press, 1990), 169.

²⁴⁰ The phrase is used only here in the Hebrew Bible, but the concept appears elsewhere (e.g. Ezekiel 16:60-62).

newness),²⁴¹ but also to the Qumran community (who understood it more as a renewed covenant that they alone enjoyed), and the later rabbis (who saw it as a future return of the Jewish people to full observance of Yahweh's law).²⁴² Vermes suggests it 'served as the foundation of the Qumran's Community's basic beliefs',²⁴³ and the theme receives detailed treatment in the Damascus Document.²⁴⁴

Jeremiah 31:31-34 is vitally important to the writer to the Hebrews, who quotes all four verses in Hebrews 8:8-12 (the longest Old Testament quotation in the New Testament), and repeats vv33-34 in Hebrews 10:16-17. The concept of 'new covenant' receives a thorough exposition in this section, and the phrase is also used twice by Paul and once by Luke.²⁴⁵ It seems likely, therefore, that the passage had significant influence on New Testament theology.²⁴⁶

More than other writers of the Hebrew Bible, Jeremiah emphasises the discontinuity between the old covenant and the new, and this emphasis is taken up both by the author of Hebrews and by Paul. Jeremiah's emphasis is not simply in his unique naming of it as 'a new covenant', but in Yahweh's insistence that it is 'not like the covenant I made with their fathers', and 'no longer shall...'.²⁴⁷

Of particular interest to this study are the parallels with Ezekiel 36:27-28 that have already been identified.²⁴⁸ What Ezekiel ascribes to the Spirit, Jeremiah ascribes to the law:²⁴⁹

²⁴¹ See particularly Hebrews 8:13.

²⁴² Lawrence H. Schiffman, *Qumran and Jerusalem: Studies in the Dead Sea Scrolls and the History of Judaism* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010), 252-253. See also Lawrence H. Schiffman, 'The Concept of Covenant in the Qumran Scrolls and Rabbinic Literature,' in *The Idea of Biblical Interpretation: Essays in Honor of James L. Kugel*, ed. H. Najman and J. H. Newman (Journal for the Study of Judaism Supplement Series 83; Leiden: Brill, 2004), 257-278.

²⁴³ Geza Vermes, *The Dead Sea Scrolls in English* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995⁴), 43.

²⁴⁴ CD 6:19, 8:21, 20:12 (see also 1QpHab 2:3). For a detailed discussion of the theme see Philip R. Davies, *The Damascus Covenant: An Interpretation of the 'Damascus Document'* (JSOTSup 25; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1983), 173-197

²⁴⁵ 1 Corinthians 11:25, 2 Corinthians 3:6, Luke 22:20.

²⁴⁶ See Leslie C. Allen, *Jeremiah: A Commentary* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2008), 357-358, 360.

²⁴⁷ vv31, 32, 34.

²⁴⁸ See above, p. 86.

²⁴⁹ Block, *Ezekiel 25-48*, 356-357. See also Block, 'The Prophet of the Spirit', 39.

Jeremiah 31:33

I will put my law within them,
and I will write it on their hearts.

And I will be their God, and they shall
be my people.

Ezekiel 36:27-28

And I will put my Spirit within you,
and cause you to walk in my statutes
and be careful to obey my rules. You
shall dwell in the land that I gave to
your fathers,

and you shall be my people, and I will
be your God.

Yet it should not be thought that there are two alternative infusions, either the law or the Spirit.²⁵⁰ Isaiah 59:21 has already made clear the link between Spirit and word. Ezekiel's emphasis that the Spirit's 'infusion' will cause Yahweh's people to walk in his statutes, demonstrates his clear understanding that the effect of the Spirit is the same as Jeremiah's anticipation of the effect of the law. What Jeremiah and Ezekiel are both saying is that under the new covenant the law and the Spirit will not be external and transient, but internal and permanent.²⁵¹

Equally, the 'infusion' of the Spirit shows how the old system of temporary indwellings will also be eliminated. No longer will it be possible to say of those who prophesy, 'but they did not continue doing it'.²⁵² Together, the message from both Jeremiah and Ezekiel is that by his Spirit, Yahweh will renew the heart of his people.²⁵³ The new heart will become a suitable and permanent dwelling-place both for his Spirit, and his word.²⁵⁴

This is also emphasised in the repeated connections between the Spirit's work, and

²⁵⁰ James Dunn says the two texts demonstrate 'the law written in the heart (the enabling factor in Jeremiah) being precisely equivalent to the gift of the Spirit (the enabling factor in Ezekiel).' Dunn, *Baptism in the Holy Spirit*, 48.

²⁵¹ Pamela J. Scalise, Gerald L. Keown, and Thomas G. Smothers, *Jeremiah 26-52* (WBC 27; Dallas: Word, 1995), 133-134.

²⁵² Numbers 11:25.

²⁵³ Against Dunn, Menzies denies that the Spirit mediates the blessings of the new covenant, at least in Luke (Menzies, *Empowered for Witness*@30-32, 43-44, cf. Dunn, *Baptism in the Holy Spirit*, 38-54), and the later rabbis agreed (Menzies, *Empowered for Witness*@95-98). However, he does not argue that Luke understood Ezekiel and Jeremiah differently, but seems to be suggesting that because Luke's pneumatology is different from Jeremiah's and Ezekiel's, he was not influenced by these passages at all. Whether Menzies is right about this is not a necessary discussion at this stage; there is sufficient evidence elsewhere in the New Testament, particularly in Paul, to assert that the old covenant hope of a new Spirit within Yahweh's people influenced (some) New Testament writers.

²⁵⁴ Ezekiel 36:26-27, Jeremiah 31:33.

Yahweh's relationship with his people. Knowledge of Yahweh would no longer be mediated through specially endowed leaders, but all of Yahweh's covenant people would know God in a more immediate way,²⁵⁵ 'I will be their God, and they shall be my people... they shall all know me'. Despite the protestations of some,²⁵⁶ Jeremiah is referring to the knowledge 'of God' that is at stake, not merely knowledge 'about God', or about God's law.²⁵⁷ This knowledge is 'based on his disclosure... [and] grounded in his self-revelation'.²⁵⁸ As Newman and Stine make clear, this means 'a close relationship to the LORD', much more than 'knowing who someone is or being acquainted with someone'.²⁵⁹ Indeed, 'the Hebrew word translated *knew*... refers to the closest relationship possible'.²⁶⁰

The point, it seems, is that with the indwelling of the Spirit,²⁶¹ will come the internalisation of the law, and an intimate, immediate, personal knowledge of God. None of this will be mediated through teachers (which presumably means prophets, priests and scribes), instead 'human mediators will be eliminated'.²⁶² This theology appears to be behind some of Paul's concerns to 'democratise' gifts of the Spirit in 1 Corinthians 14 (though whether he derived it directly from Jeremiah 31 remains a moot point).

This may suggest that Jeremiah considers that prophecy (along with other forms of teaching) will be eliminated in the new covenant age. But that need not necessarily be the case. Jeremiah's message is that the privileges currently reserved for some (e.g. law, relationship, forgiveness), will be given to all. It is not that the few will be brought down

²⁵⁵ Carson, *Showing the Spirit*, 152.

²⁵⁶ William McKane refers to it as 'a prediction that teachers will not have to labour and sweat in order to transfer their knowledge to uncomprehending pupils... No more blockheads or memories like sieves... all will be sweetness and light'. William McKane, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Jeremiah*, 2 vols. (ICC; Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1986), 826. He is at least honest enough to admit that this 'may be unacceptably reductionist'. See also Walter Brueggemann, *A Commentary on Jeremiah: Exile and Homecoming* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 293-294.

²⁵⁷ cf. Jeremiah 9:24, 24:7.

²⁵⁸ Brevard S. Childs, *Old Testament Theology in a Canonical Context* (London: SCM, 1985), 51.

²⁵⁹ Barclay Moon Newman and Philip C. Stine, *A Handbook on Jeremiah* (UBSH; New York: United Bible Societies, 2003), 653.

²⁶⁰ idem, 28. See also William L. Holladay, *Jeremiah 1: A Commentary on the Book of the Prophet Jeremiah, Chapters 1-25* (Hermeneia; Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1986), 89.

²⁶¹ Ezekiel 36:27.

²⁶² Scalise, Keown, and Smothers, *Jeremiah 26-52*, 134.

to the level of the many, but the many will be lifted to the few.²⁶³ The reason that teaching is no longer required is that knowledge of God (that is, self-revelation from God), will become ubiquitous. Because this self-revelation is a major component in prophecy,²⁶⁴ rather than prophecy being eliminated in the new covenant age, Jeremiah is probably suggesting that the changed relationship between Yahweh and his people will lead all of them to share in the experience that in his day only prophets knew.

Summary

As we have examined the old covenant scriptures for a background to New Testament pneumatology, four 'hopes' have emerged: universal prophethood, a pouring out of Yahweh's Spirit, a new Spirit within Yahweh's people, and a new covenant. Each 'hope' is clear in the Hebrew Bible, each has strong links with prophecy, and each is built upon in the New Testament (or demonstrated to be fulfilled).

Of the four themes, the hope for a universal prophethood would seem the most relevant, but the three other hopes suggest that universal prophethood may not have been the ultimate goal, but rather was a consequence of something bigger. Prophecy is a sign of God's self-revelation, a mark that God's Spirit has been poured out, an indicator that the new covenant is upon God's people. If the Hebrew Bible has influenced New Testament pneumatology to any serious degree, then understanding prophecy in the light of this bigger hope will be vital to our progress.

The experiences of early Christians

The final factor we need to examine is the experiences of the earliest Christians. This is important because both Paul and Luke's testimony is that their theological understanding often lagged behind their personal experiences of the Spirit. They testify that they did not look for experiences to match their theology, but rather they looked for new theological explanations of their experiences. This is clear in all three of the most significant spiritual experiences in Acts: Pentecost, Paul's conversion, and the Spirit coming on the Gentiles. At Pentecost, first there was the experience (Acts 2:1-13), then the explanation (2:14-21). As Luke tells the story, the disciples knew something was going to happen (1:5), but only because Jesus had told them so, and apparently they had no

²⁶³ Scalise says there is 'an absence of a religiously privileged elite', *idem*, 135.

²⁶⁴ Numbers 12:6-8.

idea of the specifics. Likewise, Paul's own conversion and filling of the Holy Spirit was something he neither expected nor desired (9:1-2), yet God did it and his theology consequently radically changed. Finally, it seems no-one expected the conversion of the Gentiles to happen in the way it did (despite the old covenant predictions!), and it took Peter's experience in Cornelius' household (Acts 10) to convince him that his theology, and that of the rest of the Jerusalem church, also needed to be changed. At least according to Acts then, the experiences of the earliest Christians had a very significant influence on their pneumatology. With this, Paul's own testimony seems to agree – his personal encounter with God drives both his theology and his mission.²⁶⁵

Yet important though these three major experiences are, there is another experience that is at least as important – the normative experience of the Spirit that all 'ordinary' Christians had. This came as they received the gift of the Spirit on their repentance and profession of faith in Christ,²⁶⁶ and as subsequent experiences of the Spirit to which the New Testament frequently testifies.²⁶⁷ This normative day-to-day experience of the Spirit may well have been as significant an influence on New Testament pneumatology than the initiatory 'special' experiences referred to earlier.

It is therefore important that we briefly examine these four experiences as possible background to New Testament pneumatology. How did these experiences impact the writers of the New Testament? Our concern is at two levels: first, how did the event itself influence those writers that had first-hand experience of it? (e.g. what was the impact of Paul's conversion on his own ministry/theology?); and second, how did reports of the event influence writers that did not have first-hand experience? (e.g. what was the impact of Pentecost on Luke or Paul, who were not present?)

The disciples' experience of Pentecost

Luke's portrayal of the Spirit's outpouring at Pentecost is an important part of his narrative, but the lack of specific reference to it outside of Acts makes it hard to assess its historicity and significance more generally,²⁶⁸ so to properly discuss its potential

²⁶⁵ See, for example, Galatians 1:12-2:21, Romans 1:1, 1 Corinthians 9:1, 15:8-10, and Philippians 3:4-11.

²⁶⁶ Acts 2:38, 5:32, 8:15-19, 9:17, 10:45-47, 11:15, etc.

²⁶⁷ Acts 4:31, 7:55, 8:29, 8:39, 9:31, 10:19, etc.

²⁶⁸ I. Howard Marshall, 'The Significance of Pentecost', *SJT*, 30:4 (1977), 347.

significance for New Testament pneumatology we need to ask four questions: (1) What do we think happened? (2) How confident are we that our understanding of that experience is accurate? (3) If this experience was not one that the New Testament writers experienced first-hand, was it one they were likely to be aware of? (4) What theological conclusions might the New Testament writers have inferred from that experience?

What do we think happened? How confident are we?

It is possible that the events of Acts 2 were invented by Luke for some theological or other purpose, perhaps based loosely on a very different experience. This is argued, for example, by Haenchen,²⁶⁹ who explains the supposed theological purpose behind every detail of Luke's creation. Haenchen suggests in part that because the theological message is so clear, the facts must have been invented to fit. Yet not everyone sees it that way. Richard Pervo calls the narrative 'extraordinary', 'complicated' and so confused that 'a redactional solution almost leaps from the page'.²⁷⁰ I confess I find both these arguments difficult to understand. If the narrative is as confused as Pervo suggests, why did Luke not tidy it up if he was not constrained by the need for perfect historical accuracy? And if Haenchen is right that Luke carefully created the story to perfectly match his theological agenda, why did Luke not take care to ensure the story did not have the difficulties or problems Pervo identifies? However, if Luke's narrative is an accurate account of an extraordinary (and theologically very significant) event, one might expect exactly what Pervo and Haenchen identify: a slightly messy story that seems to shape all that comes after it.

Ultimately, either (a) the events happened roughly as Luke describes them and they significantly influenced him, (b) something else happened, which we now cannot recover, which somewhat influenced him, or (c) nothing significant happened so there was nothing to influence him.

Of these three options (c) seems most unlikely, given the constant affirmation throughout the New Testament that the Spirit has come, and the unquestioned impact

²⁶⁹ Ernst Haenchen, *The Acts of the Apostles: A Commentary*, trans. Bernard Noble and Gerard Shinn (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1971), 172-175, particularly 173.

²⁷⁰ Pervo, *Acts*, 58-60.

Christianity had in a very short space of time. *Something* surely happened.²⁷¹

Option (b) is relatively popular.²⁷² Yet it should not be forgotten that the events of which Luke writes, including Pentecost, 'are represented by Luke as historical events'.²⁷³ A key feature of his narrative is that the theology of Acts is driven by the unfolding events, not the other way around. He shows the apostles frequently *surprised* by the direction which eschatological fulfilment was taking. For example, Luke prefaces the story of Pentecost with the disciples' question as to when the kingdom was to be restored to Israel (Acts 1:6). As Calvin has often been quoted through the centuries, 'There are as many errors in this question as words'.²⁷⁴ So far as Luke is concerned, what little the disciples were expecting was wrong. They did not know what was going to happen. They did not shape events to fit their theology, instead their theology was shaped by the events. In Luke's portrayal Acts is not driven by the theological agenda of the apostles, but by God himself.²⁷⁵ The events shape the apostles' theology, rather than theology determining how events should be constructed or invented. Luke wants us to believe that the apostles did not decide to include the Gentiles in the church — God did.²⁷⁶ He tells us that Paul did not simply decide to convert to Christianity and receive the Holy Spirit — God intervened and literally stopped him in his tracks. He says that the only one who determined that the earliest Christians would prophesy and speak in tongues and receive the outpouring of the Spirit was God himself. Do Paul's letters read as though they were written by a man converted in the way that Luke suggests? Almost everyone thinks so. Does the mixed Jewish/Gentile make-up of the earliest church, and the removal of the requirement to keep the Jewish law suggest something powerful happened to convince the Jewish Christian leaders that God had accepted the Gentiles in Christ? Common sense

²⁷¹ Schweizer et al., *TDNT*, 6:410; Jacob Jervell, *Die Apostelgeschichte* (KEK 17; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1998), 137-138.

²⁷² For a typical example see A. J. M. Wedderburn, 'Traditions and Redaction in Acts 2.1-13', *JSNT*, 17:55 (1995), 27-54.

²⁷³ Barrett, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 2:liv.

²⁷⁴ John Calvin, *Commentary Upon the Acts of the Apostles*, trans. Christopher Fetherstone and Henry Beveridge, 2 vols. (Edinburgh: Calvin Translation Society, 1844), 1:43.

²⁷⁵ Witherington, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 21.

²⁷⁶ Huub van de Sandt misunderstands Luke's intention here and argues that Luke found it necessary to 'correct' Joel. Huub van de Sandt, 'The Fate of the Gentiles in Joel and Acts 2: An Intertextual Study', *ETL*, 66:1 (1990), 68-69.

says it did. And if so, does not that suggest that Luke may well be right when he claims that something significant happened at Pentecost? I suggest he may, for the following reasons:

1. There is no clear evidence from other early sources to suggest that the account is inaccurate.
2. Luke presents his entire work as shaped by the events he relates. His work claims that God, not a theological agenda, drives his narrative. If we dismiss that claim, we dismiss a central pillar of Luke's narrative structure.
3. There is independent testimony that there was an expectation of the Spirit's coming after Jesus' departure (John 7:39, 14:15ff).²⁷⁷
4. Alternative proposals as to what might have happened are unconvincing, and none command a consensus.²⁷⁸

I think, therefore, that a good case can be made that Luke's account is based on an historical event, that his depiction of that event is accurate, and his understanding of this event formed part of the background to his pneumatology. I intend to proceed on that basis.

So what actually happened at Pentecost? Luke's account in Acts 2 tells us that soon after the death, resurrection and ascension of Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit was poured out on the disciples of Jesus. As a result, a noise like a wind was heard, tongues like fire were seen on each disciple, they were all filled with the Spirit, and began to speak in other languages. Luke does not claim to have been present on the occasion, so presumably heard about the experience (directly or indirectly) from an eye witness.

There can be no doubt that Witherington is right when he claims that Pentecost is 'clearly a critical event which sets in motion all that follows. Without the coming of the Spirit there would be no prophecy, no preaching, no mission, no conversions, no worldwide Christian movement'.²⁷⁹ If Pentecost happened in the way that Luke claims, it would certainly have significantly shaped his pneumatological perspective.

²⁷⁷ Witherington, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 129, fn. 125.

²⁷⁸ As Dunn says, we are 'wholly at the mercy of Luke', Dunn, *Jesus and the Spirit*, 136.

²⁷⁹ Witherington, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 129.

Were other New Testament writers aware of Pentecost?

Did the influence of Pentecost spread to other New Testament writers? If Luke's account is accurate, Paul was very aware of the events of Pentecost, because he played a key role in the Council convened to discuss the place of the Gentiles in the church (Acts 15). The decision of the Council hinged on the fact that the Spirit was given to the Gentiles in the same way as it was given to the Jews at Pentecost (15:8), so Luke's account only makes sense if Paul (and the others) knew of both what happened to Cornelius at Caesarea, and what happened to the disciples at Pentecost.

But does Paul's own testimony support this conclusion? There is little direct evidence, but let us gather together what we can. Paul's first letter to the Corinthians predates Luke's narrative, but it does not predate the event itself, and there Paul writes that 'I will stay in Ephesus until Pentecost'.²⁸⁰ This presumes that the congregation of Corinth (of which a significant number were Gentiles) was aware of the date of this Jewish festival, even though it was less important in the Jewish calendar than the other annual feasts.²⁸¹ Could Paul's assumption that the Gentiles knew the date of this feast be a hint that Pentecost held more significance for Gentile Christians than is sometimes assumed?²⁸²

With regard to other New Testament writers, there is even less evidence. If Peter did contribute to the New Testament, and Luke's account is accurate, then clearly Pentecost was a very significant influence on him (Acts 2, 10-11 and 15), but there is no explicit verification of that within the letters sometimes attributed to him.²⁸³ The writer of the addition to Mark seems to have been influenced by Pentecost, probably via Acts,²⁸⁴ but there is little other evidence in the New Testament.²⁸⁵

²⁸⁰ 1 Corinthians 16:8. Luke also notes that on another occasion Paul wishes to be in Jerusalem for Pentecost (Acts 20:16).

²⁸¹ Eduard Lohse, 'πεντηκοστή', *TDNT*, 6:46.

²⁸² Fee, *God's Empowering Presence*, 820, argues that it is.

²⁸³ Although both 1 & 2 Peter have a reference to the Holy Spirit and prophecy/preaching which are consistent with Luke's portrayal (1 Peter 1:12, 2 Peter 1:21).

²⁸⁴ E.g. Dunn, *Jesus and the Spirit*, 246. See Mark 16:17 for a parallel with Pentecost. But 16:16-18 all have strong parallels in Acts, which makes it likely the addition is dependent on Acts, rather than another source.

²⁸⁵ For a brief discussion as to why Pentecost seems not to have been prominent in the later New Testament, see below p. 98.

This leaves us with the conclusion that it is highly likely that the Pentecost event strongly influenced Luke. It is possible that it had some influence on Paul, but there is little evidence to tell us whether it influenced other New Testament writers.

What theological conclusions might be drawn from the event?

The key theological conclusion that New Testament writers might be expected to draw from Pentecost is the one that Peter himself drew on the day in question – that the new covenant age had arrived, and a new era of prophecy empowered by the Spirit had come. As the disciples spoke in Gentile languages, one might also expect them to conclude that the gospel will need to be preached to the Gentiles, though the strong implication of Acts is that this did not become apparent to them until much later. Nevertheless, after the inclusion of the Gentiles into the church it is quite likely that the early Christians reflected again on Pentecost, and its influence in relation to proclamation of the gospel in Gentile languages, though delayed, may have been significant.

We could say that Pentecost ‘proved’ that the new covenant era promised in the old covenant scriptures had now arrived. This is likely to have encouraged the New Testament writers to search the scriptures to understand those promises better, something they had already begun in reference to Jesus (Luke 24:27, *cf.* Acts 1:16), but could also now do in reference to the Spirit and other promises relating to the new covenant. The Pentecost experience was crucial in demonstrating that hope had turned into reality, and its initial significance in this regard cannot be underestimated. Pentecost – even more than the resurrection – gave Christianity its eschatological dimension.

However, Pentecost was not the only experience that had this effect. The ‘every day’ work of the Spirit in adding converts to the church,²⁸⁶ and the continuous indwelling of the Spirit in each believer,²⁸⁷ also affirmed Christianity’s eschatological dimension, and did so in a way which was much closer to home. As the church grew, Pentecost seems to have been of primary importance only to those particularly interested in its earliest days. What happened at Pentecost was being repeated across the Graeco-Roman world – they did not need to keep remembering what the Spirit *had done*, they could see what the

²⁸⁶ Acts 2:47, 5:14, 16:5.

²⁸⁷ Romans 8:9-11, 1 Corinthians 3:16, 2 Corinthians 6:16, Ephesians 2:22, 2 Timothy 1:14, James 4:5.

Spirit *was doing*. This is in obvious contrast to the events of Calvary, which remained of critical importance throughout the New Testament, and kept being remembered.²⁸⁸ This makes sense when we remember that the life, death and resurrection of Jesus changed history and would never be repeated — ‘it is finished’.²⁸⁹ In contrast to Jesus, the Spirit did not return to heaven having done his work. The work begun at Pentecost is *not* finished. Pentecost demonstrated that the Spirit had arrived, subsequent experiences would show that the Spirit was here to stay. Just as the birth of Jesus receives relatively little attention in the New Testament compared to Jesus’ death and resurrection, so it seems that reflection on subsequent experiences of the Spirit largely eclipses discussion on the initial experience.

Paul’s experience of his own conversion

Paul and Luke both saw Paul’s conversion experience²⁹⁰ as an encounter with the risen Jesus,²⁹¹ but Gordon Fee and Finny Philip suggest that Paul also saw his conversion as an experience of the Spirit,²⁹² even though Paul never explicitly says so. Their main argument is that Paul saw conversion in a general sense as the work of the Spirit, and he must therefore have seen his own conversion in the same light.²⁹³ Moreover, in several ‘confessional’ passages,²⁹⁴ Paul uses ‘we/us’ language to refer to the Spirit’s work in conversion, demonstrating that Paul is including himself with those who have received

²⁸⁸ Cf. 1 Corinthians 11:23-26.

²⁸⁹ John 19:30, cf. 17:4.

²⁹⁰ Not all scholars accept that Paul was in fact converted, for example Krister Stendahl, ‘Call Rather Than Conversion,’ in *Paul among the Jews and Gentiles and Other Essays* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1976), 7-23. But Stendahl both underplays the change in Paul, and gives ‘conversion’ a narrower definition than it warrants. See Peter T. O’Brien, ‘Was Paul Converted?’, in *The Paradoxes of Paul*, ed. Don A. Carson, Peter T. O’Brien and Mark A. Seifrid (Justification and Variegated Nomism 2; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2004), 361-391.

²⁹¹ Acts 9:5, 26:15, 1 Corinthians 9:1, 15:8.

²⁹² Gordon D. Fee, ‘Paul’s Conversion as Key to His Understanding of the Spirit,’ in *The Road from Damascus: The Impact of Paul’s Conversion on His Life, Thought, and Ministry*, ed. Richard N. Longenecker (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 166; Philip, *The Origins of Pauline Pneumatology*, 166.

²⁹³ Fee, ‘Paul’s Conversion as Key to His Understanding of the Spirit,’ 172-177, cf. Max Turner, ‘The Significance of Spirit-Endowment for Paul’, *VE*, 9 (1975), 56-69; James D. G. Dunn, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1998), 419-425.

²⁹⁴ E.g. Romans 5:1-5, 8:15-16; 2 Corinthians 1:21-22; Galatians 4:4-7. See Fee, ‘Paul’s Conversion as Key to His Understanding of the Spirit,’ 177-181.

the Spirit, the distinguishing characteristic of all Christians.

However, although Paul certainly saw himself as one who had received the Spirit, it is not absolutely clear from the evidence that Paul believed this happened at the moment of his conversion, and Menzies therefore argues that Luke suggests Paul received the Spirit a few days *after* his conversion.²⁹⁵ I have noted previously that I am not convinced by Menzies' argument that Luke viewed the Spirit only as a *donum superadditum*,²⁹⁶ but in this context, he may perhaps be right. Paul had no concept of a Christian *without* the Spirit,²⁹⁷ but he was very aware his encounter with the risen Jesus was not normative.²⁹⁸ With that in mind, it is just possible that Paul's encounter with the risen Jesus on the Damascus road should not be viewed as the moment of Paul's 'conversion', but rather as an experience that paralleled the other apostles' encounters with the risen Jesus. If so, then perhaps Paul's receiving of the Spirit at the hands of Ananias could be viewed as a parallel to the apostles' receiving of the Spirit at Pentecost. To add a further 'if', if this is so, then what we often call Paul's conversion should be viewed as an elongated event that began on the Damascus road with a realisation that Jesus was the Messiah, and ended on Straight Street with the reception of the Spirit.

Luke and Paul have different perspectives when it comes to Paul's possession of the Spirit. The suggestion in Acts is that Paul received the Spirit three days after seeing the risen Jesus.²⁹⁹ Paul's own testimony is simply that like all believers he has the Spirit. But the two descriptions are not incompatible — Luke is emphasising *how* Paul was changed, Paul is emphasising *that* he was changed.

The magnitude and the permanence of this change may well have influenced Paul's pneumatology, helping him to understand the power of the Spirit to change lives. Nevertheless, there is no direct evidence to confirm that Paul's own experience of conversion formed a background to his pneumatology. Paul draws back from applying to others lessons from his own conversion, probably because he recognised the unusual nature of his own coming to Christ. Therefore I am not convinced that the *distinctives* of

²⁹⁵ Acts 9:17. See Menzies, *Empowered for Witness*, 213-215.

²⁹⁶ See above, p. 38.

²⁹⁷ E.g. 1 Corinthians 12:13; Galatians 3:1-5, 4:6-7; 1 Thessalonians 1:4-6.

²⁹⁸ 1 Corinthians 9:1, Galatians 1:11-12.

²⁹⁹ Acts 9:9, 17-18.

Paul's conversion formed a background to his pneumatology. Nonetheless, as Paul came to experience the Spirit in the conversion of other believers, he will no doubt have seen an overlap between the Spirit's work in his own life and in that of other believers, and these experiences of what the Spirit did in the lives of others may well have both helped him to understand the nature of the Spirit's work in his own life, and shaped his own pneumatology.

The church's experience of Gentile conversion

According to Luke, the conversion of the Gentiles significantly influenced the pneumatology of the earliest leaders of the church. Prior to the conversion of Cornelius in Acts 10 (recounted in Acts 11 and 15), few if any of those leaders were expecting the Spirit to come to uncircumcised Gentiles.

But the conversion of Cornelius' household changed all that, and Luke underlines that it was the coming of the Spirit that made the Jews realise that their theology needed to change. In Acts 10, Peter received a vision and heard testimony of an angelic visitation, which led him to believe — apparently for the first time — that the gospel ought to be preached to Gentiles (10:34-35). But it is only after the Spirit fell on them that Peter realised that God intended to give them the same gift he had earlier given the disciples (11:15-17). Likewise, although the vision and angelic visitation were also important in the retelling of the story to the other believers, it seems that the Spirit's coming was the clinching argument (11:18). So when James sums up his judgement, the work of the Spirit is to the fore (11:14), with the important addition that 'with this the words of the prophets agree' (11:15). The order is important — the coming of the Spirit forced a re-evaluation of the old covenant scriptures. The strong implication (which matches the earlier evidence) is that until the Spirit actually fell on Cornelius' household, James, Peter and the others had not realised the old covenant scriptures spoke of the conversion of uncircumcised Gentiles. The significance of this cannot be understated, given the vital importance of circumcision to the Mosaic law. The giving of the Spirit is so important, by the time the council meet in Acts 15, the summary emphasises only the giving of the Spirit (15:8-9), the vision and the angelic visitation are firmly in the background.

Paul's own defence of Gentile conversion has three components. First, like Luke, there is certainly an experiential component: that is, Paul is convinced that his mission is a mission to the Gentiles, which according to Luke is a direct consequence of his Damascus

road experience.³⁰⁰ If God has called him to preach to the Gentiles, then that is demonstration enough that God wants the Gentiles saved.

The second component in Paul's defence is the old covenant scriptures. If the first component was similar to Luke's, the second is similar to James' (Acts 11:15). We find this argument particularly in Romans 15:8-13, where Paul cites five old covenant scriptures that each refer to the Gentiles' relationship with God, and it crops up again in Romans 4:17 and Galatians 3:8.

But it is the third component that is perhaps the most important. Following his conversion Paul changed his mind about many things — and one of the most fundamental (E. P. Sanders' arguments notwithstanding) was the issue of how one was saved. This shift in Paul's soteriology, coupled with his new understanding of the old covenant scriptures did not merely permit Gentile inclusion in the covenant, but demanded it. We find this argument in several places, but principally in Romans 3-4 and 9-11. The argument there is that salvation is found through faith rather through circumcision nor outward adherence to the covenant. That must mean that God 'will justify the circumcised by faith and the uncircumcised by faith' (Romans 3:30).

Luke's evidence suggests that it was the work of the Spirit that convinced the earliest Christians that Gentiles were included in the covenant, but Paul's testimony implies it was something else that swayed him. We need not see these different perspectives in competition with one another. It is simply a helpful reminder that different people value and respond positively to different things. It would be foolish to think that all New Testament writers were swayed by the same arguments given in the same way. As we might expect given their reputations as historians and theologians respectively, Luke seems to more value eyewitness accounts, whereas Paul seems to more value the old covenant scriptures and his own theology.

How does this help us with our question of the background to New Testament pneumatology? It suggests that for many, the eyewitness accounts of Gentile inclusion into the church, together with the apostolic *imprimatur* may have been sufficient. For them, their pneumatology was probably significantly shaped by the work of the Spirit in bringing Gentiles into the church. But for others, additional arguments were both

³⁰⁰ Romans 1:13; Galatians 1:16, 2:2, 8-9; Ephesians 3:1, 8; 1 Thessalonians 2:16; 1 Timothy 2:7; 2 Timothy 4:17; *cf.* Acts 9:15; 13:47; 22:21; 26:17.

necessary and available. For Paul, in particular, our examination of the arguments he gives for Gentile inclusion suggests that his own pneumatology flowed from his soteriology and his understanding of the old covenant scriptures. His firm belief that all — Jew and Gentile — are saved by faith, is likely to have led him to the conclusion that both Jew and Gentile would receive the Spirit in the same way, regardless of what happened at Caesarea (indeed, there is little suggestion even in Acts that Paul was either swayed or surprised by those events).

The church's daily experience of the Spirit's presence

The emphasis so far on initiatory experiences should not disguise the fact that no Christian's experience of the Spirit ended at Pentecost or at their conversion. Pentecost was the start of something new, something that would endure. If the Spirit was a grammatical tense, it would be the present continuous, not the perfect.

Romans 8 perhaps most clearly expresses the vital importance of the Spirit for every-day Christian existence, although other references to the ongoing work of the Spirit abound.³⁰¹ This demonstrates that the Spirit was far more than a momentary gift given at conversion, and far more than just the Spirit of prophecy.

There are an enormous number of references to the ongoing work of the Spirit, and many of these are written to remind the readers of something they already know. This suggests that New Testament writers were confident that their claim that the Spirit is still at work even after Pentecost would correspond with their readers' own experience. The command is never 'seek the Spirit', but 'keep in step with the Spirit'.³⁰² The presence of the Spirit, not just a remembrance of the Spirit, appears to have been something that every Christian was expected to know.

So what impact did these experiences have on the New Testament writers' pneumatology? It is hard to be dogmatic. No writer explicitly states, 'I have these views about the Spirit for these reasons'. But if the normative experience of every believer was to have some sense of the Spirit's ongoing presence, one can imagine that at the very least it reinforced the idea that the Christians were living in the eschatological age of the

³⁰¹ As just a small sample see Romans 15:13-19; 1 Corinthians 2:12-14, 3:16, 6:19; 2 Corinthians 1:22, 5:5; Galatians 3:3-5, etc.

³⁰² See Galatians 5:16-25.

Spirit. It may also have reinforced the idea that in the new covenant both Jews and Gentiles share the same blessings in the same way.

So whilst the church's daily experience of the Spirit may not have added anything new to the pneumatological background of the New Testament writers, it is likely to have reinforced some of the other things we have already discussed, and likely to have helped pneumatology become one of the more important New Testament topics.

Summary: The experiences of early Christians

We have examined four different experiences of the earliest Christians with a view to better understanding how those experiences might have shaped New Testament pneumatology. Whilst some of our conclusions have needed to be somewhat hesitant, it is clear that the presence and work of the Spirit was not just a theoretical concept, but that the earliest Christians lived by the Spirit.

In that sense their experience of the Spirit underpinned their understanding of his work and shaped their theology, particularly in the earliest days of the new eschatological age. In particular, the presence of the Spirit 'proved' that the church was in the eschatological age, and probably was a decisive factor in helping them to make sense of the 'now/not yet' dilemma that they faced. Moreover, the conclusion that they were living in the eschatological age allowed them to appropriate many old covenant scriptures to their own situation, and the transforming power of the Spirit's presence was therefore greatly amplified by the increased expectation and understanding that the old covenant scriptures brought.

Conclusion: The context of New Testament pneumatology

In this chapter we have examined four different contexts which we hoped would help us better understand the background to New Testament pneumatology, and of these, only the Graeco-Roman context had a minimal impact. Each of the others: intertestamental Judaism, the old covenant scriptures and the experiences of the early Christians seem to have contributed significantly towards New Testament pneumatology.

Our study of intertestamental Judaism identified a variety of Jewish beliefs in prophecy and the Spirit, and concluded that a reasonable proportion of the Jewish readers of the

New Testament would have been open to a belief in contemporary prophecy, and perhaps keen to see prophecy in action. For many Jews, prophecy was part of their eschatological hope. Yet we also identified some significant differences between Christian and other Jewish views of the Spirit, the most important of which was that Christianity was far more interested in the work of the Spirit and prophecy than any other form of Judaism, and that Christianity was the only form of Judaism that believed the eschatological age of the Spirit had come.

When we turned our attention to the old covenant scriptures, we discovered that the Hebrew Bible contained four 'hopes' for that eschatological age: universal prophethood, a pouring out of Yahweh's Spirit, a new Spirit within Yahweh's people, and a new covenant. Each is expanded on in the New Testament, or demonstrated to be fulfilled. These hopes suggest that the presence of prophecy in the eschatological age was a consequence of something bigger —a sign of God's self-revelation, a mark that God's Spirit has been poured out, an indicator that the new covenant is upon God's people.

The final step was to examine the experiences of the earliest Christians, and we found that the themes prophesied about in the old covenant scriptures became reality in the lives of those men and women. These experiences not only demonstrated the presence of the eschatological age, but also accelerated the disciples understanding of what that meant in practice, particularly with regard to the inclusion of Gentiles into the covenant.

This vital background information is necessary to understand New Testament pneumatology, and this chapter goes a long way in ensuring we are able to fulfil part of the third aim of the study, to develop a New Testament theology or theologies of prophecy which is informed by and consistent with the writers' historical and theological context.

The challenge now will be to use this context to help in our detailed study of the New Testament itself, which will be the goal of the rest of the thesis.

3) New Covenant Prophecy in the Gospels

We have seen that the Old Testament speaks of an eschatological future when prophecy will be universal, but the New Testament writers link the coming of that age with Pentecost, not Bethlehem.¹ Therefore Crone rightly introduces his examination of John the Baptist with the words, ‘we have not yet begun the discussion of early *Christian* prophecy...’.²

Nevertheless, a number of the monographs have helpful chapters on prophecy in the gospels. Hill, Crane and Aune each spend a chapter or two on the prophethood of Jesus,³ and Crone, Farnell and Guy devote large sections to both Jesus and John the Baptist — in Guy’s case almost a third of his book.⁴ But it is not my intention to directly examine Jesus’ role as a prophet. It can hardly be suggested that Jesus is presented in the gospels as a *typical* prophet, still less a typical *new covenant* prophet. And even if he was, it would likely prove impossible to determine which of his activities was due to his role as prophet, and which to his other offices. The main intention in this chapter is to examine what the gospel writers say about new covenant prophecy in a general sense, rather than only focusing on one or two individuals.

A simple glance at the four gospels enables the reader to see that the pneumatology of John and Luke stands out above that of Matthew and particularly of Mark. In both cases their distinct concerns are apparent in sections that are unique to their gospel: John’s in the farewell discourses (and the Paraclete sayings in particular), Luke’s in the birth

¹ See below, pp. 135f.

² Crone, *Early Christian Prophecy*, 152, emphasis original.

³ Hill, *New Testament Prophecy*, 48-69; Crane, ‘The Gift of Prophecy in the New Testament’, 40-64; Aune, *Prophecy in Early Christianity*, 153-188. See also Paul E. Davies, ‘Jesus and the Role of the Prophet’, *JBL*, 64:2 (1945); C. K. Barrett, *The Holy Spirit and the Gospel Tradition* (London: SPCK, 1966), 94-99; Ellis, ‘Prophecy in the New Testament Church — and Today,’ 47-48.

⁴ Crone, *Early Christian Prophecy*, 152-186; Farnell, ‘The New Testament Prophetic Gift’, 129-180; Guy, *New Testament Prophecy*, 28-89.

narratives. For that reason, a study of new covenant prophecy in the gospels means an examination of the distinctive contributions of each writer, as well as the concepts they all share.

It is also important that this study remains a study of *prophecy*. There are many related but distracting themes, such as baptism of the Spirit, spiritual re-birth, and the relationship between Christ and the Spirit, and even the baptism of Jesus,⁵ which will regretfully and necessarily be laid aside (as will the longer ending of Mark).⁶ So in the words of Craig Keener as he embarked upon a similar study:

It is not a survey of all (or even most) relevant texts, which would unnecessarily belabor my point; I prefer working exegetically with some samples in detail rather than merely surveying broad themes by tracing every example.⁷

The primary purpose of this chapter is to begin to fulfil the first three aims of the thesis, that is to undertake an exegesis of the relevant New Testament texts, but do so in a way that is sympathetic to their historical, cultural and theological contexts, and which allows us to analyse the similarities and/or differences between the views of prophecy expressed by different New Testament writers. We will therefore work through the relevant texts in each gospel in turn, before looking at the gospels as a whole.

Prophecy in Mark's Gospel

Of all of the gospel writers, Mark has least to say on the subject of prophecy.⁸ Prophetic activity is not brought to the fore, though 13:1-36 should be viewed as prophetic.

⁵ The baptism of Jesus is clearly an important passage in New Testament pneumatology (Dunn says 'on this pivot the whole of salvation-history swings round into a new course', Dunn, *Baptism in the Holy Spirit*, 24). But whilst it is likely that the account influenced the degree to which each New Testament writer portrayed the new age as the age of the Spirit, there is little evidence to suggest that this experience of Jesus influenced directly any development of the theology of new covenant prophecy.

⁶ The longer ending of Mark does provide some interesting additional material, but the very real doubts over its authenticity mean no firm conclusions about its relevance to the earliest views on Christian prophecy can be drawn. See Bruce M. Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft/German Bible Society, 1994²), 102-106.

⁷ Keener, *The Spirit in the Gospels and Acts*, 1.

⁸ His pneumatology is also the least developed. The book opens with three quick-fire 'Spirit' stories: Jesus' promise to baptise with the Spirit, Jesus' own baptism, and the Spirit's role in the wilderness temptations (1:4-12). Much later, the Holy Spirit is seen as the source of David's prophecy (12:36), and one who will speak as the disciples seek to witness to Christ and the gospel (13:11).

Prophetic fulfilment is almost entirely lacking.⁹ John is described as a prophet (but only as a second-hand view of what the people think, 11:32), and it is only hinted that Jesus might have self-consciousness as a prophet (6:4).

Mark's pneumatology is also less well developed than that of his synoptic colleagues. Nevertheless, the Spirit's central role in the ministry of Jesus (chapter 1), and important role in the future ministry of the disciples (13:9-13) can be seen, and some commentators on Mark find fulfilment for Jesus' words in the post-Pentecost events of the book of Acts.¹⁰ Given the links between Spirit and prophecy in the background to the New Testament, it may well be that this is a reference to new covenant prophecy. However, this theme of Spirit-empowered witness is one that is found in each of the other gospels, and Mark's contribution is neither unique, nor even distinctive. It is therefore not necessary to consider it further at this stage.

Prophecy in Matthew's Gospel

More than any other gospel writer, Matthew is concerned to portray Jesus as the fulfilment of old covenant prophecy.¹¹ However, despite the interest of the debate regarding Matthew's attitude toward the old covenant scriptures, the focus must remain on Matthew's attitude to new covenant prophecy alone. Even with this limitation there are several passages of interest, that concern either John the Baptist or the prophets who would come after Jesus.

John the Baptist

All the gospel writers preface their stories of Jesus by introducing John the Baptist, and he is identified as a prophet both by the people (21:26), and Jesus himself (11:9).

⁹ The only examples are 1:2, 7:6, 8:28. 6:15 shows the crowds wrongly thinking prophecy was fulfilled.

¹⁰ Craig A. Evans, *Mark 8:27-16:20* (WBC 34b; Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2001), 311; James R. Edwards, *The Gospel According to Mark* (PNTC; Leicester: Apollos, 2002), 394; R. T. France, *The Gospel of Mark* (NIGTC; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002), 517-518. Marcus suggests it is eschatological prophecy (Joel Marcus, *Mark 8-16* (AB 27a; New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009), 886). Witherington does not agree (Witherington, *The Gospel of Mark: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary*, 344-345).

¹¹ Blaine Charette, "'Never Has Anything Like This Been Seen in Israel': The Spirit as Eschatological Sign in Matthew's Gospel", *JPT*, 8 (1996), 31-32.

An old covenant prophet

Despite John's position at the start of the New Testament, Matthew is keen for him to be portrayed as a typical old covenant prophet, and this is particularly clear in 3:1-12. There John's clothes are described in very similar terms to those considered typical of an old covenant prophet, particularly Elijah.¹² His message of repentance is also typical of the old covenant prophets,¹³ as are his warnings of eschatological judgement, his focus on preparing the way for the Messiah, his rejection of much of what passed for organised religion,¹⁴ and his denouncement of godlessness in royal leaders.¹⁵ This identification with the old covenant is strengthened by Matthew's suggestions that John is to be identified with Elijah.¹⁶

However, John is obviously not *just* an old covenant prophet. His focus on baptism, whilst perhaps not unique, sets him apart from his old covenant colleagues. And, we must not forget that as well as being a prophet himself, John is also a fulfilment of Isaiah's prophecy.¹⁷ He is, as Jesus himself puts it, more than a prophet,¹⁸ standing in the 'hinge position' between promise and fulfilment.¹⁹

That makes an examination of John's prophethood particularly interesting, because he is compared both to old covenant prophets, and to those who will prophesy under the new covenant.²⁰ However, to simply say that John the Baptist is a typical old covenant prophet is to miss something vital, because in Matthew 11:2-18,²¹ we are also given an insight into

¹² Zechariah 13:14. Also compare ζώνην δερματίνην περὶ τὴν ὀσφὺν αὐτοῦ in Matthew 3:4, with ζώνην δερματίνην περιεζωσμένος τὴν ὀσφὺν αὐτοῦ in 2 Kings 1:8 (LXX). See Hilber, 'Diversity of OT Prophetic Phenomena and NT Prophecy', 254.

¹³ cf. Isaiah 1:27, 59:20, Jeremiah 5:3, 26:3, Ezekiel 14:6, 18:30.

¹⁴ cf. Isaiah 3:12, 9:16, 28:7, 56:10-12; Jeremiah 14:14, 23:15-16.

¹⁵ e.g. 2 Samuel 12, 1 Kings 17, etc.

¹⁶ Matthew 11:14, 17:10-12.

¹⁷ Matthew 3:2-3, 4:17, cf. Isaiah 40:3.

¹⁸ Matthew 11:9.

¹⁹ France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 420.

²⁰ See below, pp. 108f.

²¹ See also Luke 7:18-35. There are minor differences between the two accounts, but none that affect our exegesis here. For more on the differences, and a discussion of Q, see Joachim Gnllka, *Das Matthäusevangelium*, 2 vols. (Freiburg: Herder, 1986-1992), 1:405-406, 411-413; and W. F. Albright and C. S. Mann, *Matthew: Introduction, Translation and Notes* (AB; New York: Doubleday, 1974), 140-141.

the distinctive nature of John's prophethood — he is not like any other old covenant prophet.

More than a prophet

Matthew 11:1-19 records that whilst in prison, John sends two disciples to Jesus with a simple question, 'Are you the one who is to come, or shall we look for another?' (11:3). Historically, this has puzzled many. Why did John not know?²² Consequently, some scholars have doubted the authenticity of either the accounts of John's early life, or this present passage. Others suggest that John was concerned the content of his own prophecies about Jesus had been wrong. But the problem is not a modern one. From the church fathers onwards the passage has been perplexing. (Even Augustine and Chrysostom suggested that John was not asking for his own sake, but for the sake of others.²³)

But the text is clear that John himself was the focus throughout: *John* heard (11:2), *John* sent word (11:2), Jesus said 'Go and tell *John*' (11:4).²⁴ So why did John not know the answer? It seems he particularly needed to know not because he understood little, but because he understood much. He realised that the old covenant scriptures spoke of the eschatological age and the coming of the Messiah as fulfilling two functions: one judgement, one blessing. Upon hearing of Jesus' ministry (11:2) whilst in prison, he understood that Jesus was blessing — but what about the coming judgement? Was that also part of Jesus' ministry, or should John expect another to come and fulfil that role?²⁵

Whilst others were simply admiring Jesus' good works, only John was trying to understand how blessings without judgement could fulfil the Messiah's role. And only

²² The incongruity of the question, coming from John the Baptist of all people, is greater in Matthew than in Luke. See Donald Verseput, *The Rejection of the Humble Messianic King: A Study of the Composition of Matthew 11-12* (European University Studies Series XXIII 291; Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 1986), 61.

²³ For more on some 'solutions' to the problem see idem, 61-62. Luz has a brief but helpful overview of the history of interpretation, Ulrich Luz, *Matthew 8-20*, trans. Wilhelm C. Linss (Hermeneia; Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 2001 [Das Evangelium nach Matthäus]), 133.

²⁴ William Hendriksen, *Exposition of the Gospel According to Matthew* (NTC; Grand Rapids: Baker, 1973), 484.

²⁵ See Leon Morris, *The Gospel According to Matthew* (PNTC; Leicester: Inter-Varsity Press, 1992), 275; David L. Turner, *Matthew* (BECNT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008), 291. Gundry suggests the emphatic position of ἕτερος means ἢ ἕτερον προσδοκῶμεν should be translated 'or should we look for a different kind of Coming One?', Robert H. Gundry, *Matthew: A Commentary on His Handbook for a Mixed Church under Persecution* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994²), 205.

Jesus could answer that question, so John sent the messengers to him. Jesus responded by dramatically drawing attention to the magnitude of the blessing. No-one in the old covenant scriptures had ever given sight to the blind, but it was often a subject of new covenant prophecies — and this is what Jesus was doing.²⁶

Jesus does not criticise or chide John,²⁷ but neither does he answer John's question directly. He simply tells the disciples to tell John 'what you hear and see'. On the surface, the answer does not help,²⁸ it only repeats what John already knew — but looking more deeply, it seems that Jesus answered in such a way as to draw John's attention to the fulfilment of various Messianic prophecies, particularly in Isaiah.²⁹ For example, Isaiah 35:5-6 says:

Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf unstopped;
then shall the lame man leap like a deer, and the tongue of the mute sing for joy.

This is exactly what John needed to hear. Matthew 8-9 has recorded exactly this happening,³⁰ and by additionally reminding John that he is also raising the dead,³¹ Jesus points out he is exceeding the expectations of the Messianic age.³² But the preceding verses in Isaiah 35 are also important because John's concern seems to have been that Jesus did not appear to be acting as the coming judge. But these verses bring a reassuring promise — that vengeance and salvation do indeed come together:

Strengthen the weak hands, and make firm the feeble knees. Say to those who have an anxious heart, 'Be strong; fear not! Behold, your God will come with vengeance, with

²⁶ Morris, *Matthew*, 276.

²⁷ Craig S. Keener, *The Gospel of Matthew* (SoRC; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009²), 334.

²⁸ Luz, *Matthew 8-20*, 131.

²⁹ Osborne lists Isaiah 26:19, 29:18, 35:5-6, 42:18, and 61:1, Grant R. Osborne, *Matthew* (ZECNT; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2010), 415.

³⁰ Luz, *Matthew 8-20*, 130.

³¹ By adding a *καί* out of sequence, 'the dead are raised' is both emphatic and climactic in the list of miracles.

³² Several commentators point out that there does not seem to have been an anticipation within Judaism that the Messiah would be a miracle-worker. Instead, the expectation was more general — that in the messianic age, sickness and disease would disappear. See W. D. Davies and Dale C. Allison, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel According to Saint Matthew*, 3 vols. (ICC; London: T & T Clark, 1988-1997), 2:241; Luz, *Matthew 8-20*, 134

the recompense of God. He will come and save you.³³

A second Messianic prophecy, also alluded to by Jesus, makes the same point:

The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me, because the LORD has anointed me to bring good news to the poor;³⁴

Again the context of the verses in Isaiah are crucial.

...he has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound; to proclaim the year of the LORD's favor, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn;³⁵

The one who brings blessing and proclaims the year of favour is the same one who preaches vengeance. Certainly this does not answer all of John's questions.³⁶ Jesus is well aware that his claim to be the fulfilment of the Old Testament is hard to accept, hence his declaration that blessed is the one for whom Jesus is not a stumbling block (11:6).³⁷

Having answered John's disciples, Jesus then turns his attention to the crowd. Concerned perhaps that the crowd will think less of John because they have not understood the motive behind his question, Jesus is keen to help them understand. Jesus says John is not just a prophet, but 'more than a prophet', because he is the one of whom the prophets spoke (v10). This commendation by Jesus is not difficult to understand. Many in the crowd had tentatively drawn the same conclusions. But Jesus' greater testimony proves more of a problem. In what way is John greater than all those born of women?

Nolland suggests it is a question of privilege,³⁸ Verseput that it was John's 'position of

³³ Isaiah 35:3-4.

³⁴ Isaiah 61:1a. As Grundmann points out, the structure of Jesus' answer means the emphasis is on this good news, not on the apparently more spectacular miracles. Walter Grundmann, *Das Evangelium Nach Matthäus* (THKNT; Berlin: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 1968), 304.

³⁵ Isaiah 61:1b-2.

³⁶ At a theological level he may wonder whether there is significance in the Lord's favour being described as a *year* whilst vengeance as a *day*. At a very human level, he may be struggling to understand how Jesus is proclaiming the opening of the prison to those who are bound. For a thoughtful proposal as to why there is a delay between the two aspects of Jesus' ministry, see Dunn, *Baptism in the Holy Spirit*, 41-43.

³⁷ In the context, stumbling block is probably the best translation of σκανδαλισθῆ. Carson's paraphrase captures the meaning well: blessed is he 'who does not find in him and his ministry an obstacle to belief', Carson, 'Matthew,' 262.

³⁸ Nolland, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 457. See also Francis Wright Beare, *The Gospel According to Matthew: A*

nearness to the Messiah and the coming age'.³⁹ France points to his 'pivotal role in the eschatological drama',⁴⁰ Turner suggests that 'he fulfils the role of the awaited "Elijah" to initiate restoration in Israel',⁴¹ Morris offers that he was 'the forerunner of the Messiah',⁴² Keener that 'what makes a servant of God great is the message that servant bears',⁴³ or as Carson puts it, 'he pointed most unambiguously to Jesus'.⁴⁴

In the context, Jesus' statement is designed to tell Matthew's readers more about Jesus than about John, and Morris', Keener's and Carson's suggestions capture this best. But the suggestion is not a new one, and dates back at least as far as Calvin, who dealt with the question in his typical colourful style:

He was more excellent than the Prophets in this respect, that he did not, like them, make known redemption at a distance and obscurely under shadows... the pre-eminence of John consisted in his being the herald and forerunner of Christ; for although the ancient Prophets spoke of his kingdom, they were not, like John, placed before his face, to point him out as present.⁴⁵

Hagner made the same point more succinctly, but no less clearly:

He is the one in whom the OT expectation has finally been distilled into one final, definitive arrow pointing to the presence of the Messiah.⁴⁶

If this is what makes John great, what makes him the least? If anything, commentators have struggled with this question to an even greater extent. Two suggestions can be immediately ruled out. Gundry denies that it means the least in the future will surpass the greatest now present, and instead argues it means that the most humble is the greatest (*cf.* 18:4). But he admits this means Jesus' words are reduced to 'more a challenge

Commentary (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1981), 259.

³⁹ Versepunt, *The Rejection of the Humble Messianic King*, 86.

⁴⁰ France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 428. A similar view is held by Osborne, *Matthew*, 421.

⁴¹ Turner, *The Holy Spirit and Spiritual Gifts*, 24.

⁴² Morris, *Matthew*, 280.

⁴³ Keener, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 337-338. A similar point is made by Luz, *Matthew 8-20*, 139.

⁴⁴ Carson, 'Matthew,' 265.

⁴⁵ John Calvin, *Commentary on a Harmony of the Evangelists*, trans. William Pringle, 3 vols. (Edinburgh: Calvin Translation Society, 1845-1846), 2:13.

⁴⁶ Donald A. Hagner, *Matthew 1-13* (WBC 33a; Dallas: Word Books, 1993), 306. See also Gregory K. Beale, *A New Testament Biblical Theology: The Unfolding of the Old Testament in the New* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2011), 909.

than a statement of fact',⁴⁷ and such reductionism does not appear to be Matthew's intention at all. Grundmann's view, that Jesus is referring to the ages of himself and John respectively (the younger [Jesus] will be greater than the older [John]) is even less likely.⁴⁸

The plain meaning of Jesus' words suggests that there is something about the character of the kingdom of heaven that makes all citizens in it greater than all non-citizens. But if we are to accept this plain reading of the text, we must provide answers to two further questions: (1) can we really exclude John from the kingdom?, and (2) what is it about the kingdom that makes its citizens greater than all non-citizens?

The first question divides opinion. Everyone accepts that John is at a turning point of salvation history. But is he the beginning of the end, or the end of the beginning? Literature on the kingdom of heaven is legion, and we have woefully inadequate space for anything like an adequate discussion. Nevertheless, Davies and Allen have shown that the coming of God's kingdom did not 'belong to a moment, but constituted a series of events that would cover a period of time... the last act has begun but not yet reached its climax'.⁴⁹ This being the case, John died before that climax. He could speak of the kingdom, he could see the kingdom, but rather like Moses and the promised land,⁵⁰ he died just before he could enter it. Despite his greatness and proximity to the Messiah, he died before inheriting the kingdom,⁵¹ although this in no way excludes him from an eschatological place in it (*cf.* 8:11-12).⁵²

Commentators also differ on the second question, although here there is room for more than one proposal to be correct. Because John belongs to the old order, he is considered inferior to even the most humble representative of the new.⁵³ But why? The usual

⁴⁷ Gundry, *Matthew*, 208-209.

⁴⁸ Grundmann, *Das Evangelium Nach Matthäus*, 307. The view goes back at least to Chrysostom and Augustine (see Osborne, *Matthew*, 421).

⁴⁹ Davies and Allison, *Matthew*, 1:390.

⁵⁰ This illustration is also used by T. W. Manson, *The Sayings of Jesus* (London: SCM Press, 1949 [1937]), 70.

⁵¹ See Verseput, *The Rejection of the Humble Messianic King*, 88-89. Other commentators who share this view include Nolland, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 425; Morris, *Matthew*, 280-281.

⁵² Verseput, *The Rejection of the Humble Messianic King*, 90, 346 fn. 115; Hagner, *Matthew 1-13*, 306; Nolland, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 429.

⁵³ Leopold Sabourin, *Il Vangelo Di Matteo: Teologia E Esegese*, 2 vols. (Roma: Edizioni Paoline, 1974-1977), 2:617.

suggestion is privilege⁵⁴ or benefits,⁵⁵ but Carson rightly insists that the greatness of those in the kingdom must be more than simply privilege, and it must be linked with the greatness of John himself:

He was the greatest of the prophets because he pointed most unambiguously to Jesus. Nevertheless even the least in the kingdom is greater yet because... he or she points to Jesus still more unambiguously than John the Baptist.⁵⁶

This conclusion of Carson's is particularly interesting given our concern with new covenant prophecy.⁵⁷ It implies two things: (1) that the least in the kingdom is not merely greater than John in some general, abstract sense, but is a greater *prophet* than John, able to point to Jesus in an even greater way than he could, and (2) the purpose of great prophecy is to point to Jesus. If Carson is right in his analysis, this suggests that Jesus' hope for the kingdom age may be similar to the old covenant hope for universal prophethood in the eschatological age.⁵⁸ Universal prophethood is implied because Jesus does not say that the least in the kingdom *can be* greater than John, but that they *will be*, and if it is prophecy that makes them great, then surely they will prophesy. Still further, it implies that in Jesus' estimation the great purpose of prophecy is to point to him, an argument also made through the subtle changes in 11:10 to the citation from Malachi 3:1,⁵⁹ in explicit statements to this effect in other gospels,⁶⁰ and in the way that Matthew uses the old covenant scriptures throughout his gospel.⁶¹

Before we leave this passage, there is still a little about prophecy in the old and new covenants to be explored. Jesus goes on to say (11:13) that 'all the Prophets and the Law prophesied until John'. This short saying differs slightly from that in Luke 16:16 which

⁵⁴ Nolland, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 457; Morris, *Matthew*, 280-281; France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 429.

⁵⁵ Osborne, *Matthew*, 421.

⁵⁶ Carson, 'Matthew,' 265. Again this view has a long pedigree, going back at least to Calvin, *Commentary on a Harmony of the Evangelists*, 2:14.

⁵⁷ The same principle is demonstrated by Keener (although he does not speak of prophets), who says that the greatness of the least in the kingdom 'is because they proclaim a fuller message', Keener, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 339.

⁵⁸ See above, pp. 76f.

⁵⁹ See Carson, 'Matthew,' 264 and Don A. Carson, 'The Purpose of Signs and Wonders in the New Testament,' in *Power Religion*, ed. Michael S. Horton (Chicago: Moody Press, 1992), 107.

⁶⁰ Luke 24:27; John 5:39, 46.

⁶¹ Carson, 'Matthew,' 268.

says, 'The Law and the Prophets were until John; since then the good news is preached'. Matthew's construction emphasises prophecy both by including the verb προφητεύω and by the unique reversal of 'law and prophets'.⁶² The primary purpose of the statement seems to be to underline again the pivotal nature of John's ministry, and therefore reinforce the significance of the coming of Jesus.⁶³ John's ministry and therefore Jesus' arrival marked the end of the age of prophecy, and the beginning of the age of fulfilment.

Yet the statement also marks out John as the last of the prophets, and suggests something significant has happened to prophecy itself. On its own, it is likely that we would conclude from 11:13 that prophecy will cease for good, and that there will be no such thing as prophecy in the new covenant age. But such a conclusion would be presumptuous, as made clear by the eschatological hope of universal prophecy discussed in the previous chapter,⁶⁴ and the indication from 11:11 that even the least in the kingdom of God will be greater than all the prophets who have gone before. This is further underlined by several passages in Matthew that testify to the continued presence of prophets even after the death of John.⁶⁵

All this suggests that 'the Prophets' have come to an end in John, and the old, inferior way of prophesying has also come to an end. Yet this end also marks a new beginning, and when the kingdom is fully inaugurated, a new group of people (all those in the kingdom) will enjoy a new type of prophesying, pointing to Jesus in a far greater way than ever before.

The prophets to come

On four occasions in Matthew's gospel explicit mention is made of prophets in the future. Two passages (7:15-23 and 24:24) speak of false prophets, and two (10:40-42 and 23:34-36) of true prophets. Unfortunately however, these passages tell us very little about the nature of prophecy in the future, other than the simple fact that Jesus expects it to be present.⁶⁶

⁶² France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 431; Davies and Allison, *Matthew*, 2:256-257; Carson, 'Matthew,' 268.

⁶³ Morris, *Matthew*, 283.

⁶⁴ See above, pp. 76f.

⁶⁵ Matthew 7:15-23, 10:40-41, 23:34-36, 24:24.

⁶⁶ This can be gleaned from the warnings about false prophets, as well as the predictions about true

However, there is another passage that despite not mentioning prophecy may well be relevant to our study: 10:16-25. In this section Jesus speaks of sending out his disciples. The content of Jesus' instructions reveals that he is speaking of their ministry in the future — nowhere in Matthew's gospel do the predictions of 10:17-18, and 21-23 take place.⁶⁷ What these disciples are to do is to 'bear witness' for Jesus' sake (10:18), as 'the Spirit of your Father [will be] speaking through you' (10:20).

This is a significant statement as it is the only occasion in Matthew's gospel where the Spirit is said to work in the disciples, rather than in Jesus. Several commentators suggest that this refers to prophecy, some tentatively,⁶⁸ but also some quite definitely. For example, Keener says this passage suggests God 'will empower them with the Holy Spirit of prophecy', whilst Luz says it 'is the experience of early Christian prophecy'.⁶⁹ I suspect Keener and Luz are correct here, because there are similarities between this passage and another that does speak of prophets (23:34-35).⁷⁰

Summary

Matthew does not have a highly developed pneumatology, nor does he emphasise the Spirit or indeed prophecy. Yet despite this, there is a clear sense both that prophecy will continue in the age to come, and that it will be of a different order to the prophecy of the past, which came to an end with John the Baptist. This echoes something of the eschatological hope of universal prophethood which was present in elements of Judaism and suggested in the old covenant scriptures. This future prophecy will not exclude anyone in the kingdom of God, and the greatness of their prophesying will be a result of the way they point unambiguously to the Messiah, Jesus.

prophets. After all, if there were to be no prophets in the future at all, Jesus would not have to describe how to identify false ones, as the comparison with false Christs (23:23-24) demonstrates. See France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 878.

⁶⁷ Morris, *Matthew*, 254; Luz, *Matthew 8-20*, 89.

⁶⁸ Davies and Allison, *Matthew*, 2:186.

⁶⁹ Keener, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 321; Luz, *Matthew 8-20*, 89. See also Osborne, *Matthew*, 389.

⁷⁰ Both mention flogging in synagogues, both speak of going from town to town (10:23 and 23:34), and both speak of persecution and martyrdom. The occasions and audiences are clearly different, but it seems as though Jesus had the same concepts in mind.

Prophecy in Luke's Gospel

Luke's concept of the Spirit is far more developed than that of Matthew, so we shall have to be all the more strict not to get distracted by wider issues of pneumatology. That said, when the Spirit is portrayed it is most often done so in the context of prophecy or inspired speech.⁷¹ We will not look again at the parallel passages that have already been examined in Matthew or Mark,⁷² but there are several additional themes that will be particularly useful: (1) the birth narratives,⁷³ and (2) Jesus' teaching on the Spirit's work in the disciples' witness.⁷⁴

The Spirit and the birth narratives

Luke's Spirit-filled opening to his gospel is dramatic in the extreme. The focus of the chapter is Christological. Luke testifies to Jesus,⁷⁵ and brings in a host of witnesses: the testimony of angels, the testimony of miracles, the testimony of prophets (and therefore the Spirit), the testimony of old covenant prophecies, and the testimony of righteous men and women.

But our interest is not Christological but pneumatological, and nowhere in the intertestamental period, nor even in the old covenant scriptures is there another example of such a concentration of the Spirit's activity over such a wide spread of 'ordinary' people (including women) in such a short space of time.⁷⁶ In just one chapter there are three promised or actual fillings of the Spirit (1:15, 41, 67), each with associated

⁷¹ Cho, *Spirit and Kingdom in the Writings of Luke and Paul*, 136.

⁷² Although some differences are apparent between the parallel passages, they are small, and it is not as if every extra or missing word would demonstrate conclusively Luke's distinctive theology. See Paul S. Minear, *To Heal and To Reveal: The Prophetic Vocation According to Luke* (New York: Seabury Press, 1976), 83.

⁷³ Luke 1:5-2:40.

⁷⁴ Luke 12:12, 21:10-19, 24:44-49.

⁷⁵ Cho, *Spirit and Kingdom in the Writings of Luke and Paul*, 138.

⁷⁶ This point is disputed by Turner who says that 'there is little exceptional' about the Spirit's work in the birth narratives — rather 'it should be expected' (Turner, *The Holy Spirit and Spiritual Gifts*, 24). But Turner is underplaying the drama of Luke's opening chapters. As he admits, in Judaism the Spirit is 'manifest through occasional holy people', and that 'the rabbis can occasionally speak of... experiencing the Spirit of prophecy' (idem, emphasis added). Indeed, even he later points to the gift of the Spirit to John in Luke chapter 1 as 'unprecedented' (idem, 25). For a detailed critique of Turner's arguments on this and related points see Miller, 'Luke's Conception of Prophets', 166-190.

prophesying. An angel speaks twice (1:11, 1:26), and not just any angel but Gabriel himself.⁷⁷ There is both a miraculous conception (1:13) and a *very* miraculous conception (1:35). A prophet is promised (1:14-17), there is a miraculous silencing and loosening of the tongue (1:22, 64), and the fulfilment of long-awaited prophecies. The second chapter is no less dramatic. An angel returns (this time with a host of others, 2:13), and the Spirit comes upon a man and reveals the future to him (2:26) in the company of a prophetess (2:38). There is simply nothing comparable to this anywhere in the old covenant scriptures or the surviving documents of early Judaism.⁷⁸

Of particular interest to us are the prophets and the prophecies. Zechariah's speech (1:68-79) is the only one specifically identified as a prophecy, although Elizabeth also speaks as she was 'filled with the Holy Spirit' (1:42-45). Given that John is a prophet (1:76), and that he was 'filled with the Holy Spirit, even from his mother's womb' (1:15), his leaping in the womb at the arrival of the expectant Mary could be considered a prophetic act (1:41, 44). Mary's song (1:46-55), magnificent though it is, is not introduced in a way that identifies it as prophetic, although many understandably conclude that it is. In chapter 2, Simeon (who had already received revelation 'by the Holy Spirit', 2:26) gives what appears to be a prophetic speech (2:29-32, 34-35) whilst 'in the Spirit'. Anna is identified as a prophetess (2:36), but the contents of her speech is summarised, rather than recorded.

This means we have two people identified as a prophet or prophetess (both of whom appear to act prophetically, but neither have recorded speech), two people identified as speaking in the Spirit, one more who explicitly prophesied, and one who gave apparent prophetic speech but which is not identified as such.

Space does not permit a close examination of all this, but the following features can be identified:

⁷⁷ Josef Ernst, *Das Evangelium Nach Lukas* (RNT; Regensburg; Friedrich Pustet, 1951²), 62.

⁷⁸ The magnitude of the revelation is perhaps illustrated by the punishment given to Zechariah for asking for a sign. As Eckey points out (Wilfried Eckey, *Das Lukasevangelium*, vol. 1 (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener, 2004), 79), old covenant believers asked for signs in similar circumstances (Abraham, Gideon, Moses), and received them without penalty, but that was not extended to Zechariah. Gabriel's answer suggests the revelation he received should have been sufficient, although the punishment also acts as a gracious confirmatory sign (Heinz Schürmann, *Das Lukasevangelium*, 2 vols. (THKNT 3; Freiburg: Herder, 1969-1993), 1:37).

- The entire section is very Jewish,⁷⁹ and reminiscent of several old covenant scriptures, in particular Genesis 11-21,⁸⁰ but also 1 Samuel 1-2, Daniel 8-10,⁸¹ and others.⁸²
- The content of all of the speeches are based heavily on the old covenant scriptures.⁸³ C. K. Barrett describes them as ‘an island of the OT, surrounded by the New’, and J. Gresham Machen even suggests they are, ‘probably the most markedly Semitic section in the whole New Testament’.⁸⁴
- Several of the themes are prominent in the old covenant scriptures (but not the new): God removing barrenness (1:7, 13, 25),⁸⁵ priesthood (1:5, 8-9),⁸⁶ an announcement from Gabriel (1:19, 26),⁸⁷ circumcision (1:59, 2:21), redemption of the firstborn (2:22-24) and purification (2:22),⁸⁸ sacrifice (1:9-11, 2:24), the law (1:6,

⁷⁹ Paul Winter, ‘The Cultural Background of the Narrative in Luke I and II’, *JQR*, 45:2-3 (1954-1955), 159-167, 230-242, 287.

⁸⁰ Green, *The Gospel of Luke*, 53-58.

⁸¹ There are several parallels with Daniel 8-10, including Gabriel’s presence. See Raymond E. Brown, *The Birth of the Messiah: A Commentary on the Infancy Narratives in Matthew and Luke* (ABRL; New York: Doubleday, 1993²), 270-271; Pao and Schnabel, ‘Luke,’ 255.

⁸² William H. Shepherd, *The Narrative Function of the Holy Spirit as a Character in Luke-Acts* (SBLDS 147; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1994), 116-117, 124-125.

⁸³ See the helpful tables in Brown, *The Birth of the Messiah*, 358-360, 386-389, and the narrative overview in Eckey, *Das Lukasevangelium*, 67-68. Also Green, *The Gospel of Luke*, 51-58; Marshall, *The Gospel of Luke*, 45-47; Nolland, *Luke 1:1-9:20*, 17-19. For parallels from the Psalms see Hans Klein, *Das Lukasevangelium*, vol. I/3 (KEK; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2006), 108. Schürmann suggests that Simon already stands in the ranks of ‘Christian’ prophets whose job is to recognise and announce Christ (Schürmann, *Das Lukasevangelium*, 1:124). But this is to forget that Jesus believed it was the role of old covenant prophets to do precisely that (24:27), and to forget that Simon lives (and almost certainly dies) before John the Baptist, the last of the old covenant prophets (7:26-28).

⁸⁴ Barrett, *The Holy Spirit and the Gospel Tradition*, 125; J. Gresham Machen, *The Virgin Birth of Christ* (London: Marshall, Morgan and Scott, 1930), 46. For a survey, see Pao and Schnabel, ‘Luke,’ 253-257.

⁸⁵ This evokes memories some of Israel’s most respected mothers: Sarah (Genesis 18), Rebekah (Genesis 25), Rachel (Genesis 30), Hannah (1 Samuel 1-2) and the mother of Samson (Judges 13). Bock, *Luke*, 1:78; Pao and Schnabel, ‘Luke,’ 255-256; Brown, *The Birth of the Messiah*, 268-269; Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *The Gospel According to Luke I-IX* (AB 28; New York: Doubleday, 1974), 323; Walter Grundmann, *Das Evangelium Nach Lukas* (THKNT 3; Berlin: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 1961), 49.

⁸⁶ Brown, *The Birth of the Messiah*, 265-268; Green, *The Gospel of Luke*, 64.

⁸⁷ See above, fn. 81.

⁸⁸ Pao and Schnabel, ‘Luke,’ 269-271; Bovon, *Luke 1*, 99; Bock, *Luke*, 235-236; Brown, *The Birth of the Messiah*, 447-451.

2:22-24).⁸⁹ Three of the episodes (including the first and last) take place in the temple (1:9, 2:27, 2:46).⁹⁰

- There is something of a remnant theme:⁹¹ In the magnificat, the proud are scattered, the rich sent away empty, the mighty brought down, but ‘his mercy is for those who fear him’.⁹² Those who do fear God are minor characters: ordinary people, not rulers or high priests,⁹³ but the few who are righteous⁹⁴ and waiting⁹⁵ (προσδέχομαι) for the consolation of Israel or redemption of Jerusalem (2:25, 38).⁹⁶
- John the Baptist is in the mould of the old covenant, echoing 1 Samuel 1-2, and evoking the eschatological Elijah (1:17, cf. Malachi 4:5-6).⁹⁷

All this demonstrates that in these two chapters Luke is rooting his story in the old covenant scriptures in the strongest possible way. The impression given is that this story is not a fresh start but a continuation of what has gone before.⁹⁸ But whilst there is qualitative similarity, there is an enormous quantitative difference. Nothing of this magnitude in such a short space of time has happened before. These two chapters,

⁸⁹ Green, *The Gospel of Luke*, 65; Pao and Schnabel, ‘Luke,’ 268-269.

⁹⁰ Pao and Schnabel, ‘Luke,’ 254.

⁹¹ Bock, *Luke*, 1:91, 159, 253; Brown, *The Birth of the Messiah*, 242, 268, 351, 378; Fitzmyer, *The Gospel According to Luke I-IX*, 361; Arthur A. Just, *Luke*, 2 vols. (CCom; Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1996-1997), 1:49, 52-53, 66, 76, 120.

⁹² Luke 1:50-53.

⁹³ François Bassin, *L'évangile Selon Luc*, vol. 1 (Vaux-sur-Seine: Éditions de la Faculté de Théologie Évangélique, 2006), 86; Adolf Schlatter, *Das Evangelium des Lukas* (Stuttgart: Calwer, 1960), 168-169.

⁹⁴ Elizabeth and Zechariah are ‘righteous before God’ (1:6), Mary ‘found favour with God’ (1:30), Simeon ‘was righteous and devout’ (2:25), Anna ‘did not depart from the temple, [but was] worshiping with fasting and prayer night and day’ (2:37). They are models of Jewish piety. See Marshall, *The Gospel of Luke*, 52-53; Bock, *Luke*, 1:77.

⁹⁵ The great age of Simeon and Anna (and perhaps Elizabeth and Zechariah too) is a sign that Israel has been waiting a long time for its redeemer. Wolfgang Wiefel, *Das Evangelium Nach Lukas* (THKNT 3; Berlin: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 1988), 77.

⁹⁶ The same word is used in 23:51 of Joseph of Arimathea, who was ‘waiting for the kingdom of God’, and the same thought is expressed by those on the Emmaus road: ‘we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel’ (24:21). Eschatological hope is described in Judaism in a very similar way, David Flusser, *Judaism and the Origins of Christianity* (Jerusalem: Magnes, 1988), 127.

⁹⁷ Pao and Schnabel, ‘Luke,’ 254-255, 257-258; Fitzmyer, *The Gospel According to Luke I-IX*, 326; Bovon, *Luke 1*, 37-37. See also 1:76, cf. Isaiah 40:3.

⁹⁸ Green, *The Gospel of Luke*, 57.

encompassing little more than a year, parallel the spectacular events in all the long life of Abraham, add in a few from David,⁹⁹ Samuel and Daniel, in addition to other unparalleled stories such as the appearance of the angels to the shepherds. It is almost as if these two chapters are the retold highlights of the old covenant scriptures.

These opening chapters have much to say about prophecy and the prophetic, and what they do say is thoroughly old covenant in essence. And yet nowhere in the old covenant scriptures did the Spirit burst on to the scene in such a measure as to have so many prophecies (including three by angels, and possibly three by women¹⁰⁰) and miracles. The result of Luke's introduction to his gospel is much the same as that of Jesus' words concerning John the Baptist we studied earlier, and that Luke will soon repeat.¹⁰¹ Something decisive is happening, which is both the climax and fulfilment of the promises of Old, but also the start of something new.¹⁰² The Spirit is gloriously, visibly at work, and it all gives witness to Jesus.¹⁰³ The old prophetic order is spectacularly reaching its peak. And that is just the introduction.

The Spirit and the disciples' witness

On two occasions the disciples are told that the Holy Spirit will help them to bear witness (12:12, 24:44-49), and on a third occasion it is implied (21:10-19). Witness is a theme usually associated with John's gospel, but it is also important to Luke, particularly in his second volume.¹⁰⁴ We have already come across similar passages in Matthew's gospel,¹⁰⁵ and concluded that it was likely that they spoke of new covenant prophecy, but none of them are exact parallels.¹⁰⁶

⁹⁹ Bassin, *L'évangile Selon Luc*, 123-125, 136-138.

¹⁰⁰ Even one prophesying woman would be remarkable. See Wiefel, *Das Evangelium Nach Lukas*, 80.

¹⁰¹ See above, pp. 110f.

¹⁰² Menzies, *Empowered for Witness*, 120, emphasis original.

¹⁰³ Darrell L. Bock, *A Theology of Luke and Acts* (Biblical Theology of the New Testament; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2012), 213.

¹⁰⁴ Allison A. Trites, 'The Importance of Legal Scenes and Language in the Book of Acts', *NovT*, 16:4 (1974), 274-284; Allison A. Trites, *The New Testament Concept of Witness* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977), 128-153.

¹⁰⁵ See above, pp. 116f.

¹⁰⁶ Although 21:10-19 does parallel Mark 13:8-13, which we did not examine.

Luke 12:12 says little that has not already been said in Matthew, although Luke's frequent links between the Spirit and empowered witness makes a reference to prophecy even more likely than it was in Matthew.¹⁰⁷ The promise that words will be given when they are required is one familiar from the old covenant scriptures,¹⁰⁸ but the reference to the Spirit as the source of help is new. Luke's second volume records the fulfilment of this promise, at least for Peter.¹⁰⁹ Given the severe punishment that it is said will be given upon the denial of Jesus (12:8-10), and that Peter did not receive the punishment threatened after the cock crowed (22:54-62), it seems that Jesus' promise does point beyond Pentecost.¹¹⁰ (That is, as Peter did not yet have the help of the Spirit, he could not be as culpable.)

21:10-19 is a similar passage, although the Spirit is not mentioned despite the parallel in Mark doing so, although who changed what and why has so far eluded commentators.¹¹¹ Instead Jesus says 'I will give you a mouth and wisdom', although it should be remembered that Luke twice links Spirit and wisdom (Acts 6:3, 10).¹¹² In its immediate context, the promise has a relatively narrow focus,¹¹³ but 'with the onset of Acts... we understand fully that he will be present to the community of his followers by means of the Holy Spirit poured out among them'.¹¹⁴

In 24:44-49, the promise is quite different, the context is still witness (v48).¹¹⁵ Crucially, it is a post-resurrection promise: 'I am sending the promise of my Father upon you. But

¹⁰⁷ Green, *The Gospel of Luke*, 484-485.

¹⁰⁸ Given to both Moses (Exodus 4:12) and Jeremiah (Jeremiah 1:9), cf. Psalm 119:41-46. Pao and Schnabel, 'Luke,' 329.

¹⁰⁹ Acts 4:8. See Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *The Gospel According to Luke (X-XXIV)* (AB 28a; New York: Doubleday, 1985), 965.

¹¹⁰ Max Turner, 'Holy Spirit', *DJG*, 347.

¹¹¹ Marshall, *The Gospel of Luke*, 768.

¹¹² Paul makes the same connection (1 Corinthians 2:4, 13; 12:8; Ephesians 1:17).

¹¹³ Although Bock is right to point out that this promise does not suggest a special function given only to a few, and Beasley-Murray helpfully points out that the promise is not a momentary one, but a permanent one — 'if the disciples were to be constantly in need of the Spirit's aid, they were to rest assured that it would be perpetually given'. Bock, *Luke*, 2:1671; George R. Beasley-Murray, 'Jesus and the Spirit,' in *Mélanges Bibliques: En Hommage au R. P. Bédard Rigaux*, ed. Albert Descamps and R. P. André de Halleux (Gembloux: Éditions J. Duculot, 1970), 473.

¹¹⁴ Green, *The Gospel of Luke*, 737. For a similar view see Marshall, *The Gospel of Luke*, 768.

¹¹⁵ See Shelton, *Mighty in Word and Deed: The Role of the Holy Spirit in Luke-Acts*, 116-117.

stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high.’ (v49). According to Shelton, the reference to ‘clothing with power’ brings to mind Elisha receiving Elijah’s mantle before Elijah was taken up to heaven, and Elisha continued his work,¹¹⁶ a thought that goes back to at least the fourth century.¹¹⁷ This is not a different promise to the earlier promise of help when under persecution. Instead, it reinforces and clarifies those earlier promises¹¹⁸ — that after Jesus’ departure the Spirit will enable them to continue his witness, not only in the law courts but to all nations. After the resurrection, the disciples now understand the scriptures (v45), the mission of Christ (v46) and the message that needs to be preached (v47). Only now can they truly be witnesses (v48).¹¹⁹

Taken together, these three passages make it clear that the Spirit’s work is not set to fizzle out after the heights of Luke 1-2. Indeed, the Spirit will continue to be at work, sent by Jesus (24:49), and commissioned to empower the disciples to bear witness to Christ and the gospel, and in a sense continue the work that he has begun. Although the promises are given to the Twelve, that does not necessarily mean they are *only* given to the Twelve, particularly if viewed against the background of an eschatological hope of universal prophethood.¹²⁰ Indeed, the implication (particularly of 12:10-12) is that it is a requirement of all who believe in Jesus to witness to him, and that the Spirit will help believers to do precisely that.

Summary

Taken as a whole, we see that Luke portrays both the climax of the Spirit’s work in the old covenant, alongside promises of the Spirit’s work in the new. What both portrayals have in common is that the purpose of the Spirit’s empowering work is testimony to Jesus the Messiah. The book ends on something of a cliff-hanger — a great promise of power from on high is given, but as yet no fulfilment has come. Luke’s readers will have

¹¹⁶ idem, 117. See also John L. Nolland, *Luke 18:35-24:53* (WBC 35c; Dallas: Word Books, 1993), 1221; J. Severino Croatto, ‘Jesus, Prophet Like Elijah, and Prophet-Teacher Like Moses in Luke-Acts’, *JBL*, 124:3 (2005), 456-457.

¹¹⁷ Ephrem the Syrian, *On the First Book of Kings*, cited in Marco Conti and Gianluca Pilara, eds., *1-2 Kings, 1-2 Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther* (ACCS 5; Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2008), 120.

¹¹⁸ Shepherd, *The Narrative Function of the Holy Spirit as a Character in Luke-Acts*, 149.

¹¹⁹ David E. Garland, *Luke* (ZECNT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2011), 967.

¹²⁰ John Michael Penney, *The Missionary Emphasis of Lukan Pneumatology* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997), 62.

to wait for volume two before finding out whether the Spirit's work in the new covenant will surpass the work of the old.

Prophecy in John's Gospel

John does not speak directly of either future prophets or future prophecy. Nevertheless, the pneumatology of John is well-developed, and there are several passages that should be of interest.¹²¹ Those that would appear most relevant relate to the Spirit helping the disciples to witness, in language similar, but not identical, to that used in the other gospels.¹²² Less relevant, but still important are those that refer to the giving of the Spirit to the disciples.¹²³

The Spirit and the disciples' witness

In our earlier discussion we discovered that there was a link between prophecy and witness in the synoptic gospels to the extent that prophecy was always bound up with witness.¹²⁴ Witness is a major theme in John,¹²⁵ and the disciples' future witness is linked to the Spirit on three occasions, which suggests that John might also view prophecy and witness as bound up together.

But before we delve too deeply into the disciples' future witness, it will be worth a brief overview of the way John treats prophecy and witness more generally. If the two terms are interlinked throughout his narrative, that will give us more confidence that it is appropriate to look for links in the passages that relate to the disciples' future witness.

The prophet that is most prominent in John's gospel (excluding Jesus himself) is undoubtedly John the Baptist, and it is impossible not to notice a significant emphasis on his witness to Jesus that appears throughout the early chapters of the gospel, and

¹²¹ The caveat expressed earlier remains. This is not a study of John's pneumatology, and it is therefore not intended to examine either Jesus' Spirit-baptism (1:29-34), or Nicodemus' Spirit-rebirth (3:1-15), or the story of the Samaritan woman (4:1-45) (despite Willem Cornelis van Unnik, 'A Greek Characteristic of Prophecy in the Fourth Gospel,' in *Text and Interpretation: Studies in the New Testament Presented to Matthew Black*, ed. Ernest Best and R. McLachlan Wilson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979)).

¹²² John 14:26, 15:26-27, 16:13-15.

¹²³ John 7:39, 14:16-17, 16:7, 20:22.

¹²⁴ See above, pp. 116f, 122f.

¹²⁵ Trites says it is one of John's favourite words, Trites, *The New Testament Concept of Witness*, 80. See also Merrill C. Tenney, 'The Meaning of "Witness" in John', *BSac*, 132:527 (1975), 229-241.

particularly in the first chapter.¹²⁶ Witness is not simply a prophetic function of the Baptist, it is *the* prophetic function. This is not to suggest that prophecy and witness are synonymous in John, because witness is a bigger concept. Prophecy is part of witness. Jesus requires external witness, as his own witness to himself is not sufficient (5:31), so John brings forward a host of witnesses, including the Father (5:32, 37), John the Baptist (5:33), Jesus' own works (5:36) and the Scriptures and Old Testament prophets (5:39, 46). It is perhaps surprising that there is no mention of the Spirit,¹²⁷ yet the Baptist's witness was a result of Spirit-filling, as were Jesus' works. The Scriptures were inspired by the Spirit. Even the Father's testimony was communicated via the Spirit at Jesus' baptism. In John's presentation, the Spirit is the unseen means by which *all* this testimony takes place.¹²⁸ Just as importantly, as Trites put it, 'This evidence fails to convince opponents, however, unless it is accompanied by the inward witness of the Holy Spirit'.¹²⁹ The need of the Spirit for witness to be effective may help to explain why prophecy and witness are so closely tied together.

When we examine other references to prophets and prophecy in John, we find that each one is also related to witness to Jesus, even though the word μαρτυρέω is not normally used. The prophets wrote of Jesus (1:45, also 6:45, 12:38), Caiaphas prophesied Jesus would die for the people (11:51), Jesus is described as a prophet (4:19, 4:43, 9:17) and the Prophet (6:14, 7:40, cf. 7:52). The only reference to prophets/prophecy that does not directly witness to Jesus is in 8:52-53, where after Jesus claims 'if anyone keeps my word, he will never see death', the Jews twice remind him that the prophets died – but even that is used in a context that contains one of Jesus' most startling self-revelations, 'before Abraham was, I am'.

In this very brief overview, we have seen two things of relevance. First, throughout his gospel John ties together the themes of prophecy and witness very tightly, particularly in

¹²⁶ See John 1:7-8, 1:15, 1:19, 1:32, 1:34, 3:26, 5:32, 5:33, cf. 10:40-42.

¹²⁷ 'There is another who bears witness' (5:32) could refer to the Spirit, but commentators are almost united in concluding it refers to the Father. E.g. Leon Morris, *The Gospel According to John* (NICNT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995²), 287-288; Köstenberger, *John*, 191; Raymond E. Brown, *The Gospel According to John (I-XII)* (AB 29; New York: Doubleday, 1966), 224. Von Wahlde suggests John the Baptist, Urban C. von Wahlde, *The Gospel and Letters of John*, 3 vols. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010), 2:248.

¹²⁸ So in 3:34 John explains why Jesus is able to bear (prophetic) witness: 'For he whom God has sent utters the words of God, for he [the Father] gives the Spirit without measure.'

¹²⁹ Allison A. Trites, 'Witness', *DJG*, 879.

the ministry of John the Baptist. Second, true witness is a work of the Spirit. These initial conclusions mean that a study of the future witness of the disciples, particularly when spoken of in the context of the Spirit, ought to be very relevant to our study of new covenant prophecy, despite John not using the words προφητεύω, προφητεία or προφήτης in the context of the eschatological age.¹³⁰

We will begin with 15:26-27, which explicitly refers to witness, although 14:26, and 16:13-15 are also related. As Brown shows, the passage is very similar to those already examined in the synoptics.¹³¹ Jesus promises that he will send the Spirit to the disciples. The Spirit will witness, and so will the disciples.¹³² The witness is explicitly witness about Jesus,¹³³ and the implication is the Spirit will enable the disciples' witness.¹³⁴ The reference to his disciples being with Jesus since the beginning suggests that the primary application of the promise is restricted to them personally. That said, 'it would be out of step with these chapters to think that [later] Christians are thought of as those who bear witness apart from the Spirit'.¹³⁵ The principles, whilst perhaps taking on a special meaning for the disciples, are important for the whole Christian community.¹³⁶

Neither 14:26 nor 16:13-15 refer directly to prophecy or witness, because both speak only about how the Spirit will speak to the disciples, they say nothing about how the disciples

¹³⁰ John shows a remarkable reluctance to use the verb προφητεύω in his gospel – it appears just once, and then of Caiaphas (11:51) – and he never uses the noun προφητεία. In comparison, προφήτης is used frequently, though still significantly less than Luke or Matthew. None of those words are used anywhere in the Johannine letters – the only non-Pauline letters to omit them.

¹³¹ His helpful chart indicates that 15:26-27 is paralleled by Matthew 10:20, 18 and Mark 13:9, 11 and Luke 12:13, Raymond E. Brown, *The Gospel According to John (XIII-XXI)* (AB 29a; New York: Doubleday, 1970), 694.

¹³² μαρτυρεῖτε could be indicative or imperative, though the imperative makes more sense in the context, Carson, *John*, 529.

¹³³ Beasley-Murray, *John*, 277; Carson, *John*, 530; Tenney, 'The Meaning of "Witness" in John', 229-230; Andreas J. Köstenberger and Scott R. Swain, *Father, Son and Spirit: The Trinity and John's Gospel* (NSBT 24; Leicester: Apollos, 2008), 97 especially fn. 99.

¹³⁴ It is implied that there are not two separate processes of witnessing, but one process, Spirit and the disciple together. Thomas L. Brodie, *The Gospel According to John: A Literary and Theological Commentary* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), 490; Andrew T. Lincoln, *The Gospel According to John* (BNTC; Peabody: Hendrickson, 2005), 412; Rudolf Bultmann, *The Gospel of John: A Commentary*, trans. George R. Beasley-Murray (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1971), NR.

¹³⁵ Carson, *John*, 530.

¹³⁶ Turner, *The Holy Spirit and Spiritual Gifts*, 87.

themselves are to speak. But the links to 15:26-27 are clear enough, as the table below shows:

14:26	15:26	16:13-14
the Helper, the Holy Spirit	the Helper	
whom the Father will send in my name	whom I will send to you from the Father	
	the Spirit of truth	the Spirit of truth
he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you	he will bear witness about me	he will take what is mine and declare it to you

The last row of the table is particularly instructive. All three passages emphasise that the Spirit will speak of Jesus: ‘all that *I* have said’, ‘about *me*’, ‘what is *mine*’. There seems to be a chronological progression, too. In 14:26 the Spirit will remind them of what Jesus has said (in the past), whilst in 16:13-15 he will speak what he hears (speaking of a time in the future), and ‘declare¹³⁷ to you the things that are to come’. In 15:26 the timeframe is not specified. Taken together the point seems to be that the Spirit’s testimony about Jesus is not restricted chronologically.

The question of time frame brings us to an important issue in 16:13. The declaration that the Spirit will speak of ‘what is yet to come’ leads many commentators to conclude that there is a predictive element to the Spirit’s revelation. However, the phrase ‘what is yet to come’ only demands that the things of which the Spirit speaks are future from the perspective of Jesus’ discourse,¹³⁸ it does not demand that they will *still* be future at the time the Spirit speaks of them. The context (v12) is not eschatological revelation, but simply that Jesus has more to say, but the disciples cannot now bear it,¹³⁹ and whilst it is

¹³⁷ ‘Declare’ is ἀναγγέλλω which may suggest prophecy. See Jean Zumstein, *L’évangile Selon Saint Jean (13-21)*, vol. 2 (CNT2 42007), 139; Julius Schniewind, ‘ἀναγγέλλω’, *TDNT*, 1:64.

¹³⁸ Rudolf Schnackenberg, *The Gospel According to St John*, trans. Kevin Smyth, et al., 3 vols. (TCNT; Tunbridge Wells/London: Burns & Oates, 1968-1982), 3:135. Bultmann and Ridderbos both rightly link three things: the non-originality of what the Spirit will say; the importance of Jesus’ ministry on earth; and the subject of the disciples’ witness will be their present relationship with him (i.e. their relationship with him after his glorification). Bultmann, *The Gospel of John*, 574-575; Herman Ridderbos, *The Gospel of John: A Theological Commentary*, trans. John Vriend (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 527.

¹³⁹ A parallel might be 13:7, ‘What I am doing you do not understand now, but afterward you will understand’.

true that the Spirit occasionally reveals the future, this is unusual.¹⁴⁰ Therefore it should not be presumed that there is a predictive element to the Spirit's revelation.¹⁴¹

In fact, we may be able to say more about what the Spirit is to reveal. Zumstein points out that in John 'to come' is used very often to speak of Christ. He both came (1:15, 27; 3:31; 6:14; 11:27; 12:13) and is to come (14:2-3; 18:28). This, together with 16:14's assertion that the Spirit will glorify Jesus, and the fact that the next pericope deals with Christ's coming (see particularly 16:17) leads Zumstein to conclude that 'the things to come' which the Spirit will declare are Christological.¹⁴²

As we look back over the Spirit and the disciples' witness in John, 15:26-27 speaks of spirit-empowered speech that bears witness to Jesus. As John closely identifies prophecy with witness to Jesus, and as these promises refer to the future, it seems reasonable to suggest that this witness is akin to eschatological prophecy. 14:26 and 16:13-15 emphasise that the Spirit's work is absolutely focused on witness to Jesus¹⁴³ and depend on his revelation.

The promise of the Spirit

Each of the three pericopes examined above refer to something the Spirit will do in the future, and there are three further passages that shed a little light on the giving (more accurately, the receiving, λαμβάνω) of the Spirit, 7:39, 14:16-17, 16:7 and 20:22.

John 7:39 says that the Spirit has not yet been given,¹⁴⁴ and lays down the conditions for his arrival: Jesus must first be glorified. The context is that Jesus has directed his hearers

¹⁴⁰ Morris, *The Gospel According to John*, 621-622.

¹⁴¹ See also Köstenberger, *John*, 473-474; Carson, *John*, 540; Hartwig Thyen, *Das Johannesevangelium* (HNT 6; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2005), 667.

¹⁴² Zumstein, *L'évangile Selon Saint Jean (13-21)*, 140.

¹⁴³ So much so that Dietzfelbinger contrasts this with the variety of spiritual gifts in Paul and says that in John 'reduziert sich die Geist-Erfahrung auf die Gabe der Prophetie, in deren Wort Jesus vergegenwärtigt wird' ('the Spirit is reduced to an experience of the gift of prophecy where Jesus is made present in the word'), and spends several paragraphs trying to determine how that might have happened. He recognises that the community would not have considered it 'reduction', but a concentration on the essentials. Christian Dietzfelbinger, *Das Evangelium Nach Johannes*, 2 vols. (ZBK; Zürich: Theologischer Verlag Zürich, 2001), 2:164-165

¹⁴⁴ Schlatter suggests John sees the absence of the Spirit as a judgement on the rabbis, Adolf Schlatter, *Der Evangelist Johannes* (Stuttgart: Calwer, 1975⁴), 202. But John is speaking of the eschatological Spirit here, and making no judgement on whether or not the Spirit had 'departed from Israel' (see above, pp. 62f).

attention to the old covenant scriptures where (apparently) it says ‘out of his heart will flow rivers of living water’ (7:38). There is no specific scripture that says this, but the reference is very likely to the Spirit (water is sometimes used as a metaphor for the Spirit in the old covenant scriptures)¹⁴⁵ and brings to mind the old covenant prophecies of an outpouring of the Spirit, and the hope of a Spirit within Yahweh’s people.¹⁴⁶ There is a question as to exactly when the Spirit is to be given, but that is better answered by 20:22. 14:16-17 adds that the presence of the Spirit will be permanent, and can only be received by believers, not by the world. When the Spirit comes he will be *in* them, whereas now he is only *with* them.¹⁴⁷

16:7 gives much more detail about the Spirit’s future work, and links the Spirit’s coming with Jesus’ departure. Thus the eschatological ‘Spirit promises’ of the Old Testament — which one might have thought would be fulfilled when the Messiah *comes* — are only to be fulfilled when the Messiah *goes*.

That leaves us with the hotly debated 20:22.¹⁴⁸ In a post-resurrection appearance of Jesus, he breathed¹⁴⁹ and said to the disciples (minus Thomas, who was absent), ‘Receive the Holy Spirit’. In the eyes of many commentators the difficulty of understanding exactly what is meant by this is caused by attempts to reconcile John’s ‘giving of the Spirit’ with Luke. Their solution to the problem is simply to abandon those attempts.¹⁵⁰ I cannot agree, as it seems to me that the biggest problem with the passage is not its apparent

¹⁴⁵ See above, pp 82f.

¹⁴⁶ The Greek is ambiguous, and some take the reference to point to Jesus rather than believers. For a defence of the position taken here, see Morris, *The Gospel According to John*, 374-378; J. B. Cortes, ‘Yet Another Look at John 7:37-38’, *CBQ*, 29 (1967), 75-86.

¹⁴⁷ This assumes the correct reading in v27 is μένει (‘is in’) rather than μενεῖ (‘will be in’). The manuscript evidence is split, although it is easier to imagine the present being changed to the future by later scribes than the other way around. ἔσται (‘will be’) is almost certainly correct, only a tiny number of manuscripts have ἐστίν (‘is’) and it is easy to imagine a scribe may have tried to harmonise this verb with the other present-tense verbs that precede it. See James B. Hamilton, *God’s Indwelling Presence: The Holy Spirit in the Old & New Testaments* (NACSBT; Nashville: B & H, 2006), 175-182 for a detailed analysis of the evidence.

¹⁴⁸ The issues do not directly relate to our concern about new covenant prophecy, and therefore our discussion will be significantly curtailed.

¹⁴⁹ There is some debate as to whether ἐμφυσάω can mean simply ‘breathed’, or must carry the implication of ‘breathed out’ or ‘breathed on’.

¹⁵⁰ C. K. Barrett, *The Gospel According to St. John* (London: SPCK, 1978²), 570.

irreconcilability with Acts, but that the coming of the Spirit changes nothing.¹⁵¹ Spirit and witness has been such an important theme in John, and the bestowal of the Spirit to the disciples has been trailed several times. But if this is John's Pentecost, what a contrast with Luke's, and what an anti-climax!¹⁵² The alternative is either a two-stage coming of the Spirit,¹⁵³ or we view 20:22 as a symbolic act that points ahead to a 'real' filling, such as that which Luke records at Pentecost. I see merit in Turner's suggestion of a two-stage experience of the spirit (unique to the Twelve), and also in Carson's suggestion of a symbolic act.¹⁵⁴ But what has this got to do with prophecy? Only this: if 20:22 marked the fulfilment of all the paraclete/Spirit promises in John, we would have to conclude that John was not promising eschatological prophecy or the fulfilment of any old covenant hopes.¹⁵⁵ Whatever the earlier verses meant, they did not mean that. If there was no alternative to such a view, we would have to go back and revise our exegesis to ensure that it matched such a low-key fulfilment. Thankfully, the possibility of either a two-stage experience, or a symbolic act here in 20:22 means that is not necessary. (And conversely, the exegesis given of all six pericopes, lends significant weight against a 'Johannine Pentecost'.)

Summary

The evidence gleaned from John's gospel is remarkably similar to that which has come from the synoptics. The Spirit is a major theme in John, and there is a very strong correlation between prophecy and witness to Jesus, which is the work both of the Spirit, and of the disciples. The promise of the Spirit is for all, although there are aspects of the

¹⁵¹ See Carson, *John*, 653.

¹⁵² If the Spirit really was with the disciples, why did Thomas not believe their testimony?

¹⁵³ There are many variations on this theme. For one see Turner, *The Holy Spirit and Spiritual Gifts*, 89-100, and Max Turner, 'The Concept of Receiving the Spirit in John's Gospel', *VE*, 10 (1977), 24-42. One attraction of this idea is that the metaphor of Jesus breathing brings to mind God breathing life into Adam (Genesis 2:7) and Ezekiel requesting the Spirit bring life (Ezekiel 37:9) — see Klaus Wengst, *Das Johannesevangelium*, 2 vols. (TKNT 4; Stuttgart: W. Kolhammer, 2000-2001), 2:292. This makes it at least possible that Jesus is conferring the indwelling Spirit in here (after the resurrection), and the prophetic Spirit is still to come (after the ascension), and Turner's arguments are fairly persuasive.

¹⁵⁴ For a detailed argument for this position see Carson, *John*, 651-655; Ben Witherington, *John's Wisdom: A Commentary on the Fourth Gospel* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1995), 340-341.

¹⁵⁵ Some commentators, particularly in the Catholic tradition, see 19:30 as a bestowal of the Spirit, which inevitable impacts on their interpretation of 20:22. This is highly unlikely, however. See the summary of the positions in Francis J. Moloney, *The Gospel of John* (SP 4; Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1998), 535.

promise that seem particularly applicable to the Twelve.

Conclusion: New Covenant prophecy in the Gospels

One of the purposes of this chapter was to contribute to the first aim of this thesis, to undertake a detailed exegesis of relevant New Testament texts that concern contemporary or future prophecy, or shed light on the early Christians' understanding of the eschatological Spirit. The gospel writers record an unprecedented increase in manifestations of the Spirit's work that begins with the events surrounding the birth of Jesus. One of the main aspects is an increase in prophetic activity that culminates in the ministry of John the Baptist. Yet none of the gospel writers suggest that this heightened prophetic activity is the fulfilment of the eschatological outpouring. Rather, it is portrayed as the climax of the old covenant age.

The chapter has also helped with our final aim, that of definition. All the gospel writers link Spirit-empowerment to speech that testifies to Jesus, and all but Mark very strongly link prophecy with testimony about Jesus, both in the present and in the future. If we had to define verbal prophecy from the gospel accounts alone, it would be **Spirit-empowered speech that testifies to Jesus**.

Our second and third aims are to examine the similarities and/or differences between the views of prophecy expressed by different New Testament writers, doing so in a way that is consistent with their historical, cultural and theological contexts. There are significant similarities between the gospel writers, as we have noted in the previous two paragraphs. Yet there are differences, too. In John there is an emphasis that a vital future ministry of the disciples will be to testify to Jesus with the help of the Spirit, along with an indication that although there may be something distinctive about the witness of the Twelve, all believers will witness to Jesus with the help of the Spirit. In both Matthew and Luke there is a strong sense that there will be prophecy in the age to come, and that like the pinnacle of old covenant prophecy it will be a witness to Jesus. That said, it will be of a different order to the prophecy of the past, which came to an end with John the Baptist. This prophecy seems to be both more glorious and more universal, and echoes something of the eschatological hope of universal prophethood that forms the background to first-century thought.

Luke, of course, gives himself an opportunity to demonstrate this prophecy in action, as

he alone writes a sequel to his gospel. We therefore now turn to Acts to see whether the principles identified here are matched by fulfilment there.

4) Prophecy in Acts

The book of Acts is crucial to an understanding of Christian prophecy because it contains much of the scant New Testament evidence describing what prophets did and how they operated. Even more importantly, Acts is the only New Testament book that describes in detail the fulfilment of the old covenant promises regarding prophecy in the new covenant.

Any study of Acts immediately runs into the ‘historicity question’. We have already dealt with many of those issues,¹ and I do not intend to repeat the debate here. We concluded earlier that Luke constructs his narrative on the basis that it was events that shaped the theology of the earliest church, not the other way around.² Removing that foundation would leave little else standing, and therefore we will proceed on the basis that events did indeed shape theology.

The purpose of this chapter is similar to that of the previous chapter, that is to apply the first three aims of the thesis to the book of Acts, namely: (1) to undertake an exegesis of the book of Acts, (2) to analyse the similarities and/or differences between the views of prophecy expressed by Luke in comparison to other writers, and (3) to develop a Lukan theology of prophecy, whilst considering Luke’s historical, cultural and theological context.

Prophecy at Pentecost

For Luke, Pentecost is a unique moment in salvation history.³ As we have seen, Luke has built up pneumatological expectation throughout his gospel and now focuses attention

¹ See above pp. 94f.

² See the three reasons given above, p. 96.

³ Keener, *The Spirit in the Gospels and Acts*, 192. See also Mills, *A Theological/Exegetical Approach to Glossolalia* 48-49.

on fulfilment.⁴ Acts 2 is particularly important, as the coming of the Spirit on the disciples is one of the foundations that the rest of Acts is built upon,⁵ and mirrors the baptism of Jesus near the opening of Luke's gospel.⁶

Peter's interpretation of Joel's prophecy leaves no doubt that Pentecost marks the dawn of the eschatological age of the Spirit.⁷ In our earlier study, we identified four eschatological hopes that were particularly prominent in the old covenant scriptures, namely universal prophethood, a pouring out of Yahweh's Spirit, a new Spirit within Yahweh's people, and a new covenant. Before we examine prophecy in Acts, it will be worth briefly considering whether Luke demonstrates the fulfilment of these pneumatological hopes.

The first two hopes (universal prophethood and a pouring out of Yahweh's Spirit), are certainly claimed by Peter to have been fulfilled, as both feature prominently in Joel's prophecy (2:17-18). Universal prophecy is emphasised by Luke's description that these things happened to 'all' (2:1, 4, 7; 'each one' in v3),⁸ although there is no indication yet

⁴ Barrett, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 1:108; Bruce, 'The Holy Spirit in the Acts of the Apostles', 170-171. Fulfilment is a major theme of Acts, see Charles H. Talbert, 'Promise and Fulfilment in Lucan Theology,' in *Luke-Acts: New Perspectives from the Society of Biblical Literature Seminar*, ed. Charles H. Talbert (New York: Crossroad, 1984), 91-103.

⁵ Witherington, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 128-130.

⁶ Jürgen Roloff, *Die Apostelgeschichte* (NTD 5; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1981), 37. Josep Rius-Camps, 'La Utilización Del Libro de Joel (Jl 2,28-32a LXX) En El Discurso de Pedro (Hch 2,14-21): Estudio Comparativo de Dos Tradiciones Manuscritas,' in *Studies in the Early Text of the Gospels and Acts: The Papers of the First Birmingham Colloquium on the Textual Criticism of the New Testament*, ed. David G. K. Taylor (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 1999) NR.

⁷ See Roli G. dela Cruz, 'Luke's Application of Joel 2:28-32 in Peter's Sermon in Acts 2', *Cyberjournal for Pentecostal-Charismatic Research*, 4 (1998), and Kevin Giles, 'Prophecy in the Bible and in the Church Today', *Interchange*, 26 (1980), 76. Schweizer disagrees, (Schweizer et al., *TDNT*, 6:410-411), saying that Christ ushered in the new age.

⁸ Acts 2:1, 7, cf. 2:3. This almost certainly means the 120, not just the twelve, as the connections with 1:13-15 are tight — the 'all' of 1:13-15 is carried through the 'they' of 1:24-26, into chapter 2. See I. Howard Marshall, *The Acts of the Apostles* (TNTC; Leicester: Inter-Varsity Press, 1980), 68. A few manuscripts add οἱ ἀπόστολοι, but this seems to be a late addition (Barrett says it is 'certainly secondary', Barrett, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 1:112). See also Robert Banks and Geoffrey Moon, 'Speaking in Tongues: A Survey of New Testament Evidence', *Chm*, 80:4 (1966), 281; Dunn, *Baptism in the Holy Spirit*, 40; Marshall, 'The Significance of Pentecost', 352-353; Max Turner, 'Early Christian Experience and Theology of "Tongues",' in *Speaking in Tongues: Multi-Disciplinary Perspectives*, ed. Mark J. Cartledge (Studies in Pentecostal and Charismatic Issues; Carlisle: Paternoster, 2006), 5.

that Peter thought that the Gentiles might be included in the 'all' in the way he later came to understand (cf. Acts 10).⁹ The pouring out of Yahweh's Spirit is emphasised by Peter's repetition of the phrase 'poured out' in 2:33.

The third hope, a new Spirit for Yahweh's people seems to be strongly implied by the promise of the gift of the Holy Spirit (2:38) to the crowd. The context of both 2:38 and Ezekiel 36:25 is cleansing and forgiveness,¹⁰ and the promise that they will dwell in the land (Ezekiel 36:28, 37:14) suggests that like Peter, Ezekiel is calling to those 'who are far off' (Acts 2:39).

The fourth hope, a new covenant, is not quite so clear, but is still present. It is hard not to see Pentecost as a temporary and partial reversal of the curse at Babel¹¹ — if so, that creates a link with the reversal of the curse of judgement which is a feature of the new covenant.¹² Forgiveness is also a feature of the new covenant (2:38, cf. Jeremiah 31:34), but more importantly, in Acts 2 there is an emphasis on a close relationship between Yahweh and his people, which is one of the main themes of Jeremiah's new covenant promise. This is seen through the visible and audible signs of 2:2-3, analogous to fire and wind which are both reminiscent of old covenant theophanies¹³ and therefore demonstrate the presence of God with his people.¹⁴ This is further underlined by a subtle difference between the text of the LXX and that used by Luke,¹⁵ through two additions of μου (my)

⁹ 'Universal prophethood' means the prophethood of all who call upon the name of the Lord (cf. 2:21). That is true throughout Acts, so as the early believers soteriology widened so did their pneumatology.

¹⁰ Peterson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 154-155.

¹¹ See, particularly Pervo, *Acts*, 61-62. It is only a partial reversal as it temporarily removes the effects of Babel (lack of understanding between people of different languages), but it does not remove the languages themselves.

¹² See Jeremiah 31:16-20, 27-28, 38-40.

¹³ See, for example, Exodus 19:18, 2 Samuel 22:16, 1 Kings 19:11-12, Isaiah 66:15, Ezekiel 13:13, cf. 1 Enoch 14:9-15, 18-22. 2 Esdras 13:10 combines both fire and wind in an apparent theophany. Barrett, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 1:113; Marshall, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 68; Witherington, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 132.

¹⁴ The concepts of 'wind' and 'spirit' are so similar in the old covenant scriptures (Hebrew: רוּחַ), that its association with the presence of God is particularly strong here. For the eschatological significance of 'fire', and its links with the presence of God, see Leland Ryken, James C. Wilhoit, and Tremper Longman III, eds., *Dictionary of Biblical Imagery* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1998), 287.

¹⁵ There are six potentially significant changes, as listed by Turner, *Power from on High*, 269-270. It is possible, of course, that the changes are pre-Lukan, as Bock argues, Darrell L. Bock, *Proclamation from Prophecy and Pattern: Lucan Old Testament Christology* (JSNTSup 12; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1987), 163. For

after ‘male servants’ and ‘female servants’: καί γε ἐπὶ τοὺς δούλους μου καὶ ἐπὶ τὰς δούλας μου. The effect, of course, is to bind the servants to Yahweh, which is consistent with the emphasis of the new covenant.¹⁶ The timing of the event with the Jewish feast of Pentecost may also reinforce this idea, because it is likely that at this time at least some Jews saw Pentecost as a feast of covenant renewal,¹⁷ so for God to do something new on this day of all days could well be significant. Luke’s narrative portrays the blessings of Pentecost spreading around the world, so he may have seen Pentecost as the firstfruits of blessing, and understood the Spirit’s coming as the fulfilment of this ‘firstfruits festival’.¹⁸ Another intriguing tradition links Pentecost to the giving of the law at Sinai,¹⁹ but it cannot yet be dated back to the first century (currently, the best estimate is the second century).²⁰ If it should prove earlier, that would further underline a fulfilment of Jeremiah’s new covenant prophecy, linking the giving of the ‘old’ law at Sinai, with the giving of the ‘new’, internal law in Jerusalem (cf. Jeremiah 31:33).²¹

Yet even without this later tradition, there is a definite sense in Acts 2 that three of the four eschatological pneumatological hopes are being fulfilled, and strong hints that the fourth (new covenant) is also.

But if much of Acts 2 suggests the fulfilment of longed-for eschatological hopes, there is at least one thing that is both new and unexpected. The 120 are ‘filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages as the Spirit gave them utterance’ (2:4),

more on the text of Joel 2 in Acts see Steven E. Runge, ‘Joel 2:28-32a in Acts 2:17-21: The Discourse and Text-Critical Implications of Variation from the LXX’ (paper presented at the SBL Annual Meeting, San Diego, 2007); Rius-Camps, ‘La Utilización Del Libro de Joel En El Discurso de Pedro,’ 245-270.

¹⁶ Cf. Jeremiah 31:33b-34a: ‘their God’, ‘my people’, ‘they shall all know me, from the least...’.

¹⁷ See the caution of Menzies, *Empowered for Witness*, 192-193. However, there is evidence both in Jubilees 6:17 and at Qumran, and most commentators seem happy to accept that the tradition would have been well known, even if it was not universally practiced. See Gregory K. Beale, ‘The Descent of the Eschatological Temple in the Form of the Spirit at Pentecost: Part 1: The Clearest Evidence’, *TynBul*, 56:1 (2005), 79.

¹⁸ That is likely the meaning συμπληρώω (2:1), often translated here as simply ‘arrived’ but more literally as ‘fulfilled’. See Lohse, *TDNT*, 6:50; Jervell, *Die Apostelgeschichte*, 132.

¹⁹ See Jervell, *Die Apostelgeschichte*, 132-133.

²⁰ Barrett, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 1:111; Robert W. Wall, ‘The Acts of the Apostles,’ in *NIB*, vol. 10 (Nashville: Abingdon, 2002), 53-54; and more positively Turner, *Power from on High*, 280-289.

²¹ Beale lists several reasons to accept this connection, even if the tradition is later, Beale, ‘The Descent of the Eschatological Temple in the Form of the Spirit at Pentecost (Part 1)’, 78-83.

which is the earliest recorded example of Christian or Jewish tongues-speaking. It is unexpected because nothing in our earlier study led us to anticipate tongues-speech in the eschaton, and yet ‘Peter understands the *tongues* phenomena to be the fulfilment of what Joel says regarding *prophecy*’.²² Peter’s affirmation means our investigation into prophecy must begin with an examination of this tongues-speech.

What are ‘tongues’ in Acts 2?

Tongues in Acts 2 are usually described in one of four ways:²³ (1) A miraculous gift of hearing that allows listeners to hear in their native language what a speaker is saying in a different language. (2) The non-miraculous speaking of a human language that the speaker already knows. (3) Unintelligible ecstatic speech.²⁴ (4) The miraculous speaking of a human language that the speaker does not know. We will examine each in turn.

A gift of hearing, not speaking?

Despite some prominent support,²⁵ I find the suggestion that tongues is a gift of hearing unpersuasive, for several reasons. (1) A very simple, but nonetheless compelling argument is that the phenomenon is called tongues, not ears. (2) Only 2:6 and 2:8 give any suggestion that the gift might be one of hearing, but both comments are from the perspective of the *hearers*, so hearing is inevitably the point of reference — in itself, that proves nothing. (3) 2:4 (‘they began to speak in other tongues’), seems to me to be sufficient on its own, particularly as it is from the narrator who can stand back and

²² Carson, *Showing the Spirit*, 140, emphasis original. See also Dunn, *Jesus and the Spirit*, 174 and Schnabel, ‘Urchristliche Glossolalie’, 77.

²³ Cartledge lists thirteen possible options, and he does not include the theory put down by Zerhusen (see below, p. 140). Cartledge, ‘The Nature and Function of New Testament Glossolalia’, 136-139. Of the thirteen he lists, many can be simplified and merged (as done here), and some have only been argued from Corinthians, not from Acts.

²⁴ Throughout the thesis, I have deliberately avoided using the term ‘ecstatic’ without an additional modifier (such as ‘unintelligible’, as here), as it has proved to be such a problematic and impossible to define word. See Schnabel, ‘Urchristliche Glossolalie’, 78-79.

²⁵ Luke Timothy Johnson, ‘Tongues, Gift of’, *ABD*, 6:597, and Luke Timothy Johnson, ‘Glossolalia and the Embarrassments of Experience’, *PSB*, 18:2 (1997), 117, and Luke Timothy Johnson, *Religious Experience in Earliest Christianity: A Missing Dimension in New Testament Studies* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1998), 111. For a different perspective within the *Anchor Bible Dictionary* see Horn, ‘Holy Spirit’, 3:267. Others who view tongues as a gift of hearing include Jenny Everts (Powers), ‘Tongues or Languages? Contextual Consistency in the Translation of Acts 2’, *JPT*, 2:4 (1994); Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 977, 1100. See also the works cited by Everts, p. 74, fn. 9.

provide a 'neutral' perspective. (4) Johnson argues that 'the divided response of the crowd is decisive', but the divided response could easily have arisen simply from the confusion of many languages being spoken at once.²⁶ (5) It is hard to imagine that Luke is suggesting the miracle happened among those who were still unbelievers.²⁷

Non-miraculous speaking of a human language?

Bob Zerhusen has mounted the most credible case for the view that the 120 were speaking an intelligible language that was not miraculously given,²⁸ though he builds on an earlier work by McCone.²⁹ The suggestion immediately runs into the difficulty of understanding how the 120 could speak in the native languages of all those listed in 2:9-11.³⁰ Zerhusen argues that Luke is not suggesting they did. Instead he claims that the crowd thought the 120 would speak in Hebrew, because in first-century Palestine it was expected that religious speech, particularly in the temple courts, would occur exclusively in that language rather than in Aramaic or Greek. But instead of speaking in Hebrew, the 120 spoke in 'other tongues', that is in Greek and/or Aramaic. This, of course, did not require a language miracle.

²⁶ See below, p. 143.

²⁷ Carson, *Showing the Spirit*, 138. As Turner puts it, '[Luke] would hardly be inclined to suggest that the apostolic band merely (say) babbled ecstatically and incomprehensibly, whilst the Spirit worked, in the as-yet unbelieving diaspora pilgrims...'. Turner, 'Early Christian Experience,' 5, emphasis original.

²⁸ Robert Zerhusen, 'An Overlooked Judean Diglossia in Acts 2?', *BTB*, 25:3 (1995). This is based on his earlier thesis: Robert Zerhusen, 'The Meaning of "Other Tongues" in Acts 2: An Alternative Suggestion' (Unpublished MTh Thesis, La Mirada: Talbot School of Theology, 1991).

²⁹ R. Clyde McCone, *Culture and Controversy: An Investigation of the Tongues of Pentecost* (Philadelphia: Dorrance & Company, 1978). Very few others have put forward this proposal. The only ones I am aware of are Hudson F. Mackenzie, *Natural Tongues: Exploring Acts and Corinthians* (Hamilton: Walker Printers, n.d.) and Renton Maclachlan, *Tongues Revisited: A Third Way* (Porirua: Clearlight, 2000). Mackenzie is far from convincing, and Maclachlan leans very heavily on Zerhusen. According to J. Massingberd Ford, 'Toward a Theology of "Speaking in Tongues"', *TS*, 32:1 (1971), 9-10, Hubert E. Edwards, 'The Tongues at Pentecost: A Suggestion', *Theol.*, 16 (1928), 242-252, takes a similar approach, arguing that the languages were in fact dialects spoken naturally by the 120, but I have not been able to obtain his article.

³⁰ The seeming lack of order to the list of nations has long been a topic of debate, Rudolf Pesch, *Die Apostelgeschichte* (EKKNT 5; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener, 1986), 105-106. For two contrasting views see Gary Gilbert, 'The List of Nations in Acts 2: Roman Propaganda and the Lukan Response', *JBL*, 121:3 (2002), 497-529 and Bruce M. Metzger, 'Ancient Astrological Geography and Acts 2:9-11,' in *Apostolic History and the Gospel: Biblical and Historical Essays Presented to F.F. Bruce on His 60th Birthday*, ed. W. Ward Gasque and Ralph P. Martin (Exeter: Paternoster Press, 1970), 123-133.

On the surface, the argument may seem extremely unlikely, but we should examine the evidence. The 120 do not speak in a language that the crowd merely understands, they speak in their native languages, literally ‘our own language in which we were born’ (2:8).³¹ What would be the birth-language of Jews who were Parthians and Medes and Elamites, etc.? This is almost an impossible question to answer, because there is little written evidence from the first century,³² and almost no evidence that tells us what language people *spoke*.³³ So although it is likely that the birth languages of these people were very varied, there is not yet the evidence to prove that it was not just Greek and/or Aramaic.

On other points the evidence against Zerhusen is stronger. He is right that the Hebrew language had a theological significance in Judaism which is both distinctive and powerful,³⁴ but he is unable to provide evidence to demonstrate that not speaking Hebrew in this context would be shocking.³⁵ Even in Palestine, it is likely that Hebrew was understood only by an ‘educated minority’.³⁶ Just as importantly, in the first-century Greek was also considered a sacred language, suitable for use in the synagogue, and appropriate for the scriptures.³⁷ So whilst the Hebrew language certainly had a religious function, its use was not so fixed or sacrosanct that using Greek would cause the extreme reaction of the crowd. McCone, who admits that the use of the Septuagint in some synagogues appears to undermine his case, argues this was ‘at first strongly resisted’ and

³¹ McCone fails to understand the significance of ‘birth language’, instead interpreting τῆ ἰδίᾳ διαλέκτῳ ἡμῶν ἐν ᾧ ἐγεννήθημεν as simply ‘their own language’. McCone, *Culture and Controversy*, 10-15.

³² Irina Levinskaya, *The Book of Acts in its Diaspora Setting* (The Book of Acts in its First Century Setting; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), viii-ix.

³³ Michael O. Wise, ‘Languages of Palestine’, *DJG*, 434.

³⁴ See Mayer Gruber, ‘Language(s) in Judaism’, *EJm*, 783.

³⁵ Zerhusen, ‘An Overlooked Judean Diglossia in Acts 2?’, 127.

³⁶ Grant R. Osborne, *The Hermeneutical Spiral: A Comprehensive Introduction to Biblical Interpretation* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2006²), 324. Joseph A. Fitzmyer, ‘Did Jesus Speak Greek?’, *BAR*, 18:5 (1992), says the majority could not understand Hebrew. For an alternative understanding, see Jehoshua M. Grintz, ‘Hebrew as the Spoken and Written Language in the Last Days of the Second Temple’, *JBL*, 79 (1960), 32-47.

³⁷ Gruber, ‘Language(s) in Judaism’, 2:784-785. Stanley Porter adds that the evidence ‘points away from Hebrew’s preservation as a prestige religious language’, Stanley E. Porter, ‘The Functional Distribution of Koine Greek in First-Century Palestine,’ in *Diglossia and Other Topics in New Testament Linguistics*, ed. Stanley E. Porter (Journal for the Study of the New Testament Supplement 193; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2000), 58.

cites unspecified rabbis as saying, ‘The man who teaches his son Greek is as accursed as the man who eats pork’.³⁸ McCone does not specify the source for this citation, but it is likely he is referring to Soṭah 9:14 C.³⁹ But this is too late to rely on as evidence for first century language use, and even if it was not, the accompanying Gemara says the prohibition was again Greek wisdom, not the Greek language.⁴⁰

In conclusion then, there is little evidence that tongues in Acts 2 were non-miraculous languages.

Unintelligible ecstatic speech?

Some scholars suggest that tongues in Acts 2 are unintelligible.⁴¹ However, if the tongues are not a miracle of hearing,⁴² then it follows that they cannot be unintelligible speech, because the listeners understood what was said. The only ‘evidence’ from Acts that it may be unintelligible is that the disciples were accused of drunkenness (2:13). If the *only* reaction was a belief that the disciples were drunk, this would perhaps be evidence for unintelligibility. However, according to Luke, the accusation of drunkenness is only one reaction. Many others affirm the intelligibility of the speech – they recognised both the language (‘in our own tongues’), and the content (‘we hear them telling... the mighty works of God’).⁴³ Moreover, this partial accusation of drunkenness would follow more easily if the speech was the ability to speak in many human languages.⁴⁴ Therefore the theory that in Acts 2 Luke is referring to ecstatic, unintelligible utterances is very unlikely to be correct.

The miraculous speaking of human languages?

Many writers refer to tongues in this sense as *xenoglossia* or *xenolalia*, to distinguish the

³⁸ McCone, *Culture and Controversy*, 17.

³⁹ ‘And [they decreed] that a man should not teach Greek to his son’.

⁴⁰ ‘For Rabbi said: Why use the Syrian language in the land of Israel? Either use the holy tongue or Greek! ...The Greek language and Greek wisdom are distinct’. For evidence of the distinctions sometimes made in the ancient world between Greek language and Greek culture, see J. N. Adams, *Bilingualism and the Latin Language* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 12-13.

⁴¹ E.g. Gerhard Dellling, *Worship in the New Testament* (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1962), 32.

⁴² See above, p. 139.

⁴³ Acts 2:11.

⁴⁴ See below, p. 144.

phenomena from tongues that are *unknown* languages.⁴⁵ Many who are persuaded that this describes the tongues-speech of Acts 2 also argue that (1) this is *not* true of tongues-speaking elsewhere in the New Testament, (2) that such an interpretation brings division between Luke and Paul, and (3) that this removes any opportunity for establishing the historicity of the passage.⁴⁶ That this position is held by so many, despite these formidable obstacles, demonstrates the inherent attractiveness of the position. Most commentators therefore take a position similar to that of Max Turner, that ‘this sense is virtually demanded...’.⁴⁷

This sense also best explains the mixed reaction of the crowd. Unintelligible ecstatic tongues would explain the accusations of drunkenness. A gift of hearing would explain the positive reaction of the crowd. But only the speaking of many languages explains *both* reactions. If Luke was describing the miraculous speaking of many human languages, then it would be quite a confusing situation before Peter stands up at 2:14. It is not difficult to imagine (for example) that an Egyptian may hear Peter speak to him in his own language, but also hear many other disciples speaking languages unknown to him. It is quite possible that whilst the Egyptian would be amazed that Peter could speak Egyptian, he could not accept that *all* the languages these people were speaking could be genuine — after all, how, even between them, could they possess such linguistic ability? The excitement of the speaker and the incomprehensibility to the listener of much that was being said around him would lead to exactly the result of 2:11-13. He concludes that the disciples are drunk.⁴⁸ Other more charitable observers hear their own language being

⁴⁵ For the former term see Cyril Glyndwr Williams, ‘Glossolalia as a Religious Phenomenon: “Tongues” at Corinth and Pentecost’, *Religion*, 5:1 (1975), 16; Carson, *Showing the Spirit*, 79; Johnson, ‘Glossolalia and the Embarrassments of Experience’, 116. For the latter see Cecil M. Robeck, ‘Ecclesiastical Authority and the Power of the Spirit’, *Paraclete*, 12:3 (1978), 21; Harold Hunter, ‘Tongues-Speech: A Patristic Analysis’, *JETS*, 23:2 (1980), 125; Charles H. Talbert, ‘Paul’s Understanding of the Holy Spirit: The Evidence of 1 Corinthians 12-14’, *PRSt*, 11:4 (1984), 103; William G. MacDonald, ‘Biblical Glossolalia: Thesis Four’, *Paraclete*, 27:3 (1993), 38; Turner, *The Holy Spirit and Spiritual Gifts*, 21; Cartledge, ‘The Nature and Function of New Testament Glossolalia’, 139. Joseph Fitzmyer prefers ‘xenologia’, Fitzmyer, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 239; Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *First Corinthians: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB 32; New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008), 469.

⁴⁶ See, on all three points, Johannes Behm, ‘γλῶσσαι’, *TDNT*, 1:724.

⁴⁷ Turner, ‘Early Christian Experience,’ 4. See also Tom L. Wilkinson, ‘Tongues and Prophecy in Acts and 1st Corinthians’, *VR*, 31 (1978), 2, who says ‘there hardly seems any reasonable doubt that... the tongues-speaking that appears there [i.e. in Acts] was in the languages known to the hearers’.

⁴⁸ Marshall apparently assumes this reconstruction, as do Carson and Turner. Marshall, ‘The Significance

spoken, and when talking to others come to understand that what sounds like unintelligible babble around them is in fact other genuine languages being spoken,⁴⁹ and are simply amazed and bewildered. Verse 11 shows that all understood at least part of what was being said. They did not understand completely, precisely because it was not a miracle of hearing, but of speaking — no-one could understand all of the languages, so no-one understood everything.⁵⁰ Therefore opinion was split between the enquirers and the mockers (vv12-13).⁵¹ Both groups heard a mixture of the intelligible and (to them) the unintelligible, but reacted differently to the same phenomenon. There is, therefore, ample evidence to confirm that Luke portrays tongues in Acts 2 as xenoglossia — a miraculous speaking in other languages. This suits Luke's purpose, or perhaps the miracle itself defines Luke's purpose.

The eschatological significance of tongues

We have already discussed that in Acts 2, Luke draws attention to the fulfilment of some old covenant prophecies, and when Peter says 'this is that',⁵² he is referring to the coming of the Spirit and the speaking in tongues as the fulfilment of Joel 2. It is the tongues-speaking, not just Peter's sermon, that demonstrates that the age which Joel spoke of has come about.⁵³ This fulfilment may help explain why Luke should so emphasise the tongues-speaking, and counters any criticism that a language-miracle was not necessary, because all could understand Greek and/or Aramaic anyway.⁵⁴

But Joel had prophesied that men and women would *prophesy* in the last days, not that

of Pentecost', 361; Carson, *Showing the Spirit*, 139; Turner, 'Early Christian Experience,' 5-6. Along similar lines, Gundry argues that the Jews from Palestine were those who accused the apostles of drunkenness as they did not recognise the foreign languages being spoken, whilst the non-Palestinians understood the miracle. Robert H. Gundry, "'Ecstatic Utterance" (N.E.B.)?', *JTS*, 17:2 (1966), 304.

⁴⁹ Luke points out that the crowd were discussing this amongst themselves (2:6-11).

⁵⁰ Barrett, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 1:125, is one of many who seems not to appreciate this.

⁵¹ Pesch describes the mockers as 'böswillig' (wilful or malevolent), because he believes it is not possible to confuse foreign languages and drunkenness otherwise, Pesch, *Die Apostelgeschichte*, 107. But the confusion from *all* the languages must have been significant, and drunkenness may have been a reasonable conclusion if one was not willing to investigate further.

⁵² Acts 2:16 (KJV, ASV).

⁵³ Forbes, *Prophecy and Inspired Speech*, 219-220, fn. 213; Carson, *Showing the Spirit*, 140, and the works he cites in footnote 11 on that page.

⁵⁴ E.g. Zerhusen, 'An Overlooked Judean Diglossia in Acts 2?', 119; Roloff, *Die Apostelgeschichte*, 38.

they would have an ability to speak in tongues. And Peter, by his addition of ‘and they shall prophesy’ to Joel’s text (2:18), not only acknowledges the importance of prophecy, but emphasises it. If tongues-speech does fulfil Joel’s words about prophecy that seems to suggest that the two phenomena share similar characteristics, or perhaps that tongues are a type of prophecy.⁵⁵ The shared characteristics of prophecy and these tongues includes that both are intelligible speech, and that both are empowered by the Spirit. The only obvious difference between prophecy and tongues is that tongues are in another language, in this case a miraculously given language.

But is Luke really suggesting that tongues-speech is the eschatological prophecy promised by Joel? One test we can easily conduct is to see whether the gift of tongues described in Acts 2 matches our understanding of eschatological prophecy from Luke.⁵⁶ The earlier work showed two threads emerge from Luke: (1) prophetic speech would be Spirit-empowered, and (2) prophecy involved witnessing to Jesus.

Was that the case of the tongues-speech in Acts 2? Certainly there is no doubt that the tongues-speech was Spirit-empowered (2:4), and there are also a few clues in the text that suggest it did involve a witness to Jesus. As circumstantial evidence, we are clear about the content of Peter’s sermon, and it certainly witnessed to Christ.⁵⁷ It is reasonable to assume that either the tongues-speech had similar content, or that the tongues-speech served as an introduction to Peter’s sermon. Either way, it too could be considered as witness to Jesus. More directly, the testimony of those hearing the tongues-speech is that the 120 were ‘telling... the mighty works of God’. That is certainly not incompatible with witness to Jesus. Indeed, given that seven weeks previously Jesus had risen from the dead, that they had seen him several times since, and that just a few

⁵⁵ See Carson, *Showing the Spirit*, 141; Forbes, *Prophecy and Inspired Speech*, 51; Richard B. Gaffin, *Perspectives on Pentecost: Studies in New Testament Teaching on the Gifts of the Holy Spirit* (Phillipsburg: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1979), 80, 82. See also Leonard J. Coppes, *Whatever Happened to Biblical Tongues?* (Phillipsburg: Pilgrim Publishing Company, 1977), 44-45. Engelsen takes exactly the opposite view, arguing that ‘In Acts the speech phenomenon referred to by the term γλῶσσα λαλεῖν encompasses both prophecy and praise of God’, Engelsen, ‘Glossolalia’, 190. In other words, for Engelsen, prophecy is a subspecies of tongues. The distinction does not matter to the discussion here, though it will become more important later on.

⁵⁶ See above, p. 124.

⁵⁷ J. Panagopoulos, ‘Die Urchristliche Prophetie: Ihr Charakter und Ihre Funktion,’ in *Prophetic Vocation in the New Testament and Today*, ed. Johannes Panagopoulos (Supplements to Novum Testamentum 45; Leiden: Brill, 1977), 13.

days before Pentecost they had witnessed him ascending to heaven, it is hard to imagine they could tell the mighty works of God *without* speaking of Jesus.⁵⁸ Finally, in 1:8, Luke records Jesus as saying ‘you will receive power when the Holy Spirit had come upon you, and you will be my witnesses⁵⁹ in Jerusalem...’. It is impossible to imagine that Luke does not want us to believe that the 120 fulfilled that command/promise in chapter 2.

Therefore it does seem that the tongues-speech in Acts 2 meets the expectation for eschatological prophecy in Luke’s gospel, and that Peter was justified in claiming that the tongues-speech fulfilled Joel’s prophecy. This matters because it suggests that the main difference (perhaps the only difference) between prophecy and tongues in Acts 2 is that the language in which it was spoken was not the native language of the speakers, but was miraculously given. This means that tongues in Acts 2 is a type or a subset of prophecy, specifically prophecy in a miraculously given language.

But why was it *this* type of prophecy (prophecy in a miraculous language) that is seen at Pentecost? Why not the normal, non-tongues type of prophecy?⁶⁰ In the new covenant scriptures, signs always have a purpose, and are never merely for dramatic effect, so it is highly unlikely that tongues were given simply because they were more spectacular than ‘regular’ prophecy. But what sign value do tongues have that ‘regular’ prophecy does not have?⁶¹

The languages miraculously spoken in Acts 2 were all languages spoken in Gentile lands,⁶²

⁵⁸ Bock helpfully draws a parallel with Luke 19:37-38, Darrell L. Bock, *Acts* (BECNT; Grand Rapids: Baker, 2007), 104.

⁵⁹ μου μάρτυρες could be objective genitive (witnesses to Jesus), or possessive genitive (witnesses belonging to Jesus). Probably both are meant. See Peterson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 111.

⁶⁰ Surprisingly, this question is rarely asked. Earl Richard is one of many who emphasise the eschatological importance of Pentecost, but do not explain the eschatological significance of tongues. Earl Richard, ‘Pentecost as a Recurrent Theme in Luke-Acts,’ in *New Views on Luke and Acts*, ed. Earl Richard (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1990), 143-149.

⁶¹ Bellshaw’s suggestion that in Acts tongues are an eschatological sign to unbelieving Jews because ‘whenever the gift of tongues was exercised Jews were present’ loses its lustre when one remembers that Jews were present in *every* episode in Acts, and that on the other occasions of tongues, only believing, not unbelieving Jews were present. William G. Bellshaw, ‘The Confusion of Tongues’, *BSac*, 120:478 (1963), 149. A similar view is put forward by Zane C. Hodges, ‘The Purpose of Tongues’, *BSac*, 120:479 (1963), 232; and S. Lewis Johnson, ‘The Gift of Tongues and the Book of Acts’, *BSac*, 120:480 (1963), 309-311.

⁶² See the list in Acts 2:8-11. For more on the structure of the list, see Metzger, ‘Ancient Astrological

and several old covenant scriptures and intertestamental texts led to an expectation of a mass Gentile conversion in the latter days.⁶³ Therefore one of the messages in Acts 2 may be, ‘this is what new covenant witness sounds like’ — not just a witness in Aramaic or Greek, but witness in countless Gentile languages. Old Testament scholar Duane L. Christensen describes the old covenant prophets’ concept of the nations in the last days apparently without Pentecost at all in mind. Yet the parallels between his summary of the prophetic word and the events of Pentecost are striking:

When, as a result of the suffering and mission of the servant, the peoples at the ends of the earth are waiting for Yahweh’s rule, their survivors join themselves to Israel to converge on Jerusalem ([Isaiah] 55:5). People from nations ‘of every tongue’ join the returning Jews (Zech 8:21-23), and the alienation of the enemy nations is removed when Yahweh changes ‘the speech of the peoples to a pure speech’ so that they may call on his name (Zeph 3:9)... They join themselves to Yahweh and become his people (Zech 2:11)...⁶⁴

The coming of many languages to Jerusalem, the calling on the name of the Lord and becoming Yahweh’s people is exactly what Luke records, and by the time Luke writes his account, he is very aware of the importance of the Gentile mission, and almost certainly familiar with the texts that Christensen cites.⁶⁵ Peter’s citation of Joel 2 included the promise that the Spirit would be poured out ‘on all flesh’, and Luke’s narrative is already following the direction set in 1:8 — Jerusalem, Judea, the ends of the earth. It is therefore not difficult to imagine that prophecy in Gentile languages would have seemed particularly significant when compared with ‘ordinary’ prophecy, even more so if it was God who made it happen.

However, the Spirit fell on the 120, not on the crowd, and it was they who spoke in tongues, not the multitude. In other words, at Pentecost the gospel was ‘only’ preached

Geography and Acts 2:9-11,’ 123-133.

⁶³ See Isaiah 19:23, 45:22-34; Jeremiah 3:17; Zechariah 8:23; also Tobit 13:11; 1 Enoch 48:4; Testament of Simeon 7:2; Sibylline Oracles 5:493-500; and 2 Baruch 68:5. This hope became prominent in early Christianity, which is why a key purpose of Luke’s narrative is to demonstrate the gospel being preached to and accepted by an ever-widening Gentile audience. For more on the importance of the salvation of the Gentiles in Luke-Acts, see Jacques Dupont, ‘Le Salut des Gentils et la Signification Theologique du Livre des Actes’, *NTS*, 6 (1959-60), 132-155.

⁶⁴ Duane L. Christensen, ‘Nations’, *ABD*, 4:1045.

⁶⁵ Luke’s knowledge of the Septuagint appears to be exceptional. See the comments above, pp. 120f, and the literature cited there.

in many languages. This could be construed as the first stage towards the fulfilment of these Isaianic prophecies, but it would only be the first stage. Luke makes no reference to the crowd responding in many tongues, nor to the inclusion of Gentiles into the church – although the crowd came from Gentile lands and spoke Gentile languages, they were all either Jews or proselytes (2:11). Therefore whilst the tongues-speech at Pentecost certainly fulfilled the old covenant prophecies that the Spirit will be poured out in the last days, it did not fulfil the prophecies about Gentile conversion – but it does point to them.⁶⁶

The tongues-speaking of Acts 2 therefore has a double eschatological significance. It is significant because it is new covenant prophecy, and it is significant because it anticipates the gospel proclamation to all nations. Luke and Peter viewed the early events of Acts 2 as a fulfilment of Joel's prophecy that in the last days all would prophesy. This prophesying was demonstrated by the 120 as they spoke in tongues (that is, as they prophesied in miraculously given languages), and in Peter's speech.⁶⁷ Luke's entire presentation in Acts 2 seems designed to prove that the new age, the age of the Spirit, had finally broken in on God's people.

Prophecy in the rest of Acts

Having investigated the distinctive tongues-type of prophecy in the opening of Acts, it is now possible to look for prophecy in the rest of the book. Various strategies for identifying prophecy exist, but the first strategy must be to examine speech that Luke himself identifies as prophetic. Luke never uses the word προφητεία, but he does use both προφητεύω and προφήτης on several occasions. Our findings in Acts 2 also mean that we should look for references to γλώσσα, and be alert to other forms of speech that are described as empowered by the Spirit.

However, at this stage we are not interested in prophecy or prophets from the old covenant scriptures, and this excludes many references to προφητεύω and προφήτης.⁶⁸ Neither are we interested in the 'prophet like Moses' which the apostles and Luke take to

⁶⁶ George Eldon Ladd, *A Theology of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993²), 385; Carl F. H. Henry, *God, Revelation and Authority*, 6 vols. (Waco: Word, 1976-1983), 6:378.

⁶⁷ Friedrich et al., *TDNT*, 6:854.

⁶⁸ Specifically, it excludes 2:16, 2:30, 3:18, 3:21, 3:24-25, 7:42, 7:48, 7:52, 8:28, 8:30, 8:34, 10:43, 13:15, 13:20, 13:27, 13:40, 15:15, 24:14, 26:22, 26:27, 28:23, 28:25.

refer exclusively to Jesus, the ‘Jewish false prophet’, or γλῶσσα when it refers to something other than languages.⁶⁹ This leaves less evidence than might be expected – four occurrences of the verb προφητεύω (two of which occur in Acts 2), four more of the noun προφήτης, and four of γλῶσσα (again two of which occur in Acts 2).⁷⁰ However, if we expand our search to include other possible references to Spirit-empowered speech, we have considerably more data to work with.⁷¹

Luke’s use of προφητεύω raises more questions than answers, because Luke never uses the verb in the context of recorded prophetic speech, which makes it difficult to know what Luke thinks prophecy is.⁷² Of the four occurrences, two occur in the Pentecost narrative as citations from Joel’s prophecy. We have already examined Acts 2 in some detail, so little needs to be added to that discussion. However, it is worth noting that the addition of ‘and they shall prophesy’ in 2:18 emphasises both the universality of new covenant prophethood, and its significance as a sign of the new covenant age. The third reference to προφητεύω occurs in 19:6 in the context of speaking in tongues (‘they began speaking in tongues and prophesying’), and it is probably best we examine that verse when dealing with γλῶσσα, below.⁷³ The fourth reference is tantalisingly brief: Luke notes that Philip the evangelist had ‘four unmarried [παρθένοι] daughters, who prophesied’ (21:9). Discussion of this verse often focuses on whether Luke’s description of the women as virgins/unmarried is significant. Παρθένος can be used with or without focus on virginity,⁷⁴ though most of the dictionaries and lexicons assert there is no such focus here.⁷⁵ Celibacy and prophecy are sometimes linked in Second Temple and rabbinic

⁶⁹ Further excluding 2:3, 26; 3:22-23; 7:37; and 13:6.

⁷⁰ προφητεύω is found in 2:17, 18; 19:6; 21:9; προφήτης in 11:27, 13:1, 15:32, 21:10; and γλῶσσα in 10:46 and 19:6.

⁷¹ Adding 1:8; 4:8, 31; 5:32; 6:10; 7:55-56; 11:23-24; 13:9-11; 21:4 and perhaps 18:25. We exclude 4:25 and 28:25 as they refer to old covenant prophesying. Codex Bezae would add 15:7 and 15:32, although these are almost certainly interpretative expansions, a consequence of the Codex’s particular interest in the Spirit. See E. J. Epp, *The Theological Tendency of Codex Bezae Cantabrigiensis in Acts* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1966), 67-70, 116-118.

⁷² This perhaps suggests that in the first-century there was little need to explain the phenomenon.

⁷³ See below, pp. 174f.

⁷⁴ BDAG, 777.

⁷⁵ See, for example, Joseph A. Fitzmyer, ‘παρθένος’, *EDNT*, 3:40; Johannes P. Louw and Eugene A. Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament Based on Semantic Domains*, 2 vols. (New York: United Bible Societies, 1988-1989²), 1:108. For the contrary view see BDAG, 777.

sources,⁷⁶ but never in the New Testament.⁷⁷ Luke's purpose is likely much simpler. Whilst it is likely that there were women amongst the 120 (Acts 2), and possibly amongst the Ephesian twelve (Acts 19), Luke has not said so explicitly, so without 21:9, there would be no explicit reference anywhere in the book of Acts to the fulfilment of Joel's prophecy that 'your sons *and daughters* will prophesy'. But here Luke records that not just one, but four daughters prophesy, demonstrating there were several women in the early church who had the gift of prophecy.⁷⁸ Whether this means that they had a wide reputation with regard to their prophetic gift, or whether Luke simply means to record that they prophesied during his stay in Philip's house, is perhaps a moot point.⁷⁹ Either way the record clearly underlines the broad distribution of the prophetic gift in the new covenant.

Moving from the verb to the noun, on four occasions Luke describes some of his contemporaries as prophets. In Acts 11:27-28, a group of prophets came from Jerusalem to Antioch, one (Agabus) is named and he prophesies. In 13:1, a group of 'prophets and teachers' is referred to, and the Holy Spirit speaks. In 15:32, again in Antioch, Judas and Silas are specifically identified as prophets, as is Agabus (again) in 21:10. Although Luke never uses προφητεύω or προφητεία in proximity to προφήτης in Acts, every time a man is identified as a prophet (and it is always a man), it is in the context of what they said.⁸⁰ On three of those occasions Luke specifically draws attention to the Spirit's role in the prophet's speech and the content of the speech is given in some detail,⁸¹ but when the Spirit is not mentioned (15:32) Luke records only general details about the effect of the speech — they 'encouraged and strengthened the brothers with many words'.

⁷⁶ Miller, 'Luke's Conception of Prophets', 99-100.

⁷⁷ Gerhard Delling, 'παρθένος', *TDNT*, 5:834, fn. 52.

⁷⁸ John B. Polhill, *Acts* (NAC; Nashville: Broadman Press, 1992), 435.

⁷⁹ The participle is present tense and active voice, and could therefore refer to an on-going state, or a specific event.

⁸⁰ In the case of Agabus in Antioch he 'foretold by the Spirit that there would be a great famine' (11:28). In 13:2, while the Antioch prophets were worshipping the Lord, 'the Holy Spirit said, "Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul..."'. In 15:32, Judas and Silas 'encouraged and strengthened the brothers with many words'. Finally, in 21:11, Agabus said, 'Thus says the Holy Spirit, "This is how the Jews at Jerusalem will bind the man..."'.

⁸¹ The formula for describing the prophetic inspiration varies in each case. In 11:28 Agabus speaks *διὰ τοῦ πνεύματος*. In 13:2 Luke simply writes *εἶπεν τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον*, whereas in 21:11 Agabus uses the introductory formula: *τάδε λέγει τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον*.

In Acts 13 five prophets and teachers from Antioch met together, and there the Holy Spirit spoke to them, requesting that Barnabas and Saul were sent out as missionaries to the Gentiles. Strictly speaking we do not get a record of a prophecy, instead we get a record of what the Holy Spirit said, though many commentators presume that this word was communicated to the group as a prophecy. It came in the context of worship (13:2), and Luke records that the group did what the Holy Spirit said (13:3). But this is a very brief passage, and it is hard to say too much more. It is not even clear whether the description ‘prophets and teachers’ applies equally to the whole group, or whether some are prophets and others are teachers.⁸²

Now that we have briefly examined the simpler or shorter references to prophecy in Acts, we can study in greater detail the more difficult or longer references.

Judas and Silas (Acts 15:32)

We have identified that we need to approach Judas and Silas slightly differently from the way we approached the other prophets, because on the three other occasions we read of προφήτης, we can be confident that Luke is portraying genuine prophecy because the contents of Spirit-prompted speech can be assessed, and the Holy Spirit is specifically mentioned as the source of the speech.⁸³ However here in Acts 15:32 Luke simply records, ‘And Judas and Silas, who were themselves prophets, encouraged and strengthened the brothers with many words.’ Luke does not tell us the content of the speech, nor does he mention the Spirit,⁸⁴ he just tells us the effect the speech had. So is this speech prophecy, or is it ‘ordinary’ speech that happens to be from the mouths of prophets?⁸⁵

There are good reasons to affirm that the speech is prophecy. There is no need to insist that Luke must explicitly draw attention to a prophecy through an introductory formula, reference to the Spirit, or use of προφητεύω. In addition, there is every reason to think

⁸² Farnell ably demonstrates the problems that the lack of evidence brings, by first arguing that the description ‘prophets and teachers’ in 13:1 demonstrates that ‘the gifts of prophecy and teaching are distinguished’, yet later stating, ‘in Acts 13:1-3 teaching may perhaps appear to be an exercise of the prophetic gift’. Farnell, ‘The New Testament Prophetic Gift’, 113, 225, fn 126.

⁸³ ‘Agabus stood up and foretold by the Spirit’ (11:28), ‘While they were worshipping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said...’ (13:2) and Agabus ‘said, ‘Thus says the Holy Spirit,...’ (21:11).

⁸⁴ Codex Bezae adds πληρεις πνευματος αγιου.

⁸⁵ At a minimum, prophecy is Spirit-empowered speech, and there is no suggestion in the New Testament that every word uttered by those identified as prophets was Spirit-empowered.

that prophecy would encourage and strengthen the brothers,⁸⁶ and no need to doubt that a prophecy (or prophecies) could have many words.

On the other hand, it cannot be assumed that just because Luke describes Judas and Silas as prophets he is suggesting that the speech is a prophecy, particularly if there could be other reasons for identifying them as such. The job of Judas and Silas was to accompany Paul and Barnabas back to Antioch to deliver the letter from the Jerusalem Council. They are described in 15:22 as ‘leading men’, but in 15:32, he says ‘who themselves were also⁸⁷ prophets’ (καὶ αὐτοὶ προφηταὶ ὄντες), in quite an emphatic way. The emphasis implies that Judas and Silas were not the only prophets, and that their prophethood was particularly important for the task of delivering the letter. This may suggest that Luke’s identification of them as prophets came more from a desire to underline their authority and ability to know God’s will, than from a desire to identify this particular speech as prophetic.⁸⁸ This possibility is heightened when we remember that the whole visit to Antioch was necessary, ‘since we have heard that some persons have gone out from us and troubled you with words, unsettling your minds, although we gave them no instructions’ (15:24). It was not that men had gone to Antioch who simply said they were from the Jerusalem church, they really were from the Jerusalem church.⁸⁹ In this situation, the presence of men recognised as prophets would help to demonstrate that this message from Jerusalem, unlike the previous one, was both of God and with authority.

This means there are good reasons to doubt that Luke is identifying the speech of Judas and Silas as prophetic, and it would be wiser not to use this verse to contribute towards a definition of Christian prophecy. After a definition has been determined from clearer texts, it would of course be possible to see whether this occasion matches the definition.

⁸⁶ Those who argue that this is precisely what Luke is saying in Acts 15:32 include Crone, *Early Christian Prophecy*, 203-204, and especially 290; Dudley Foord, ‘Prophecy in the New Testament’, *RTR*, 31:1 (1972), 13; Hill, *New Testament Prophecy*, 124. Ellis points out that παράκλησις is frequently linked with prophecy by Luke, Ellis, *Prophecy and Hermeneutic in Early Christianity*, 131-132.

⁸⁷ Barrett, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 2:749.

⁸⁸ See Aune, *Prophecy in Early Christianity*, 265-266; Peterson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 441; Miller, ‘Luke’s Conception of Prophets’, 120, 122.

⁸⁹ Peter says clearly that they had gone out ‘from us’. Acts 15:24, cf. 15:1.

Agabus (Acts 11:27-30, 21:10-14)

The prophet Agabus is mentioned twice by Luke, the first occasion (11:27-30) concerned an impending famine, the second occasion (21:10-14) concerned the danger to Paul in Jerusalem. The hearers believed Agabus' first prophecy and responded positively and freely, even though he did not demand a response.⁹⁰ Paul also appears to have believed Agabus' second prophecy, but he did not act upon it (though again Agabus did not demand a response).⁹¹ The purpose of both of Agabus' prophecies were to warn about the future, which is not at all what we were expecting following our study of eschatological prophecy in the old covenant scriptures, the gospels or Acts 2. Indeed Agabus looks more like an old covenant prophet than a believer prophesying in fulfilment of the eschatological promises.

But is Agabus' prophecy really in the style of old covenant prophets? Grudem says not, and claims that by old covenant standards, Agabus would have been condemned as a false prophet, because his predictions fail to come true.⁹² He concludes that Agabus 'receives some kind of revelation and then reports it in his own words... with the details wrong',⁹³ which has led to Acts 21 becoming a battleground between those who see two types of prophetic authority in the Bible, and those who see only one. The primary arguments against Grudem relate to his assertion that Agabus' prophecy was not authoritative,⁹⁴ whilst we are primarily concerned with whether Agabus' prophecy is a fulfilment of eschatological hopes regarding prophecy. The two issues are not the same, but the arguments against Grudem do have an impact on the present study, because Grudem's opponents try to demonstrate that Agabus is in continuity with old covenant prophets, and we had not expected to find old covenant-style prophets after John the Baptist. We therefore need to carefully assess the issues.

⁹⁰ Barrett, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 1:560.

⁹¹ Gaffin, *Perspectives on Pentecost*, 66; {Hilber, 1994 #277@256. See also Mark A. Barclift, 'The Misapplication of the Gift of Prophecy', *Paraclete*, 19:2 (1985), 22.

⁹² Grudem, *The Gift of Prophecy in 1 Corinthians*, 79. He argues that Paul was bound by the Romans not the Jews (21:11, 33), and that Paul was not delivered into the hands of the Gentiles, but instead the Gentiles rescued him from the Jews (21:11, 30; 22:24). See also Hill, *New Testament Prophecy*, 108.

⁹³ Grudem, *The Gift of Prophecy in 1 Corinthians*, 80-81.

⁹⁴ Strictly speaking, Grudem says it has 'divine authority of general content', which he contrasts with 'divine authority of actual words' which is attributed only to old covenant prophets and new covenant apostles.

One argument sometimes offered against Grudem concerns whether Agabus' prophecy really was fulfilled. Robert Thomas compares the apparent 'inaccuracies' in Agabus' prophecy to 'inaccuracies' with the gospel records of the crucifixion, but that discussion has no bearing on this study.⁹⁵ However, a more relevant form of this argument states that the literal fulfilment demanded by Grudem was not demanded from old covenant prophets, and therefore Agabus' prophecy was similar to theirs, despite Grudem's assertions. This has led to the unusual phenomenon of conservative evangelical scholars doing their best to find 'inaccurate' prophecies in the Old Testament, or at least 'inaccurate' according to the standards Grudem expects from Agabus. Consequently several writers have accused Grudem of demanding 'pedantic precision' from Agabus,⁹⁶ because various old covenant prophets would be condemned alongside Agabus if judged by similar standards. For example, Gentry cites Malachi 4:5 which prophesies that Elijah will return, but this found fulfilment not in the return of Elijah, but in the appearance of John the Baptist.⁹⁷ Similar arguments are put forward both by McWilliams⁹⁸ and Hilber,⁹⁹ and taken together are persuasive. Significantly, perhaps, Grudem has still not responded to any of these criticisms even in the most recent presentation of his work.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁵ For reference, Thomas argues that throughout Acts it is recorded that the Jews crucified Jesus, but in the gospels it records that the Romans crucified him. This is no less 'accurate' than Agabus' prophecy, and he believes this demonstrates that Luke sometimes speaks of the people responsible for an act even though they may not have actually carried out the act themselves (Thomas, 'Prophecy Rediscovered?', 91; and Gentry, *The Charismatic Gift of Prophecy*, 43). Grudem responded by arguing this is true only when the person wants the act to be done and directs others to do it (Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 1053). In Grudem's view this makes the crucifixion account 'accurate', but does not make Agabus' prophecy accurate.

⁹⁶ So Gaffin, *Perspectives on Pentecost*, 65-66, fn. 22; Gentry, *The Charismatic Gift of Prophecy*, 42; Farnell, 'The New Testament Prophetic Gift', 108; McWilliams, 'Something New under the Sun?', 326.

⁹⁷ Gentry, *The Charismatic Gift of Prophecy*, 42-43.

⁹⁸ McWilliams, 'Something New under the Sun?', 326. He cites Genesis 49:11 (*cf.* Deuteronomy 33:9), Psalm 40:6, Jeremiah 31:15, Amos 9:11 (*cf.* Acts 15:16-17), as well as Malachi 4:5-6.

⁹⁹ He gives several examples throughout 1 and 2 Kings where prophecies are fulfilled, but the fulfilment does not come in a precisely literal fashion. Hilber, 'Diversity of OT Prophetic Phenomena and NT Prophecy', 250-251, 255-256, particularly fn. 31 and fn. 32.

¹⁰⁰ Although the text of the 2000 edition of *The Gift of Prophecy in the New Testament and Today* is almost identical to the earlier 1988 edition, Grudem added a number of appendices, some of which respond to specific criticisms of his work. He also added some interaction with objectors in his 1994 *Systematic Theology*. However, in neither of these works has he dealt with the claims that he is demanding too much from Old Testament prophetic fulfilment.

McWilliams' and Hilber's work weighs heavily against Grudem's argument that Agabus is not in continuity with the old covenant prophets.¹⁰¹

There are two more arguments against Grudem. A second argument is that Agabus' introductory formula ('Thus says the Holy Spirit') consciously places Agabus in the role of an old covenant prophet, and Grudem himself admits that this does seem to be the case, at least at first glance.¹⁰² He proposes several possible solutions to this problem, but acknowledges that none are without their problems, and he himself has changed his view as to which 'solution' might be correct.¹⁰³ Unfortunately Grudem does rather leave you with the impression that he has not even convinced himself that he is right on this point. The third argument which suggests Agabus was cast in the mould of old covenant prophets is his use of a symbolic action in his prophecy, a familiar device also used by several prophets of the old covenant.¹⁰⁴

So what should we make of Agabus? Grudem's argument that Agabus is unlike old covenant prophets because his prophecy did not come true, has been shown by McWilliams and Hilber to be over-simplified. And in two other ways (the introductory formula and use of symbolic action), Agabus seems to be consciously mimicking old covenant prophets. That does not mean that Agabus is a prophet in *exactly* the same way as Isaiah or Jeremiah, or even as John the Baptist, after all, his introductory formula ('thus says the Holy Spirit', whilst similar to that often used by old covenant prophets ('thus says Yahweh'), is nonetheless distinctive. Notwithstanding this, most observers, even those with no interest in Grudem's argument, suggest that Agabus' prophetic style is reminiscent of old covenant prophecy.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰¹ McWilliams, 'Something New under the Sun?', 325.

¹⁰² Grudem, *The Gift of Prophecy in 1 Corinthians*, 79.

¹⁰³ Compare idem, 82 with Grudem, *The Gift of Prophecy in the New Testament and Today*, 83.

¹⁰⁴ Cf. 1 Kings 11:29-40, 22:11; Isaiah 20:1-6; Jeremiah 13:1-11; Ezekiel 4:1-17, 5:1-17.

¹⁰⁵ See, particularly Hermann Patsch, 'Die Prophetie des Agabus', *TZ*, 28:3 (1972), 228-230, and Cecil M. Robeck, 'The Gift of Prophecy in Acts and Paul, Part 1', *SBTh*, 5:1 (1975), 23-25, who after a detailed analysis, concludes there was 'extreme similarity'. Others taking the same view include {Hur, 2001 #1454@149, fn. 105}; Ellis, *Prophecy and Hermeneutic in Early Christianity*, 130; Barclay Moon Newman and Eugene A. Nida, *A Translator's Handbook on The Acts of the Apostles* (UBSH; New York: United Bible Societies, 1972), 405; Friedrich et al., *TDNT*, 6:849; Delling, *Worship in the New Testament*, 29; Shepherd, *The Narrative Function of the Holy Spirit as a Character in Luke-Acts*, 236; F. David Farnell, 'The Gift of Prophecy in the Old and New Testaments', *BSac*, 149:596 (1992), 395-396; G. W. H. Lampe, "'Grievous

Excursus: How many types of prophecy are there?

Does this mean that there is more than one type of prophecy in Acts? That is certainly the conclusion of most writers,¹⁰⁶ whose conclusions range from two,¹⁰⁷ three,¹⁰⁸ six,¹⁰⁹ or seven¹¹⁰ types of prophecy in the New Testament or in Luke-Acts. The New Testament record makes it clear that there is variety within prophecy (and the contrast between Agabus' prophecies and other prophecies underlines that), but what is less clear is whether the variety represents several distinct types,¹¹¹ two or three main types that can be further sub-divided, or a continuous spectrum that cannot be easily sub-divided.

There are several variations of the two-type view of prophecy: authoritative vs. non-authoritative (Grudem), Christological kerygma vs. apocalyptic prophecy (Dautzenberg), and the prophecy of 'professional' prophets vs. 'occasional' prophets (e.g. Lampe).¹¹² Although the categories of these different writers do not correspond exactly, there is more overlap between them than might be imagined – despite the different labels, all three writers differentiate between a relatively common type of prophecy that does not have significant authority, and its rarer more authoritative counterpart. If one attempts to categorise various New Testament prophecies into the two categories of each writer,

Wolves" (Acts 20:29),' in *Christ and Spirit in the New Testament: Studies in Honour of Charles Francis Digby Moule*, ed. Barnabas Lindars and Stephen S. Smalley (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1973), 257; Aune, *Prophecy in Early Christianity*, 263-264, 320; Roloff, *Die Apostelgeschichte*, 310..

¹⁰⁶ A small minority disagree. As Penney points out, they tend to be from dispensationalist or reformed traditions, and usually suggest there is only one type of prophecy across both testaments, Penney, 'The Testing of New Testament Prophecy', 35. For an example, see F. David Farnell, 'Does the New Testament Teach Two Prophetic Gifts?', *BSac*, 150:597 (1993), 62-88.

¹⁰⁷ E.g. Robeck, 'The Gift of Prophecy in Acts and Paul, Part 1', 35.

¹⁰⁸ See, for example, Ulrich B. Müller, *Prophetie und Predigt im Neuen Testament: Formgeschichtliche Untersuchungen Zur Urchristliche Prophetie* (Gütersloh: Mohn, 1975), 19-46.

¹⁰⁹ Aune, *Prophecy in Early Christianity*, 320-325, whose conclusions are determined from many early Christian documents, including the New Testament.

¹¹⁰ Penney, 'The Testing of New Testament Prophecy', 56-57. Strictly speaking Penney is identifying activities of the 'prophetic Spirit', rather than prophecy *per se*.

¹¹¹ There is no material difference between asserting that there is one type of prophecy with several sub-types, or that there are several types of prophecy.

¹¹² Lampe, "'Grievous Wolves" (Acts 20:29),' 257. Lampe recognises some kind of quantitative difference in the prophecies of the two types of prophet, though others recognise a difference only in the status of the two types of prophecies, Ellis, *Prophecy and Hermeneutic in Early Christianity*, 139; Henry Barclay Swete, *The Holy Spirit in the New Testament* (London: Macmillan, 1909), 377.

the division looks very similar in all three cases.

The three-type view makes a distinction between wandering prophets, locally recognised prophets and occasional or congregational prophets, though the category of ‘wandering prophet’ has since been shown to be very uncertain in the New Testament, particularly in Luke and Paul,¹¹³ and is not even assured in later documents such as the Didache.¹¹⁴ But this view need not concern us, as our interest is strictly in different types of *prophecy*, not in different types of *prophet*, and even if we established the existence of three different types of prophet, that would not mean there were necessarily three different types of prophecy.

David Aune’s six-type categorisation was created after identifying possible prophetic oracles using predetermined criteria.¹¹⁵ Aune does not believe that early Christian prophetic speech had a distinctive form and content, and therefore he argues that his criteria are the only way that prophecy can be reliably identified.¹¹⁶ Of the six types of prophecy he identifies, only three are found in Acts: oracles of assurance (e.g. 18:9, 23:11, 27:23-24), prescriptive oracles (e.g. 13:2, 21:4), and announcements of judgement (e.g. 13:9-11). However, several prophecies from Acts, including the two from Agabus, do not appear to fit into this categorisation,¹¹⁷ and neither the speaking in tongues nor Peter’s sermon in Acts 2 are identified as prophetic. At the same time, some oracles are included despite not being Christian prophecy – including oracles from demons.¹¹⁸ The inclusion of some non-Christian prophecies and the exclusion of some of the most important

¹¹³ Forbes, *Prophecy and Inspired Speech*, 242-246.

¹¹⁴ On which see Jonathan A. Draper, ‘Weber, Theissen, and “Wandering Charismatics” in the Didache’, *J ECS*, 6 (1998), 541-576 and more specifically Boring, *Sayings of the Risen Jesus*, 58-59.

¹¹⁵ The criteria were (1) attribution to a supernatural being, (2) special knowledge, and (3) use of an introductory formula. Aune, *Prophecy in Early Christianity*, 247-248. Later two more criteria were added, (4) reference to the inspiration of the speaker, and (5) The saying does not ‘rest comfortably in its present literary setting’. *Idem*, 317. Aune allows this final criterion to be used only when the saying already meets some of the other criteria.

¹¹⁶ *idem*, 262.

¹¹⁷ Although Aune discusses these prophecies at some length, he does not assign them to a particular type. He does say that Agabus’ second prophecy is close to a Graeco-Roman speech form he labels ‘predictive oracle’, and hints that his first prophecy might be of similar form (*idem*, 264-265), but that form does not appear in his list of ‘Basic Forms of Christian Prophetic Speech’.

¹¹⁸ Aune’s first criterion is attribution to a supernatural being, and explicitly includes not only attribution to God, but also ‘an angel, a deceased person, Satan, a demon, etc.’, *idem*, 247.

Christian prophecies is troubling, and means that although Aune's categorisation may have some use in demonstrating variety within the New Testament, it cannot be accepted as a definitive list of the types of Christian prophecy.

John Penney's seven-type list is not actually a list of types of prophecy, but of seven types of activity of the 'prophetic Spirit', and therefore not everything in the list even involves speech,¹¹⁹ and many of those that do involve speech are not identified by Luke as prophecy. This is potentially a problem: whilst we know that all prophecy is Spirit-empowered, is all Spirit-empowered speech prophecy?¹²⁰ Regardless, several of Penney's types are not convincing.¹²¹ As an example, he cites Acts 4:8-12, 31 as demonstrating one type as 'an influx of boldness and assurance to the speaker', but this text must be read in conjunction with 2:29, 4:29, 9:27-28, 13:36, 14:3, 18:26, 19:8, 26:26 and 28:31 which together suggest that boldness was a fairly normative consequence of the Spirit's empowering, not a special type of activity.¹²² These significant problems mean that Penney's list cannot be accepted as a definitive list of types of New Testament prophecy.

I am therefore not satisfied that the one-type, three-type, six-type or seven-type enumerations adequately describe the New Testament data. Nor can I accept that there is simply a spectrum of prophecy that cannot be divided into different types. Our investigation so far has examined every occasion in Acts that is explicitly identified as prophecy or as Spirit-empowered speech that comes from a prophet, and has uncovered two quite distinct types of prophecy. One type seems to be a consequence of an

¹¹⁹ So, type (1) is classified as 'direct revelation by the Spirit which informs subsequent preaching', and gives the example of Peter's vision prior to going to Cornelius. Type (5) is 'complementary manifestation of God's activity', by which Penney means signs and wonders that sometimes accompany speech.

¹²⁰ The approach we have taken in this study is to look at Spirit-empowered speech that is not explicitly identified as prophecy only after we have considered speech that is. That way, the Spirit-empowered speech can be compared with prophetic speech to determine the likelihood that it is in fact prophecy.

¹²¹ Even type (1) is far from convincing (see above, fn. 119). Acts seems to suggest that Peter's vision was not given to inform his preaching, but rather to change his attitude towards the invitation he would shortly receive to be a house-guest of a Gentile. It is quite different from a type of prophesying that sometimes occurs in the old covenant scriptures that does inform future speech, for example, 'Go to this people and say...' (e.g. Isaiah 6:9).

¹²² Each of those verses use *παρρησία* or *παρρησιάζομαι* to describe speech (*παρρησία* is used in the instances Penney cites). Barrett and Witherington both point out that the word is always used in the context of preaching the gospel to Jews, Barrett, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 1:233; Witherington, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 195.

eschatological outpouring of the Spirit on all people giving them prophetic ability, and a second seems to be modelled after the prophesying of old covenant prophets though with a contemporary twist. For convenience, we could label these ‘new covenant style prophecy’, and ‘old covenant style prophecy’. Within these main types, there also appear to be some sub-types (for example with new covenant style prophecy, there seems to be a ‘tongues type’ and a ‘non-tongues type’).

We cannot say at this stage that there are *only* these two types of prophecy in Acts, still less that they are the only two types of prophecy in the New Testament, as even in Acts we have not yet investigated other forms of Spirit-empowered speech, nor have we concluded our study on tongues-speech. It is possible that when we do so we will find other types of prophecy that need to be added to these. But having studied the most significant evidence (speech specifically identified as prophetic) we can give a provisional, interim conclusion: there are two types of prophecy in Acts, a ‘new covenant style’ that fulfils eschatological hope, and an ‘old covenant style’ that is modelled after the prophets of the old covenant scriptures.

Other Spirit-empowered speech in Acts

We earlier identified several passages in Acts that described speech that was Spirit-empowered, but was not explicitly identified as prophecy (1:8; 4:8, 31; 5:32; 6:10; 7:55-56; 11:23-24; 13:9-11; 18:25¹²³ and 21:4).¹²⁴ We cannot assume that all prophecy in Acts is explicitly labelled as such, but neither can we assume that all Spirit-empowered speech is prophecy, so we now need to briefly examine each of these references to determine its type of speech. To do so, we will need a set of criteria with which to judge whether this speech is prophecy, and getting the criteria right is crucial. We will therefore adopt a conservative approach, which will be to compare speech identified as Spirit-empowered with speech that Luke identifies as prophetic. If the Spirit-empowered speech looks like the prophetic speech, then we will classify it as prophecy. If not, we will not. If, at the end of the study, we have examples of Spirit empowered-speech that do not look like either of the two types of prophecy we have already identified, we can determine whether these

¹²³ There is a question in 18:25 as to whether πνεῦμα refers to the Spirit or simply to Apollos’ spirit. See the discussion below, p. 164.

¹²⁴ See above, p. 149. I consider the references in the Codex Bezae at 15:7 and 15:32 as later interpretative expansions.

represent a new type of prophecy, or something different altogether.

So far we have identified two main types of prophetic speech. Both types are portrayed as Spirit-empowered, which is why we are now examining other speech that Luke seems to identify as Spirit-empowered. The other qualities of prophetic speech vary according to type. The first type seems to fulfil eschatological ‘new covenant’ promises, and is characterised by a universality¹²⁵ and an emphasis on witnessing to Jesus. The second type seems to be modelled on ‘old covenant’ prophecies and is characterised by its identification with those labelled as ‘prophets’, and its similarity in form and content to old covenant prophecies. As we examine each occasion of Spirit-empowered speech, we will compare it to both types of prophecy.

Acts 1:8 — Here Jesus promises his disciples that they will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon them, and they will be his witnesses. This verse does not mention speech directly, but it is paradigmatic for the unfolding of the whole book, and it is clear from the rest of Acts that their witness was primarily verbal.¹²⁶ The rest of Acts suggests strongly that this witness was about Jesus, and in the context of the promise of Luke 24 and the initial fulfilment in Acts 2 (both of which we identified as referring to ‘new covenant style’ prophesying), we can also identify 1:8 with that style of prophecy.

Acts 4:8 — Peter, filled with the Spirit, defends the healing of the cripple to the rulers, elders and scribes. Peter’s speech clearly witnesses to Jesus, and the reference to Peter and John’s lowly educational status in 4:13 might be intended in part to refer back to Acts 2:18 which promised the Spirit would fall even on lowly servants. Regardless of this, 4:8 is a fulfilment of Luke 12:11-12 and 21:14-15,¹²⁷ which we previously identified as new covenant prophecy,¹²⁸ and consequently we can fairly confidently classify this as new covenant prophecy, too.

Acts 4:31 is an answer to the prayer for boldness of 4:29. The context again is witness to

¹²⁵ Acts shows a development in the earliest church’s understanding of who would receive the gift of the Spirit. Prior to chapter 10 ‘universality’ should be understood to mean ‘all believing Jews’, after Acts 10, it should be understood to include believing Gentiles too. When speaking of the ‘universality’ of prophecy, it should be taken that universal means all of God’s people.

¹²⁶ Peter G. Bolt, ‘Mission and Witness,’ in *Witness to the Gospel: The Theology of Acts*, ed. I. Howard Marshall and David Peterson (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 193.

¹²⁷ Conzelmann, *Acts of the Apostles*, 33; Fitzmyer, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 300.

¹²⁸ See above, pp. 122f.

Jesus, confirmed by the reference to the Lord's Anointed (4:26), and the opposition to Jesus (4:27, *cf.* 4:18). The answer is Spirit-empowerment not just for Peter and John, but also for their friends (4:23, *cf.* 'all' in 4:31), which underlines the gift being for all of God's people. These two factors again allow us to classify this speech as new covenant prophecy.

Acts 5:32, like 1:8, mentions witness rather than speech, but again the witness is verbal and focused on Jesus (5:30-32). The Spirit is given not just to the apostles who are on trial, but to 'those who obey him', suggesting the gift is one that is not restricted just to them. Like 4:8, the gift of the Spirit here is a fulfilment of Jesus' promise of help when on trial in Luke's gospel, and once again we can classify this speech as new covenant prophecy.

Acts 6:10 describes Stephen as speaking with 'wisdom and the Spirit' in his dispute with members of the synagogue. Luke's use of the word 'wisdom' brings to mind Luke 21:15.¹²⁹ The similarity of language and circumstance to 4:8 and 5:32, and the witness being towards Jesus (6:14) means once again we can classify this as new covenant prophecy.

Acts 7:55-56 has a different character from the speech considered until now, as it is occasioned by a vision. But the judicial context is very similar to 4:8, 5:32 and 6:10, and Stephen's speech points toward Jesus, as the vision confirms. So although the means of revelation is different, it is still Spirit-empowered speech that testifies to Jesus, and we shall again classify it as new covenant prophecy.

Acts 11:23-24 describes Barnabas as 'full of the Holy Spirit', and he will later be identified as a prophet.¹³⁰ He had been sent to Antioch by the church in Jerusalem as news reports indicated Greek conversions there. He exhorts the Antiochans to 'remain faithful to the Lord... and a great many people were added to the Lord', so it seems his speech served the dual purpose of encouragement and evangelism. Barnabus' exhortation (παρακαλέω) perhaps brings to mind the paraclete sayings of Luke's gospel, although Luke uses the word fairly frequently, often in contexts that are not related to the Spirit. In this case, it

¹²⁹ Various western texts, particularly Codex Bezae, amplify this connection still further with the addition of *διὰ τὸ ἐλέγχεσθαι αὐτοὺς ἐπ' αὐτοῦ μετὰ πάσης παρρησίας. μὴ δυνάμενοι οὖν ἀντοφθαλμεῖν τῇ ἀληθείᾳ* ('...because they were refuted by him with all boldness. Therefore being powerless to face the truth...').

¹³⁰ 13:1. See above, p. 151.

is not certain that Barnabas' speech is empowered by the Spirit, because the phrase 'full of the Holy Spirit' (πλήρης πνεύματος ἁγίου) is not always used in the context of empowered speech (e.g. Acts 6:4-5). In fact, Luke normally uses πίμπλημι when speaking of a momentary empowering, preferring πλήρης when the filling is more permanent and reflective of a good character,¹³¹ which is also the context here.¹³² It is therefore possible that Luke does not have Spirit-empowered speech in mind, or perhaps he wants us to understand that it was Spirit-empowered speech that continued over a period of time. If the speech is Spirit-empowered, it would seem more aligned with what we are calling new covenant prophecy than with old — although we are not told that the speech did testify to Jesus, it is quite likely that at least in part it did — certainly such a testimony would bring about the two results indicated here.¹³³ That, probably, is as much as we can say given the relative lack of data. There is insufficient evidence to suggest that this speech is something radically different to what we have already discovered, and although any conclusion must be tentative, it would seem that Barnabas' speech is compatible with what we call new covenant prophecy.

Acts 13:9-11 is even more different to earlier examples of prophecy, both in form and character. Here Paul pronounces a curse on Elymas the magician, which has the effect of

¹³¹ Roger Stronstad also notices the difference between Luke's use of πίμπλημι and πλήρης, but he attributes the meaning of the two words to 'prophetic inspiration' and 'Spirit's enabling', Stronstad, *The Charismatic Theology of Saint Luke*, 53-55. James Shelton argues that the meaning of both words is inspired speaking, James B. Shelton, "'Filled with the Holy Spirit" and "Full of the Holy Spirit": Lucan Redactional Phrases,' in *Faces of Renewal: Studies in Honor of Stanley M. Horton Presented on His 70th Birthday*, ed. Paul Elbert (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1988), 80-107, and finds support from Penney, *The Missionary Emphasis of Lukan Pneumatology*, 35. But against this, both Hui and Turner argue rightly that Luke's use of these terms is more varied and nuanced than this, and that πίμπλημι points to 'a definite event of short duration', whilst πλήρης would normally mean 'the presence of God's Spirit... over a long period of time'. See Archie Hui, 'Spirit-Fullness in Luke-Acts: Technical and Prophetic?', *JPT*, 17 (2000), 24-38, esp. 30; Max Turner, 'Spirit Endowment in Luke-Acts: Some Linguistic Considerations', *VE*, 12 (1981), 45-63, esp. 54.

¹³² Πίμπλημι is used in connection with the Spirit in 2:4, 4:8, 4:31, 9:17, and 13:9, all except possibly 9:17 refer to a momentary empowerment. It is also used not in connection with the Spirit in 3:10, 5:17, 13:45 and 19:29, each time in a momentary sense. In addition to 11:24, πλήρης is used of the Spirit in 6:3, 6:5, 7:55, each a more permanent empowering. In other contexts it is used in 6:8, 9:36 and 13:10, again in a permanent way. The exception is 19:28 where the Ephesians are described as full of anger.

¹³³ The exhortation is not simply to continue, but to continue *in the Lord*. Typically in the New Testament, this is done by pointing people to the work and faithfulness of Jesus. The entire book of Hebrews provides the most sustained example.

temporarily blinding him. Together with the account of Ananias and Sapphira,¹³⁴ it is one of only two punitive miracles in the book. David Aune categorises Paul's pronouncement as one of the clearest New Testament examples of an oracle of judgement,¹³⁵ which he also identifies as one of the most frequent types of old covenant prophetic speech.¹³⁶ There are other old covenant echoes, too.¹³⁷ In the LXX ψευδοπροφήτης is used principally in Jeremiah 33-36,¹³⁸ and refers there to false prophets in a pagan court. Elymas' own position could also be described in these terms, and perhaps Luke wants us to see Elymas in the light of those false prophets, and therefore Paul in the light of Jeremiah.¹³⁹ We earlier determined that to identify Spirit-empowered speech with an 'old covenant' type of prophecy, it would not only need to be reminiscent of old covenant prophets, but also be identified with those labelled as prophets. The former does seem to be true, but what about the latter? Nowhere in Acts is Paul explicitly identified as a prophet,¹⁴⁰ but his status as an apostle is not in doubt, and most scholars (and presumably earlier readers of Acts) do identify Paul as one of the prophets.¹⁴¹ With this in mind, it is reasonable to identify Paul's speech here as old covenant-style prophecy, though as a judgement oracle it is of a quite different sub-type to Agabus' predictive oracles. Notwithstanding this identification, Aune is right to point out several characteristics of the oracle which would be unusual by the standards of the old covenant

¹³⁴ Acts 5:1-11.

¹³⁵ For more on oracles of judgement, see Müller, *Prophetie und Predigt im Neuen Testament*, 47-107.

¹³⁶ Aune, *Prophecy in Early Christianity*, 269, 323.

¹³⁷ Every word in Paul's accusation, except for ῥαδιουργία, is found in the LXX, and the biblical language continues in verse 11, Haenchen, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 400.

¹³⁸ Eight out of the ten occurrences are in these chapters. For more on possible connections between Acts 13:9-11 and Jeremiah see L. Yaure, 'Elymas-Nehelamite-Pethor', *JBL*, 79:4 (1960), 297-314. Yaure suggests that the name Elymas is derived from the Aramaic *haloma*, meaning 'dreamer', and that Paul vs. Elymas is a 'conscious reflex of the record of Jeremiah vs. the dreamer prophets'. See also Hans-Josef Klauck, *Magic and Paganism in Early Christianity: The World of the Acts of the Apostles*, trans. Brian McNeil (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 2000), 48.

¹³⁹ See Miller, 'Luke's Conception of Prophets', 118.

¹⁴⁰ Although in 13:1-2 he is part of a group of 'prophets and teachers'.

¹⁴¹ See Jacob M. Myers and Edwin D. Freed, 'Is Paul Also among the Prophets?', *Int*, 20:1 (1966), 40-53; F. H. Agnew, 'The Origin of the NT Apostle-Concept: A Review of Research', *JBL*, 105:1 (1986), 75-96; Karl Olav Sandnes, *Paul — One of the Prophets?* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1991); Craig A. Evans, 'Prophet, Paul As', *DPL*, 762-765.

scriptures,¹⁴² suggesting that whilst the oracle is reminiscent of old covenant prophecies, it is not simply a copy of them. This has been true of all old covenant style prophecies in Acts (e.g. Agabus said ‘thus says the Holy Spirit’, not ‘thus says Yahweh’).

Acts 18:25 may perhaps refer to Apollos’ spirit, not the Spirit of God,¹⁴³ but the latter is more likely given that Apollos stands in contrast to the Ephesians who had not received the Holy Spirit (19:2).¹⁴⁴ Apollos certainly witnessed to Jesus (18:25), so if this is Spirit-empowered speech, it could be classified as new covenant style prophesying.

Acts 21:4 is the final reference to Spirit-empowered speech we will consider here. The speech is διὰ τοῦ πνεύματος, the same phrase used of Agabus’ first prophecy in 11:28, which suggests that this too may be prophetic. The verse is midway through Luke’s increasing warnings about Paul’s fate in Jerusalem — Paul has already noted that the Holy Spirit has testified ‘in every city that imprisonment and afflictions await’ (20:23), and Agabus is about to prophesy that Paul will be bound (22:11). Though brief, this reference is of interest because unlike the other Spirit-empowered speech that refers to Paul’s impending imprisonment, here the disciples tell Paul not to go to Jerusalem, seemingly contradicting the Spirit’s own urgings of Paul in 20:22.¹⁴⁵ Almost all

¹⁴² They are (1) It is not introduced by a messenger formula; (2) It is not the direct speech of Yahweh; (3) It is given spontaneously, not transmitted later. See Aune, *Prophecy in Early Christianity*, 269-270.

¹⁴³ For the former see Pervo, *Acts*, 459; Conzelmann, *Acts of the Apostles*, 158; Fitzmyer, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 638; Josep Rius-Camps and Jenny Read-Heimerdinger, *The Message of Acts in Codex Bezae: A Comparison with the Alexandrian Tradition*, 4 vols. (JSNTSup/LNTS 257, 302, 365, 415; London: T & T Clark, 2004-2009), 4:26. For the latter see Barrett, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 2:888; Witherington, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 565; Bruce, *The Book of the Acts*, 359; Dunn, *Baptism in the Holy Spirit*, 88. Bock is agnostic, Bock, *Acts*, 591-592.

¹⁴⁴ Unlike them, Apollos did not need an apostle to lay hands on him so that the Holy Spirit might come on him. His Spirit-empowered speech *proved* he was a believer, even though his knowledge was not complete. For more on the Ephesians, see below, pp. 174f.

¹⁴⁵ The unambiguous reference to the Holy Spirit in 20:23, and the passive participle δεδεμένος suggest that the Spirit is meant in 20:22 (it is also hard to imagine Luke would want to leave the impression that Paul’s spirit took him to Jerusalem, whilst the Spirit would have had him stay away, cf. 21:4, 11). 19:21 may also refer to the Spirit, or to Paul’s spirit. The use of ἔθετο (middle voice, ‘resolved’), would be more indicative of ‘spirit’ (see Barrett, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 2:919 and Fitzmyer, *First Corinthians*, 652). However, the parallels between 19:21 and 20:22 (Pervo, *Acts*, 482; Roy E. Ciampa and Brian S. Rosner, *The First Letter to the Corinthians* (PNTC; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010), 543), and the connection between δεῖ (‘must’) and the will of God elsewhere in Acts, suggest that perhaps ‘Spirit’ is in mind (Witherington, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 589).

commentators seek to absolve Paul of disobedience to the Spirit,¹⁴⁶ usually by suggesting that the disciples took it upon themselves to plead with Paul, after having received revelation that foresaw the tribulation he would encounter, and although that is not the most natural meaning of the words, that must surely be Luke's intent.¹⁴⁷ Opinions then differ as to whether their urging was in fact prophecy.¹⁴⁸ If it was prophecy, it does not have the features of what we are calling new covenant prophecy. It bears some similarity with Agabus' second prophecy, which may allow us to classify it as old covenant style prophecy, although if so, this would be the only example of old covenant style prophecy that is not identified as coming from prophets or apostles. There are two other possibilities: the speech could be a third type of prophecy, or something other than prophecy. The former possibility — that it is a new type of prophecy — is theoretically possible, but if so there would be no way of describing it, as this speech has few distinguishing features. We probably should consider it as a non-prophetic human response to a revelation from the Spirit, because according to most interpretations, the Spirit gave a revelation but what was spoken did not relay the revelation, but reflected only the *impression* that the revelation left on those who received it. If the Spirit gave the revelation, but did not empower the speech, that cannot be considered prophecy in the strict sense of that word.¹⁴⁹ If the commentators are right in suggesting there is discontinuity between what the Spirit 'said' and what the disciples said, then it is not prophecy.¹⁵⁰

¹⁴⁶ Although see Rius-Camps and Read-Heimerdinger, *The Message of Acts in Codex Bezae*, 4:151-152.

¹⁴⁷ See, particularly, Barrett, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 2:991.

¹⁴⁸ See the discussion in Grudem, *The Gift of Prophecy in the New Testament and Today*, 76. The distinction may, or may not, matter, but we should attempt to be as precise in our terms as the text allows.

¹⁴⁹ There are several other occasions in Acts where it is likely there was revelation without prophecy: 5:1-10, 8:29, 10:19 (cf. 11:12), 13:4, 15:28, 16:6-7, 19:21, and 20:22-23. In some instances, it may be that there was a prophecy, but that it was not recorded. For example, 13:2 records a revelation given to a group of prophets, but no record of any prophesying. Many commentators assume prophecy must have taken place there, but we need not assume that prophecy always follows revelation. The inference may be that as each was a prophet, they each received the revelation individually and did not need to hear it from one of the other prophets.

¹⁵⁰ Grudem's entire thesis is that a New Testament style of prophesying means believers putting into their own words what God has put into their minds, and this is precisely what the disciples in Tyre do here. This is not the place to examine Grudem's argument in its entirety, and in any case Grudem rightly does not argue his thesis from this verse, which he uses only to illustrate his point. It is the evidence from those identified by Luke as prophets — particularly Agabus — which is more important, and my

That brings us to the end of our examination of speech that appeared to be Spirit-empowered but was not explicitly identified as prophetic. We have examined ten occurrences of such speech, and have concluded that seven are very likely to be prophetic speech, two probably are, and one is likely not to be prophetic. Although we have seen several sub-types of prophecy (judgement oracles, law-court witness, visionary prophecy, and so on), all the prophecy we classified has fitted into the two main types of prophecy we earlier identified. Of the nine we identified as prophecy, we categorised eight as new covenant prophecy (two tentatively), and one as old covenant prophecy. It can also be observed that almost all of the new covenant style prophesying we have identified *has not* come from apostles and prophets, but all of the old covenant-style prophesying *has* come from apostles and prophets.

This enables us to now turn our attention back to tongues-speech, as Peter's identification of tongues with prophecy in Acts 2 means that our study would not be complete without examining the two other occasions of tongues-speech in Acts, in Acts 10 and Acts 19.

Cornelius and his household (Acts 10)

The length of the Cornelius narrative, and the fact that the story is told three times (*cf.* 11:1-18, 15:7-9) indicates how important the narrative is to Luke.¹⁵¹ It has many parallels with Pentecost, particularly the tongues-speech recorded in verse 46. Is this tongues-speech also prophecy, like that in Acts 2?

Luke shows that this episode marked a significant step in the Jewish church's understanding of the nature of the gospel, and stresses that it was God who took the initiative. As he describes it, Peter and the church are shown to be surprised by what God was doing¹⁵² — and God was not being subtle. There is a visit from an angel (10:3), a divine

disagreement with him on that issue leads me to believe he is wrong here, too. See above, pp. 153f.

¹⁵¹ Marshall, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 181; Klauck, *The Religious Context of Early Christianity*, 31. See also Joseph B. Tyson, 'The Gentile Mission and the Authority of Scripture in Acts', *NTS*, 33:4 (1987), 624; Barrett, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 1:491.

¹⁵² Peter would not have been surprised to see Gentiles becoming Christians. This was never an issue in the New Testament, having happened as early as Acts 2:11 (see the reference to προσήλυτοι, 'proselytes'), and Gentiles becoming believers at the eschaton was widely expected from the old covenant scriptures. What Peter appears not to have been prepared for was Gentiles becoming Christians without first accepting the outward requirements of Judaism.

vision to explain a point of Old Testament discontinuity (10:10-16), and the Spirit speaking (10:19), and falling (10:44). But of most importance is the Spirit being poured out on the Gentiles (10:45). This was proof that they 'had received the word of God' (11:1), and been 'granted repentance that leads to life' (11:18). Peter and the disciples are in no doubt that this is of God (10:47, 11:18, 15:8), despite Peter's great hesitancy at the outset of the story (10:10-19), and despite opposition from others at the end (11:2).

Luke records that everything changed because Peter and the other disciples were sure that the Holy Spirit had fallen on the Gentiles. They knew that 'the gift of the Holy Spirit was poured out', because 'they were hearing them speaking in tongues and extolling God' (10:45-46). Peter claims the Gentiles received the Holy Spirit 'just as we have', and 'just as on us at the beginning'. This was 'the same gift... he gave to us' (10:47, 11:15, 17). Later, in the Jerusalem Council, he added, 'God... bore witness to them, by giving them the Holy Spirit just as he did to us' (15:8).

Whatever happened in Cornelius' household was sufficiently persuasive to convince not just Peter, but also those of the circumcision who travelled with him, the 'circumcision party' in Jerusalem (11:1, cf. 15:1), and indeed all the apostles and elders (15:4),¹⁵³ of the genuineness of the Gentile conversion.¹⁵⁴ It was 'final and irrefutable legitimation for the acceptance of the Gentiles into the community'.¹⁵⁵

Commentators usually suggest one of two explanations of the tongues-speech in 10:46. Most view it as the miraculous speaking of unknown languages just like at Pentecost,¹⁵⁶ others view the tongues as unintelligible,¹⁵⁷ and some are agnostic.¹⁵⁸ The identification is

¹⁵³ What is at stake here is Luke's ability as a story teller and recorder of history. He clearly portrays tongues-speech as sufficiently convincing to bear the weight of testimony. Marshall writes, 'The reception of the gift of this occasion stressed the reality of the conversation of the Gentiles over against all possible doubt... The whole context rules out any thought of deception'. Marshall, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 194.

¹⁵⁴ Klauck, *Magic and Paganism in Early Christianity*, 35; Dunn, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle*, 418-419.

¹⁵⁵ Esler, 'Glossolalia and the Admission of Gentiles into the Early Christian Community', 136, and Philip F. Esler, *The First Christians in Their Social Worlds: Social-Scientific Approaches to New Testament Interpretation* (London: Routledge, 1994), 38.

¹⁵⁶ E.g. Barrett, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 1:529; Bruce, *The Book of the Acts*, 217; Gaffin, *Perspectives on Pentecost*, 82; Marshall, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 194.

¹⁵⁷ E.g. Ellis, *Prophecy and Hermeneutic in Early Christianity*, 129, fn. 121; Polhill, *Acts*, 263, fn. 109; Turner, 'Early Christian Experience,' 7-8; Witherington, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 360; Jervell, *Die Apostelgeschichte*,

important for us, because if the tongues at Caesarea are very similar to those at Pentecost, then we can classify this as another example of new covenant style prophesying. If they are different from Pentecost, they may represent a new type of inspired speech.

The parallels between Acts 2 and 10 that relate to tongues-speaking are numerous. For example, both include an evangelistic speech from Peter, both describe the Holy Spirit being ‘poured out’,¹⁵⁹ the content of both speeches is described in similar terms (telling the ‘mighty works of God’ and ‘extolling God’),¹⁶⁰ both evangelistic speeches result in faith and baptism for the hearers, and both are very significant milestones or turning points in Luke’s narrative structure and the larger context of Acts.¹⁶¹ Even more importantly, Luke records that the household received the Spirit ‘just as we have’ (10:47), ‘just as on us at the beginning’ (11:15), ‘just as he did to us’ (15:8). It was ‘the same gift’ (11:17).

This is overwhelming evidence that the tongues of Acts 10 corresponded to the tongues of Acts 2. In Acts 2, it was vitally important that the tongues were prophetic, because if they had not been, then they would not have fulfilled Joel 2, and there would have been no certainty that the eschatological age had dawned. Because of this correspondence, it is highly likely that the tongues of Acts 10 were also prophetic,¹⁶² and should form part of our study.

However, we should not push the correspondence further than Luke does. When Peter draws these parallels he specifically identifies the gift of the *Spirit* as being the same, not necessarily the gift of *tongues*: ‘who have received *the Holy Spirit* as we have’ (10:47), ‘*the Holy Spirit* fell on them as on us at the beginning’ (11:15), ‘by giving them *the Spirit* as he did to us’ (15:8). Καθώς (usually translated ‘just as’) does not mean ‘in exactly the same way as’, particularly in the New Testament, where it is often used to point out

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¹⁵⁸ Bock, *Acts*, 401.

¹⁵⁹ In relation to the Spirit, the phrase is only used in these two passages in the entire New Testament.

¹⁶⁰ τὰ μεγαλεῖα τοῦ θεοῦ (2:11) and μεγαλυνόντων τὸν θεόν (10:46).

¹⁶¹ Roloff, *Die Apostelgeschichte*, 164; F. F. Bruce, ‘Luke’s Presentation of the Spirit in Acts’, *CTR*, 5 (1990), 25; David Lertis Matson, *Household Conversion Narratives in Acts: Pattern and Interpretation* (JSNTSup 123; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996), 92.

¹⁶² Choi, *Geist und Christliche Existenz*, 30.

correspondence between contemporary events and earlier stories, for example ‘as [καθώς] it was in the days of Noah, so it will be in the days of the Son of Man’ (Luke 17:26).¹⁶³ This does not mean there will be a great flood in the days of the Son of Man — but there will be a corresponding sudden destructive judgement. In the same way, Luke wants us to understand there is clear correspondence between Acts 2 and Acts 10, but he is not suggesting the two events are identical.

The possibility of some differences between Acts 2 and 10 mean that the gift of tongues may not be identical in each, even if both gifts are prophetic, particularly as there are significant differences in the circumstances of Acts 2 and Acts 10:

1. There are thousands of people in Acts 2, there are only a small number of people in Acts 10.
2. The people in Acts 2 came from a very wide geographical area, and between them knew dozens of languages. In Acts 10, only one area is mentioned (10:1), and probably only two or three languages would be known amongst the group.
3. The speech in Acts 2 was preceded immediately with miraculous signs (2:2-3), which appear to be absent in Acts 10.
4. γλῶσσα is emphasised in Acts 2, but not in Acts 10, 11 or 15 (it is mentioned three times in Acts 2, but only once in Acts 10-15, despite the story being told on three occasions).
5. The context of Acts 2 is ‘you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth’, which paves the way for languages from every nation. The context of Acts 10 is that ‘God shows no partiality, but in every nation anyone who fears him... is acceptable to him’, which may pave the way for something different.
6. Acts 2 refers to ‘other tongues’ compared to just ‘tongues’ in Acts 10.¹⁶⁴
7. In Acts 2, the Spirit fell on the speakers, in Acts 10 the Spirit fell on the hearers.
8. In Acts 2, the hearers understood the content of the tongues-speech, whereas with the traditional interpretation of Acts 10, the hearers would not have understood the content of the tongues-speech.

None of the differences are important on their own, but the combination of all these

¹⁶³ Walter Radl, ‘Καθώς’, *EDNT*, 2:226.

¹⁶⁴ Although some Western manuscripts do add the adjective here. See Metzger, *Textual Commentary*, 336.

factors raises the possibility that the speaking in tongues of Cornelius and his household was not prophecy in many unlearned languages, but was something else, perhaps prophecy in one or two languages that they already knew.¹⁶⁵ I put forward this suggestion tentatively, because it requires a certain amount of speculation, and I am not sure it can be proven one way or the other. After all γλῶσσα is only mentioned once in these three chapters, and it is not a focus of the story. Nevertheless, I believe the suggestion is worth considering amongst existing proposals.¹⁶⁶

But before we examine the suggestion in more detail, there is an important question to consider. Luke tells us on several occasions that the Spirit coming on Cornelius' household was absolutely decisive in convincing the Jewish church that God had accepted the Gentiles. Objectors might reasonably ask whether Cornelius speaking languages he already knew would be sufficient evidence for such an important step. In answer to that, we must underline two things.

1. The suggestion is not that Cornelius *chatted* in a language he already knew, but that he *prophesied* in a language he already knew. It was the prophetic element of the speech at Pentecost, not the language element, that Peter draws attention to when he notes fulfilment of old covenant scriptures. Prophecy, not languages, was the decisive indication of the presence of the Spirit and the eschaton.
2. Neither is it being suggested that Cornelius miraculously spoke a language that he did not know, but the Jews did know (i.e. Aramaic or possibly Hebrew). Such speech could perhaps be seen as a fulfilment of Zephaniah 3:9 ('For at that time I will change the speech of the peoples to a pure speech, that all of them may call upon the name of the LORD'). Yet the encounter took place in a Gentile setting (Peter

¹⁶⁵ This suggestion is rarely explored in the literature. It is the position taken by McCone, *Culture and Controversy*, 23-24. In a little over a page he argues that Cornelius' household 'were expressing themselves freely and spontaneously out of their hearts in the languages with which they were most familiar'. Elsewhere, W. A. Criswell briefly asks, 'Could it have been that in their superlative, heavenly ecstasy they reverted each to his mother tongue in praising God for so great a salvation?'. W. A. Criswell, *The Holy Spirit in Today's World* (London: Marshall, Morgan and Scott, 1967), 168. The fullest discussion is in Zerhusen, 'The Meaning of "Other Tongues"', 52-58.

¹⁶⁶ We can safely reject the view that the tongues in Acts 10-11 were unintelligible for four reasons: (1) Nothing in the text indicates that it was, (2) we have already rejected unintelligibility in Acts 2, (3) 10:46 suggests that the tongues were intelligible, (4) the only reason for suggesting unintelligibility here would be if we were to read some interpretations of 1 Corinthians 14 into Acts 10, which seems neither warranted nor wise.

went to Cornelius' house, not the other way around), and part of the purpose of this section in Acts is to demonstrate that Gentiles *do not need to become like Jews* in order to be Christians. It is therefore very unlikely that the great Gentile breakthrough in Acts 10 would be validated by a Gentile miraculously speaking a Jewish language.¹⁶⁷

Prophesying in your own language may seem less significant than prophesying in a language you cannot speak naturally. However, if Cornelius prophesied in a language that he already knew, there is a greater possibility that the hearers would have understood the content of his speech (because they may also have been familiar with that language). If so, this would have enabled the listeners to better determine whether Cornelius' experiences corresponded to their own,¹⁶⁸ and this greater certainty may have helped to compensate for any lack of a language miracle.

Luke never tells us that the speaking in tongues was decisive in concluding that God had granted the Gentiles repentance. It is the gift of the Spirit that was decisive, and the tongues was only one element in determining that the gift of the Spirit had been given.

Now that we have dealt with some of the in-principle objections that may arise, we can turn our attention to some of the more practical details of what this prophecy may have looked like.

Luke records that Cornelius was from the Italian Cohort, who were originally recruited in Italy.¹⁶⁹ Evidence suggests that auxiliary cohorts stationed in Palestine may have drawn replacement troops from the local area (although Jews were exempt),¹⁷⁰ but Cornelius' position as centurion,¹⁷¹ and his Latin name,¹⁷² makes it reasonably likely that he was

¹⁶⁷ See McCone, *Culture and Controversy*, 23-24.

¹⁶⁸ Turner, 'Early Christian Experience,' 7; Bastian van Elderen, 'Glossolalia in the New Testament', *BETS*, 7:2 (1964), 54.

¹⁶⁹ Marshall, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 183.

¹⁷⁰ For more information on the Italian Cohort, see Michael P. Speidel, 'The Roman Army in Judaea under the Procurators: The Italian and Augustan Cohort in the Acts of the Apostles', *AncSoc*, 13-14 (1982-1983), 233-237; Mark J. Olson, 'Italian Cohort', *ABD*, 3:578; Irina Levinskaya, 'The Italian Cohort in Acts 10:1,' in *The New Testament in its First Century Setting: Essays on Context and Background in Honour of B. W. Winter on His 65th Birthday*, ed. P. J. Williams, et al. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004); D. B. Saddington, 'The Development of the Roman Military and Administrative Personnel in the New Testament,' in *ANRW*, vol. 2.26.3, ed. Hildegard Temporini (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1996), 2415-2416.

¹⁷¹ Army officers are much more likely to have served with the unit for longer, and more likely to be

Italian. Regardless, he would have spoken Latin (the language of the army), probably in addition to Greek.¹⁷³ The suggestion is that when the Spirit came and caused Cornelius to extol God, Cornelius did so in the language he normally used,¹⁷⁴ and Luke described this as ‘speaking in tongues’ because of the parallels with Pentecost. Assuming this was Latin, it is perhaps unlikely that Peter and his fellow-Jews would have understood all that Cornelius said, but they were surrounded by Latin influences and there is epigraphic evidence suggesting the lower classes who lived in Palestine had some familiarity with the language,¹⁷⁵ probably enough to determine that Cornelius and his household were extolling God.¹⁷⁶ If this suggestion is correct, and that only in Acts 2 were the languages spoken miraculously given, it would help to explain why neither the Samaritans in Acts 8, nor Apollos in Acts 18 are said to speak in tongues (although many commentators assume that they did). They did not speak in tongues because they would naturally prophesy in Jewish, not Gentile languages.

Why might Luke have used the phrase ‘speaking in tongues’ to describe someone

Roman citizens.

¹⁷² Bruce, *The Book of the Acts*, 201, fn. 1.

¹⁷³ F. F. Bruce, ‘Languages (Latin)’, *ABD*, 4:220; J. N. Adams, ‘“Romanitas” and the Latin Language’, *CQ*, 53:1 (2003), 199-200.

¹⁷⁴ Luke describes the household as speaking in tongues (plural), not speaking in a tongue, which seems to suggest that the tongues-speech was more than one language. It is quite possible that at least some in Cornelius’ household were native to Caesarea and were therefore praising God in their native Greek language, and whilst this Greek-speaking would not of itself be described as speaking in tongues (as the Greek language had been adopted extensively by Jews), when spoken at the same time as other languages are also being spoken, the plural ‘speaking in tongues’ would be quite appropriate. It is equally possible that Cornelius’ household included those whose birth language was neither Greek nor Latin.

¹⁷⁵ Alan Millard, ‘Latin in First-Century Palestine,’ in *Solving Riddles and Untying Knots: Biblical, Epigraphic, and Semitic Studies in Honor of Jonas C. Greenfield*, ed. Ziony Zevit, Seymour Gitin and Michael Sokoloff (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1995), 458. Millard’s study is important, because there is so little evidence available (see Joseph A. Fitzmyer, ‘Languages of Palestine in the First Century A.D.’, *CBQ*, 32:4 (1970), 504-507). For more support of this suggestion, see Jeffers, *The Greco-Roman World of the New Testament Era*, 14; Jonathan M. Watt, ‘The Current Landscape of Diglossia Studies: The Diglossic Continuum in First-Century Palestine,’ in *Diglossia and Other Topics in New Testament Linguistics*, ed. Stanley E. Porter (Journal for the Study of the New Testament Supplement 193; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2000), 26; Stanley E. Porter, ‘Latin Language’, *DNTB*, NR.

¹⁷⁶ Bruce thinks that Paul would have had rather more knowledge of Latin than would have been required for this task, Bruce, ‘Languages (Latin)’, 4:221. See also F. F. Bruce, *Paul: Apostle of the Free Spirit* (Carlisle: Paternoster, 1980²), 315-316, and F. F. Bruce, ‘St. Paul in Macedonia’, *BiSp*, 10:3-4 (1981), 120.

prophesying in the language of their birth? We can suggest three reasons:

1. Luke emphasises the connections back to Pentecost on several occasions, so describing Cornelius' speech as 'speaking in tongues' makes those connections even clearer.
2. Whilst in Acts 2 Luke is portraying the gospel as being *preached* in Gentile languages, here in Acts 10, he is portraying the gospel as being *received* in Gentile languages, possibly to demonstrate that God gladly empowers and receives praise not just in Hebrew, Greek and Aramaic, but 'shows no partiality' (10:34) and 'makes no distinction' (11:12).
3. In Acts 2 Luke refers to 'other tongues' whilst here in Acts 10 (and most of the rest of the New Testament) it is just 'tongues'.¹⁷⁷ In the only New Testament use of 'other tongues' outside Acts 2, it clearly means 'foreign languages'.¹⁷⁸ Yet to describe the language of Cornelius as 'foreign' would be inappropriate at the very moment Cornelius was being brought into the family of God. After Acts 10, there are no 'other tongues', and (to borrow a phrase from Paul), there is no longer Jew and Gentile. There are no foreigners,¹⁷⁹ and therefore there are no foreign languages. God can be extolled in any language, and as Paul will later declare, he will one day be extolled in *every* language.¹⁸⁰

None of this is sufficient to prove that Cornelius' household's languages were not miraculously given, and it may never be proved decisively one way or the other. But more importantly for our study, we can be confident that however the language came about, there is sufficient correspondence with Acts 2 for us to say that it was prophecy of the same type as at Pentecost (which we have previously called 'new covenant style prophecy').

¹⁷⁷ Various Western manuscripts have an adjective inserted here, although the Greek has to be reconstructed from the Old Latin which has *praevaricatis*. Suggestions include ποικίλαις (diverse), καιναῖς (new) or ἑτέραις (other), though it is unlikely that any represent the original text.

¹⁷⁸ The phrase 'other tongues' occurs only in Acts 2 and 1 Corinthians 14:21. These two occurrences have slightly different constructions: ἑτέραις γλώσσαις (Acts 2:4) and ἑτερογλώσσοις (1 Corinthians 14:21). See *BDAG*, 399. 'Foreign language' is also the meaning in the only use of this phrase in the Septuagint (although there it is in the singular).

¹⁷⁹ Contrast with the pre-Pentecost Luke 17:18.

¹⁸⁰ *cf.* Romans 14:11; Philippians 2:11; etc.

Tongues in Ephesus (Acts 19:1-7)

Acts 19 has become a notorious battleground in certain sections of New Testament theology, particularly amongst those who wish to prove or disprove the concept of a 'second blessing' or argue that the Spirit is a *donum superadditum*, but Luke's concern is how the apostles should respond to disciples who had already received John's baptism, but were not yet Christians. He records the story in direct contrast to Apollos. Both knew only the baptism of John, but Apollos is 'instructed in the way of the Lord' and 'competent in the Scriptures',¹⁸¹ whilst the Ephesians seem not to have understood even John's simple message.¹⁸² This difference is probably both the cause and effect of the Ephesians not receiving the Holy Spirit when they believed, whereas Apollos is fervent in the Spirit.¹⁸³ Therefore Apollos was not required to be re-baptised, whereas the Ephesians were.¹⁸⁴ He was considered to be a Christian, they were not. Upon water-baptism and the laying on of hands, the Holy Spirit is duly given, and they begin to speak in tongues and prophesy (ἐλάλουν τε γλώσσαις καὶ ἐπροφήτευσον). This is reminiscent of both previous occasions of speaking in tongues: Cornelius and his household began 'speaking in tongues and extolling God' (10:46), and the 120 likewise 'began to speak in other tongues... the mighty works of God' (2:4, 11). This may mean that 'extolling God', 'speaking... the mighty works of God', and 'prophesy' are roughly synonymous.

Beyond that, there is little more that we can say about the Ephesians. We know that they prophesied and spoke in tongues, and this was initiatory, as they received the Spirit. It is likely, therefore, that Luke wants his readers to view their experience in a similar way to the experience of the 120 at Pentecost. If this is the case we could perhaps classify this prophecy as 'new covenant style prophecy', although we would have to do so tentatively, as Luke gives no hint as to what the content of their prophecies might have been.

¹⁸¹ Acts 18:24-25. The addition that Priscilla and Aquila 'explained to him the way of God more accurately' (18:26) does not contradict this. It seems likely that Apollos knew enough to believe, but not yet enough to teach others accurately.

¹⁸² Luke implies that the twelve Ephesian disciples did not even know that John told 'the people to believe in the one who was to come after him, that is, Jesus' (19:4).

¹⁸³ The translation of ζέων τῷ πνεύματι (18:25) as 'fervent in the Spirit' is far from undisputed, but see above, p. 164.

¹⁸⁴ For a review of previous attempts to understand these two stories see C. K. Barrett, 'Apollos and the Twelve Disciples of Ephesus,' in *The New Testament Age: Essays in Honor of Bo Reicke*, vol. 1, ed. W. C. Weinrich (Macon: Mercer University, 1984), 29-39

It appears that Luke reserves his explicit descriptions of Spirit-reception for representatives of important religious groups: Jewish believers (Acts 2), Samaritans (Acts 8), Gentiles (Acts 10), and followers of John the Baptist (Acts 19). The purpose is likely to be twofold – to demonstrate that all of these groups need the Spirit, and to demonstrate that all of these groups can receive the Spirit. This two stage entrance into the new covenant, is therefore not portrayed as normative, but occurs at significant parts of the narrative to emphasise that entering into the promises of the new covenant, requires a transformative initiatory experience even for those who already believe in Yahweh.¹⁸⁵

In examining the recorded instances of tongues-speech we noted that one was identified as prophecy ((Acts 2), and one was identified *with* prophecy ((Acts 19), which suggests a close correlation between tongues and prophecy. Little of the content of the tongues-speech is known, with only two very brief descriptions (telling ‘the mighty works of God’ and ‘extolling God’), which we could summarise as Spirit-empowered praise. However, because tongues-speech is always initiatory in Acts, we can go further and say that it is Spirit-empowered praise resulting from faith in Christ. Given the close connection to prophecy, and our understanding of new covenant style prophecy as testifying to Jesus, it seems that each of the three occasions of tongues-speech in Acts could also be classified as new covenant prophecy.

Conclusion: Prophecy in Acts

The purpose of this chapter was to apply the first three aims of the thesis to the book of Acts, namely: (1) to undertake an exegesis of the book of Acts, (2) to analyse the similarities and/or differences between the views of prophecy expressed by different New Testament writers, and (3) to develop a Lukan theology of prophecy, whilst considering Luke’s historical, cultural and theological context.

With regard to that third aim, our earlier study had identified four eschatological hopes that were particularly prominent in the old covenant scriptures, namely universal prophethood, a pouring out of Yahweh’s Spirit, a new Spirit within Yahweh’s people, and a new covenant.¹⁸⁶ We have seen these hopes realised in Acts, particularly in regard to

¹⁸⁵ This is the fulfilment of prophecies promising a new heart and a new spirit within Yahweh’s people (e.g. Ezekiel 36:25-26).

¹⁸⁶ See above, p. 92.

prophecy, and have identified several occasions of prophecy, some explicitly identified as prophecy, others identified as Spirit-empowered speech.

We are also now in a position to arrive at some conclusions regarding a Lukan theology of prophecy, in fulfilment of the second aim. Most of the prophecy in Acts fits the expectations from the old covenant scriptures that in the eschatological age the Spirit would be poured out on Yahweh's people, and they would prophesy. It also fitted the expectations from the gospels that it would be universal, and consist of Spirit-empowered speech that testified to Jesus. We called this 'new covenant style prophecy'. In addition, we learned that when this prophecy was heard in (miraculously given?) Gentile languages it was called 'speaking in tongues'.

However, some of the prophecy did not fit this 'new covenant style', but seemed strongly reminiscent of *old* covenant prophesying. All of this type of prophesying came from those identified as prophets or apostles. It seems likely, therefore, that this 'old covenant style' prophecy continued alongside the 'new covenant style', at least for the period recorded in Acts, although the evidence suggests it was seen less often than the new covenant style. But even this old covenant style prophecy is not unaffected by the Spirit's outpouring, and there are subtle but important moves away from typical old covenant prophecies both in Agabus' predictive oracles, and in Paul's judgement oracle. This underlines again the significance of John the Baptist as the last of the (exclusively) old covenant prophets, and highlights the period of the Acts as a time of transition from the old order to the new.

We now have examined several theologies of new covenant prophecy: in addition to a Lukan theology, we have also looked at an old covenant theology of new covenant prophecy, and theologies derived from both Matthew and John's gospels. This means we can make some progress on our second aim, to compare and contrast those different theologies. Perhaps the most distinctive part of Luke's theology of new covenant prophecy is that he portrays a longer transition from an old covenant style of prophecy to a new covenant style than we were able to determine from the other sources, although there is nothing in those other theologies that is incompatible with Luke's portrayal. Furthermore, we noted above that there are strong similarities between Luke's pneumatology and that derived from the old covenant scriptures, to the extent that Luke portrays prophecy and Spirit-empowered speech as a fulfilment of the earlier predictions. Not only so, but the definition for new covenant prophecy that we

established after looking at prophecy in the gospels (**Spirit-empowered speech that testifies to Jesus**), also fits the data from Acts very well. All this suggests that Luke's theology of prophecy is fully compatible with that of Matthew and John, and that all three are developed from the old covenant scriptures.

5) The gift of prophecy in 1 Corinthians

Paul's first letter to the Corinthians is no less important than the book of Acts in developing an understanding of Christian prophecy, and chapters 12-14 provide the only systematic teaching on tongues and prophecy anywhere in the New Testament. Paul's teaching is particularly interesting as it is given in response to what he perceives to be a faulty view of both tongues and prophecy.

Our aim in this chapter is to apply the overall aims for the thesis to 1 Corinthians in particular. This means (1) a detailed exegesis of the relevant passages in 1 Corinthians, (2) an analysis of the similarities and/or differences between the view of prophecy in 1 Corinthians and that of other New Testament writers, particularly Luke, (3) the development of a Pauline theology of prophecy, which is informed by and consistent with his historical, cultural and theological context, and (4) a clear definition of prophecy as understood by Paul.

Introduction and background

To help us ensure we take the historical, cultural and theological contexts seriously, we need to begin by examining the background to chapters 12-14. In these chapters, Paul is looking to address a particular problem (12:1). At least part of the problem was that the Corinthian church valued some so-called 'spiritual gifts' highly (1:7),¹ but tended to use them in a self-serving way, rather than for the good of the community (12:21-26). Paul therefore argues for the priority of love (12:31-14:1),² and of gifts which serve the church

¹ Although the phrase 'spiritual gifts' is more common than 'gifts of the Spirit', the latter is to be preferred. One of Paul's emphases in chapter 12 is that the Spirit is the source of these gifts (12:3, 4, 7-11, 13), and that the measure of one's 'spirituality' is not to be inferred from mere possession of the gift, but in how you put the gift to use in the building up of the church (13:1-3, 14:3-4).

² As late as 1990, Carl Holladay claims 'no fully satisfactory explanation has been offered to account for [chapter 13's] placement between chap. 12 and 14'. Carl R. Holladay, '1 Corinthians 13: Paul as Apostolic Paradigm,' in *Greeks, Romans, and Christians: Essays in Honor of Abraham J. Malherbe*, ed. David L. Balch,

(12:7, 14:3-4). Gifts which are of more value to individual believers, but do not serve the church as a whole, should not be forbidden (14:5), but they should certainly not be a priority (14:1-5). In Paul's view, a specific consequence of this principle is that speaking in tongues should be *discouraged*, and prophecy should be *encouraged*. Paul further argues that gifts should be exercised in an orderly manner (14:26-40).

In many ways prophecy in 1 Corinthians is more complex than in Acts. There appear to be many forms of inspired speech listed in 1 Corinthians, each going by a different name: for example, the utterance of wisdom, the utterance of knowledge, prophecy, various kinds of tongues, and possibly the interpretation of tongues. The problem is compounded because there is almost no data that helps interpreters define what some of these gifts might be, and even when we have lots of data (e.g. for the gift of tongues) there is still considerable disagreement amongst scholars even on the most basic question of definition. It is not just the Corinthians who were confused about tongues.

Part of the issue is that Paul's words are written quite specifically for Corinth, and are occasioned by the issues within the church. The section of most interest (chapters 12-14) begins with the phrase Περὶ δέ ('now concerning'). This phrase is used frequently in the second half of 1 Corinthians,³ and commentators are united in viewing it as an indicator that Paul is addressing an issue raised in a letter the Corinthians have sent to him.⁴ So, whilst background is important for understanding any New Testament literature, the responsive nature of 1 Corinthians makes it even more important here. This means that the background posited by a scholar can have a significant influence on how the letter is understood, which means we need to be doubly careful that we neither infer too much from external sources,⁵ or infer too little. We should ensure that whatever social setting

Everett Ferguson and Wayne A. Meeks (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1990), 81. But it seems clear that Paul places the chapter here precisely to ensure that his teaching on the correct use of spiritual gifts literally centres on love – the demonstration of which must undergird all expressions of tongues and prophecy. Horsley rightly says, 'it is an integral step in a deliberative argument... This praise of love fits closely into the overall context of 1 Corinthians', Richard A. Horsley, *1 Corinthians* (ANTC; Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1998), 174.

³ 1 Corinthians 7:1, 7:25, 8:1, 12:1, 16:1, 16:2.

⁴ Fee, *God's Empowering Presence*, 570.

⁵ See the warnings in Justin J. Meggitt, 'Sources: Use, Abuse, Neglect. The Importance of Ancient Popular Culture,' in *Christianity at Corinth: The Quest for the Pauline Church*, ed. Edward Adams and David G. Horrell (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2004), 252.

we adopt is one that is constructed from research into culture, history and society, but also from the text of 1 Corinthians itself. Inevitably exegesis will affect one's understanding of the social setting, and that in turn will affect exegesis.⁶ This loop should serve both as a corrective and a constraint, but sometimes the loop simply becomes self-validating — as Dunn says, 'each interpreter or group of interpreters is in effect going round their own hermeneutical circle'.⁷

To proceed therefore, we will begin by examining 1 Corinthians for clues as to what cultural issues may be particularly worth exploring, as there could be dozens of issues in the surrounding culture that do not affect the church. In his own introduction to the letter, the first issue that Paul highlights is that of conflict.⁸ In 1:10-12, Paul says:

I appeal to you, brothers, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be united in the same mind and the same judgment. For it has been reported to me by Chloe's people that there is quarrelling among you, my brothers.

At face value, it looks as though the quarrelling is around various personalities from the wider Christian church (1:12), but Paul points out that those who seem to be the 'leaders' of the various schismatic groups are colleagues, not competitors (3:5-9, 3:21-23, 4:1). The problem is not with these eminent leaders outside the church, but from their followers within it, who tend to be puffed up (φουσιόω) in favour of one against another (4:6). Φουσιόω is used only seven times in the New Testament, and six of those occasions are in 1 Corinthians.⁹ The remainder of chapter 4 suggests that those who are puffed up have

⁶ Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 1134-1135.

⁷ James D. G. Dunn, 'Reconstructions of Corinthian Christianity and the Interpretation of 1 Corinthians,' in *Christianity at Corinth: The Quest for the Pauline Church*, ed. Edward Adams and David G. Horrell (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2004), 309. For similar warnings see C. K. Barrett, 'Christianity at Corinth', *BJRL*, 46:2 (1963), 270; Richard E. Oster, 'Use, Misuse and Neglect of Archaeological Evidence in Some Modern Works on 1Corinthians (1Cor 7,1-5; 8,10; 11,2-16; 12,14-26)', *ZNW*, 83:1 (1992), 52-73; Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 13. For a helpful reflection on the ways exegesis can be shaped by sociological assumptions, see Bengt Holmberg, 'The Methods of Historical Reconstruction in the Scholarly "Recovery" of Corinthian Christianity,' in *Christianity at Corinth: The Quest for the Pauline Church*, ed. Edward Adams and David G. Horrell (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2004).

⁸ Whole books could be (and have been) written about the issues summarised in the next few pages. The most helpful is probably Andrew D. Clarke, *Secular and Christian Leadership in Corinth: A Socio-Historical and Exegetical Study of 1 Corinthians 1-6* (Carlisle: Paternoster, 2006²).

⁹ 1 Corinthians 4:6, 18, 19; 5:2; 8:1; 13:4. The other use is also Pauline — Colossians 2:18. The related word φουσιώσις (pride/conceit) is used just once, 2 Corinthians 12:20.

set themselves up in leadership within the church, have significant influence, and oppose Paul's style of servant leadership. They consider themselves both rich and wise (4:8-13), they love words but their power is illusionary (4:18-21). Earlier, Paul had insisted that the gospel is not about 'words of eloquent wisdom' but the power of God (1:17-2:5). It seems that the puffed up leaders in Corinth considered that their eloquent and wise words showed how they were equipped for spiritual leadership, but whilst their rhetoric might have been admired in the wider society, Paul insists that spiritual power is not given by the spirit of the world, but by the Spirit of God (2:12). Paul does not consider them to be spiritual (πνευματικοῖς) at all, but fleshly (σαρκίνοις),¹⁰ infants in Christ (3:1-4), and he proves his point by reprimanding them over three serious issues that they are apparently unconcerned about themselves: (1) a man has his father's wife, (2) brothers are going to law against one another, (3) sexual immorality is permitted.¹¹

These first six chapters therefore represent Paul's diagnosis of the problems in Corinth, and are an expression of his concerns. The next ten chapters will be Paul's response to the Corinthian's concerns. Yet the problem behind the issues that Paul raises in chapters 1-6, is the same problem behind the issues that the Corinthians raise in chapters 7-16. Six times in those chapters (and not once earlier), Paul begins a section with the phrase *περὶ δέ*, the first time with *περὶ δὲ ὧν ἔγραψατε* ('concerning the matters about which you wrote'). The matters are very diverse, but of course they are not simply a random set of questions,¹² but issues caused because of the problems of spiritual leadership that Paul has been at pains to expose.¹³ As Fee puts it, 'the key issue between Paul and [the Corinthians]... has to do with the Corinthian understanding of what it means to be "spiritual" (*pneumatikos*)'.¹⁴ Paul uses *πνευματικός* as something of a technical term — it is not used in the old covenant scriptures and barely in Judaism,¹⁵ but occurs 15 times in 1

¹⁰ In this context *σαρκίνοις* probably means characterised by human thinking and values, in contrast to spiritual ones. For a fuller discussion see Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 288-289.

¹¹ 1 Corinthians 5:1-12, 6:1-11 and 6:12-20.

¹² Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 40.

¹³ L. L. Welborn, 'On the Discord in Corinth: 1 Corinthians 1-4 and Ancient Politics', *JBL*, 106:1 (1987), 98.

¹⁴ Fee, *God's Empowering Presence*, 6. See also Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 40.

¹⁵ John M. G. Barclay, 'Πνευματικός in the Social Dialect of Pauline Christianity,' in *The Holy Spirit and Christian Origins: Essays in Honor of James D. G. Dunn*, ed. Graham N. Stanton, Bruce W. Longenecker and Stephen C. Barton (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004), 160-161. It does not occur in the Septuagint, nor in Josephus or the Dead Sea Scrolls, and in the Greek pseudepigrapha only in 3 Baruch 13:4, where it is

Corinthians alone. Some scholars suggest πνευματικός was a word of self-identification used by those Paul describes as ‘puffed up’,¹⁶ but this is doubtful as the word is used reasonably frequently throughout the Pauline literature and not at all in 2 Corinthians.¹⁷ It is better to think of πνευματικός as a Pauline word which has been hijacked by the puffed up Corinthian leaders to describe something that Paul himself considers to be fleshly.¹⁸

For shorthand, most commentators describe these puffed up Corinthian leaders as the ‘spiritual élite’,¹⁹ and many blame them for various problems in the church: the toleration of incest (chapter 5),²⁰ the eagerness to take fellow believers to court (chapter 6),²¹ idol meat (chapters 8-10),²² confusion over head-coverings (chapter 11),²³ problems at the Lord’s Supper (chapter 11),²⁴ and a lack of belief in the resurrection (chapter 15).²⁵

generally held to be a Christian interpolation (its equivalent is absent from the Slavonic version). In the surviving documents of Judaism, only Philo uses it, and then only on nine occasions.

¹⁶ E.g. Friedrich Wilhelm Horn, *Das Angeld des Geistes: Studien Zur Paulinischen Pneumatologie* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1992), 180-201; Brockhaus, *Charisma und Amt*, 150.

¹⁷ Romans 1:11, 7:14, 15:26; Galatians 6:1; Ephesians 1:3, 5:19, 6:12; Colossians 1:9, 3:16 (also 1 Peter 2:5).

¹⁸ The rarity of its use in both Judaism and wider Graeco-Roman literature probably heightens the opportunity for the Corinthians to redefine it in Paul’s absence.

¹⁹ David G. Horrell, *The Social Ethos of the Corinthian Correspondence: Interests and Ideology from 1 Corinthians to 1 Clement* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1996), 101-119; Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 225. See also John Painter, ‘Paul and the Πνευματικοί at Corinth,’ in *Paul and Paulinism: Essays in Honour of C. K. Barrett*, ed. M. D. Hooker and S. G. Wilson (London: SPCK, 1982). Fee, *God’s Empowering Presence*, 10, does not agree, thinking the problems are wider than the élite, to which Gillespie provides a helpful response (Gillespie, *The First Theologians*, 115-117). Of course, to a certain extent Fee is right. After all, the opinions of the élite would likely be influential on others in the church (see John L. Hiigel, *Leadership in 1 Corinthians: A Case Study in Paul’s Ecclesiology* (Lewiston: E. Mellen Press, 2003), 90). But the problems manifested themselves most clearly amongst the élite, and it seems they were the primary cause of the problems.

²⁰ Clarke, *Secular and Christian Leadership in Corinth*, 73-88.

²¹ idem, 59-71.

²² Gerd Theissen, ‘Social Conflicts in the Corinthian Community: Further Remarks on J.J. Meggitt, *Paul, Poverty and Survival*’, *JSNT*, 25:3 (2003), 381-389.

²³ David W. J. Gill, ‘The Importance of Roman Portraiture for Head-Coverings in 1 Corinthians 11:2-16’, *TynBul*, 41:2 (1990). For his broader look at spiritual elitism in Corinth see David W. J. Gill, ‘In Search of the Social Elite in the Corinthian Church’, *TynBul*, 44:2 (1993).

²⁴ Gerd Theissen, *The Social Setting of Pauline Christianity: Essays on Corinth* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1982), 96.

²⁵ Richard A. Horsley, “How Can Some of You Say That There is No Resurrection of the Dead?” *Spiritual*

If their presence is felt in those chapters, it is felt even more clearly in the chapters which we are primarily concerned with, because Paul opens those chapters with the words *περὶ δὲ τῶν πνευματικῶν*. This is almost always translated as ‘concerning spiritual gifts’ or ‘concerning gifts of the Spirit’,²⁶ but literally means simply ‘concerning the spiritual’.²⁷

But what does *τῶν πνευματικῶν* mean in this context? Here we need to be careful. Although chapters 12-14 were written in response to a Corinthian letter, most of what Paul writes reflect his concerns, not the concerns of the élite. For example, it is unlikely that the Corinthians’ letter to Paul asked him to define love — but Paul saw that they were not being loving, and provided them with the reminder they needed. Likewise, it is unlikely that the Corinthians had asked Paul to provide a discourse on the diversity of spiritual gifts. It is much more likely that Paul felt that their question or behaviour demonstrated a lack of understanding of that topic, and so he provided it. In other words, these chapters are designed not only to answer the question(s) the Corinthians did ask, but to answer the questions they should have asked, and correct the errors they revealed. So when the Corinthians raise the issue of the *πνευματικοὶ*, Paul considered that the question demonstrated they were *ἀγνοεῖν* (lacking in knowledge, 12:1), and with an emphatic ‘therefore’,²⁸ he has two things he wants them to *γινώσκω* (know, 12:3): ‘no one speaking in the Spirit of God ever says “Jesus is accursed!” and no one can say “Jesus is Lord” except in the Holy Spirit’.²⁹

The verse has often perplexed commentators,³⁰ who struggle to understand why

Elitism in Corinth’, *NovT*, 20:3 (1978).

²⁶ Although the second edition of the HCSB opts for ‘what comes from the Spirit’ (the first edition had ‘matters of the spirit’), and Douay-Rheims has ‘spiritual things’. Both translations render *πνευματικῶν* as ‘spiritual gifts’ in 14:1.

²⁷ Unfortunately, it is grammatically ambiguous and could be either masculine, referring to spiritual men/people (Gillespie, *The First Theologians*, 66-96; John F. Jansen, ‘Speaking in Tongues: As Viewed in First Corinthians and in Acts’, *ASBFE*, 83 (1967), 48), or neuter and refer to spiritual things (Horsley, *1 Corinthians*, 165-167), or theoretically feminine and refer to spiritual women (although no commentators I am aware of take this latter view).

²⁸ Gordon D. Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians* (NICNT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987), 578.

²⁹ ‘Jesus is Lord’ seems to be a very early confession of the church. For more on early confessions, see Friedrich Lang, *Die Briefe an die Korinther* (NTD 7; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1986), 164-167.

³⁰ Thiselton lists no less than twelve different proposals, Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 918-924.

pronouncing a curse on Jesus might happen in the congregation, and why Paul is relatively relaxed despite the possibility.³¹ But in the context of the letter as a whole, it is likely that the élite in Corinth were claiming that the ‘less spiritual’ could not be trusted with public prophecy for fear that they might blurt out ‘Jesus is accursed!’, or otherwise dishonour him. It is a hypothetical situation,³² but one dreamed up by the Corinthians, not by Paul.³³ As they see it, their diligence in keeping the less spiritual from speaking has protected the church from such blasphemies. However, Paul is not concerned about that danger because there is nothing to fear from any of the gifts of the Spirit, as the Spirit empowers them all (12:5). His concern is not that Jesus will be dishonoured by what might be said, it is that the church might be missing out on blessing by restricting the opportunity for many members to participate in worship. His response, then, is to explain that the same Spirit gives different gifts to different people, and all these gifts are for the common good (12:7).

But how does this hypothesis fit with 12:2? At a basic level, 12:2 is a humbling verse. Paul is reminding the Corinthians – all of them – that they used to be pagans. Reminding Christians of their non-Christian past always has a somewhat humbling effect, as Paul’s own testimony bears out.³⁴ They have nothing to boast about. In this the élite were no different from the ‘less spiritual’, all equally were ‘led away’. Many commentators suggest this is a reference to ecstatic revelry, but both Grudem and Garland persuasively argue that this is unlikely to be the case,³⁵ and Paige puts forward a very credible

³¹ For a survey of the debate, see J. Duncan and M. Derrett, ‘Cursing Jesus (I Cor. XII.3): The Jews as Religious “Persecutors”’, *NTS*, 21:4 (1975). For an example of one imaginative (and unconvincing) view, see W. F. Albright and C. S. Mann, ‘Two Texts in 1 Corinthians’, *NTS*, 16:3 (1970). For an excellent summary of why many of the traditional solutions to the problem are unpersuasive see Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 567-570, although I find Garland’s alternative equally unpersuasive.

³² Contra, for example, Robin Scroggs, ‘The Exaltation of the Spirit by Some Early Christians’, *JBL*, 84:4 (1965), 366-367. Surely Paul would not have been so relaxed had this curse actually been uttered, or been in danger of being uttered in the congregation.

³³ This is the position taken by F. W. Grosheide, *Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians* (NICNT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1953), 281, and counters the objections of Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 579, who is unsure that it is hypothetical because he cannot accept Paul could create such a blasphemous phrase.

³⁴ 1 Timothy 1:12-16. Jouette Bassler also sees a connection between 1 Corinthians 12:3 and Paul’s own testimony, Jouette M. Bassler, ‘1 Cor 12:3 – Curse and Confession in Context’, *JBL*, 101:6 (1982), 418.

³⁵ Grudem, *The Gift of Prophecy in 1 Corinthians*, 162-164; Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 564-567. See also J. S. Vos, ‘Das Rätsel Von 1 Kor 12:1-3’, *NovT*, 35 (1993), 254.

alternative.³⁶ He notes that they were led to idols (πρὸς τὰ εἰδωλα), not *by* idols,³⁷ and ἀπαγόμενοι (led) is passive. He suggests that most Christians would have been led on a cultic procession whose destination was often a sanctuary image, as these processions were extremely common in first-century Greek and Roman cities. It is likely that this is what Paul had in mind.³⁸ So in addition to levelling the Corinthian Christians by reminding them of their shared pagan past, Paul is also contrasting the nature of pagan and Christian worship, suggesting that their experience of pagan cults is of no help to them in judging who may participate in Christian worship.³⁹ Pagans are led to dumb idols, but Christians speak ἐν πνεύματι θεοῦ (in the Spirit of God). This underlines the powerlessness of the passive idol (to whom one is led), compared with the power of God (who comes upon a speaker), but also the simple fact that in contrast to pagan religion, Christian worship is a place where *God speaks*. Corinthian Christians who are concerned that a convert may speak ill of Jesus are forgetting something crucial — in Christian worship, God is not mute. Now that they all have the Spirit, all believers are members of the same body. No-one will say ‘Jesus is accursed!’, because to have the Spirit is to be spiritual (12:3), so ‘spiritual speech’ is not to be reserved for the ‘spiritual few’.⁴⁰

Now that Paul has explained that important principle, he can go on to explain in more detail the ways in which those who are not part of the spiritual élite should exercise their gifts. It is clear from chapter 12 that many in the Corinthian church do not value the diversity of gifts of the Spirit, and instead value tongues above all others. Paul therefore does three things. First, he describes the diversity of gifts, which demonstrates that the church needs *all* the gifts, and therefore needs all the members of that church (chapter 12) to exercise those gifts. This means all church members, including the ‘élite’, are dependent even on those they deem to be weaker and less honourable (12:21-24). Second, Paul emphasises that gifts exercised without love are simply empty (13:1-3), and he

³⁶ Terence Paige, ‘1 Corinthians 12.2: A Pagan Pompe?’, *JSNT*, 44 (1991), 57-65

³⁷ *idem*, 58.

³⁸ Paige’s arguments have received widespread sympathy from recent commentators, including from Raymond F. Collins, *First Corinthians* (SP 7; Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1999), 447; Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 912; Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 566 and Ciampa and Rosner, *The First Letter to the Corinthians*, 564.

³⁹ Ciampa and Rosner, *The First Letter to the Corinthians*, 564.

⁴⁰ Forbes, *Prophecy and Inspired Speech*, 262.

reminds them what love is and is not — crucially, it is not φυσιοῦται (puffed up). This excursus on love is preparation for Paul's third point, which is a very practical one. The Corinthian élite favour the gift of tongues over other gifts, but because this is a gift that builds up only the speaker (14:4) it is inappropriate in the congregation unless it is interpreted and can build up the whole church (14:5). Prophecy, a gift apparently not valued by the élite, does however build up the whole church, and therefore the prophet is greater than the tongues-speaker (14:5). The rest of the chapter is devoted to a defence of this position, and an explanation of how the practice of the church therefore needs to change.

The variety of gifts

Paul is not only at pains to distinguish prophecy from tongues throughout chapters 12 to 14, but he also refers to several other forms of Spirit-empowered speech, such as λόγος σοφίας and λόγος γνώσεως (word of wisdom and word of knowledge). If possible we need to determine what distinguishes this speech from prophecy, in order to help us be clear about what prophecy is not. Unfortunately, it is not that simple.

The problem is not just with these two terms, because Paul uses a dizzying variety of terms in chapters 12 and 14:

1. There are at least twelve types of speech:⁴¹ ἀποκάλυψις (revelation), γλῶσσα (tongues, which themselves are of various kinds), γνῶσις (knowledge),⁴² διδαχή (teaching), ἐρμηνεία (interpretation), εὐχαριστία (thanksgiving), λόγος (word),⁴³ λόγος γνώσεως (word of knowledge), λόγος σοφίας (word of wisdom), μυστήριον (mystery), προφητεία (prophecy), ψαλμός (hymn), and possibly πνεῦμα (spirit).⁴⁴ It could be sixteen types if we include οἰκοδομή (upbuilding), παράκλησις (encouragement) and παραμυθία (consolation) from 14:3.⁴⁵ Six of these words are

⁴¹ The exact count depends on exegetical decisions such as whether γνῶσις (knowledge) is to be distinguished from λόγος γνώσεως (word of knowledge).

⁴² 14:6.

⁴³ 14:9 — 'if with your tongue you utter a word that is not intelligible...'

⁴⁴ Πνεῦμα may indicate a type of speech in 12:10 and 14:32, and possibly 14:12. If so, the usage would be similar to that of 2 Thessalonians 2:2 and perhaps 1 John 4:1 (see Charles A. Wanamaker, *The Epistles to the Thessalonians* (NIGTC; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990), 239; Jacob Kremer, 'πνεῦμα', *EDNT*, 3:119).

⁴⁵ Most English translations have something like 'speaks to the people for their encouragement, etc.', but

used nowhere else in the New Testament other than in these three chapters.⁴⁶

2. These speech types are accompanied by ten different verbs: ἀποκαλύπτω (reveal), διερμηνεύω (interpret), εἶπον (say), εὐλογέω (praise), εὐχαριστέω (give thanks), κατηχέω (instruct), λαλέω (speak), προσεύχομαι (pray), προφητεύω (prophecy) and ψάλλω (sing).
3. There are six additional non-speech gifts, πίστις (faith), ἴαμα (healing), δύναμις (power), διάκρισις (discernment), ἀντίληψις (helping), and κυβέρνησις (administrating), half of which are never mentioned elsewhere in the New Testament.⁴⁷
4. These are described using four words, χαρίσματα (gifts), διακονίαι (services), ἐνέργηματα (activities) and φανέρωσις (manifestations).
5. Four verbs are used to describe how these gifts/services/activities/ manifestations are received: ἐνεργέω (empowered), δίδωμι (given), διαιρέω (apportioned), and τίθημι (appointed).

This enormously varied vocabulary is not due to Paul selecting similes because he does not like repeating words, because there are several occasions in these chapters where words are repeated many times, even in one sentence. For example, διαίρεσις (varieties) occurs three times in 12:4-6; προσεύχομαι (pray) five times in 14:13-15; ἄλλος (another) six times in 12:8-10; and σῶμα (body) no less than eighteen times in 12:12-27. So rather than disliking repetition, Paul is deliberately overwhelming his readers with the sheer variety of gifts/services/activities/manifestations.

Yet I am not suggesting that Paul simply listed as many different words as possible. His was a qualitative argument as much as a quantitative one. For example, he uses ‘word of knowledge’ and ‘word of wisdom’ to introduce a section illustrating the diversity of gifts that the Spirit gives. It is likely that he does so in order to begin the list with two gifts that the Corinthians would value,⁴⁸ and he therefore demonstrates his point in a way

the Greek is ὁ δὲ προφητεύων ἀνθρώποις λαλεῖ οἰκοδομῆν etc., literally ‘speaks to the people encouragement, etc.’. See Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 655-656.

⁴⁶ Λόγος γνώσεως, λόγος σοφίας, ἐρμηνεία, παραμυθία, ἀντίληψις and κυβέρνησις.

⁴⁷ ἴαμα, ἀντίληψις and κυβέρνησις.

⁴⁸ Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 591. Both σοφία and γνώσις are likely to be ‘Corinthian’ terms – that is, terms that they valued. There are seventeen occurrences of σοφία in 1 Corinthians. No other

they find difficult not to accept — the Corinthians would not want to deny the value of knowledge and wisdom, so they cannot deny there are gifts other than tongues. Yet Paul would not want to list wisdom and knowledge in the abstract (i.e. without the modifier ‘word of’), because he is pre-empting the point he will make again and again in chapter 14. Gifts are not merely to edify the person who has the gift (as knowledge and wisdom may do), but to edify the church (as a *word* of knowledge or wisdom may do).⁴⁹ In other words, what commentators often refer to as two distinct spiritual gifts (‘word of knowledge’ and ‘word of wisdom’) may in fact be simply an example of Paul taking what the Corinthians value (wisdom and knowledge) and turning it into something useful for the church (words of wisdom and knowledge). The word of knowledge and word of wisdom may well not be distinct types of revelatory speech, but vocal expressions of two non-speech gifts that are particularly valued by the Corinthians.⁵⁰ If that is so, then we should be very wary of defining prophecy (or any other gift) as entirely distinct from the word of knowledge and the word of wisdom.

I am emphasising the variety of vocabulary and the possible reasons for it, because it is important that we try to be as accurate as possible in defining how Paul understands prophecy. The variety matters because it suggests that defining prophecy in contradistinction to each of the other ‘forms’ of speech is at best unwise, and probably not even possible. This is because the huge range of vocabulary, and the rarity of several of the words means it is not possible to precisely define each of the terms in a distinctive way,⁵¹ and it suggests it was not Paul’s intention that his readers attempt to do so. Indeed, the overlapping nature of these various ‘forms’ of speech suggests that prophecy includes or overlaps with much of the types of speech listed above,⁵² and if so, we ought not define prophecy in contradistinction to these other speech forms. If we were to do so,

New Testament book has more than six. More than half of the New Testament occurrences of γυνῶσις occur in 1 or 2 Corinthians.

⁴⁹ Dunn, *Jesus and the Spirit*, 221.

⁵⁰ Of course, this is rather speculative, but most of what is said about the word of knowledge and word of wisdom is speculative — and necessarily so, as neither Paul nor any of the other New Testament writers ever mention them again.

⁵¹ Fee rightly says that scholars often express ‘far greater confidence... than the evidence itself warrants’, Fee, ‘Gifts of the Spirit’, 340.

⁵² Christian Wolff, *Der Erste Brief des Paulus an die Korinther* (THKNT; Leipzig: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 2000), 477.

then our definition of prophecy will be much narrower than otherwise would be the case, and probably much narrower than Paul intended.⁵³

The variety of speech-gifts listed in chapter 12, therefore does not necessarily narrow our understanding of what prophecy is, and may even widen it.

Characteristics of prophecy

Having discussed something of the background to 1 Corinthians 12-14, we can finally turn our attention to prophecy itself, and particularly on how Paul describes it in these chapters. We will begin by identifying everything that Paul explicitly says about prophecy.

- **The source of prophecy:** Prophecy is a manifestation of the Spirit, empowered by God (12:7-8, 10), and prompted by revelation (14:30).
- **The status of those who prophesy:** God has appointed prophets second in the church, after apostles (12:28). Prophecy makes the prophesier 'greater' than one who speaks in tongues (14:5), but prophecy still needs to be weighed or judged (14:29). Prophets are to give way to one another (14:30), and are to be subject to one another (14:32).
- **The extent of the prophetic gift:** Not all are prophets (12:29), but Paul really wants everyone to prophesy (14:5), and all the Corinthians should earnestly desire to prophesy (14:1, 39).
- **The content of prophecy:** Prophetic powers correspond in some way to understanding mysteries and knowledge (13:2).
- **The effect of prophecy:** Prophecy speaks to people (14:3), builds up the church (14:3-5), is a sign for believers (14:22), convicts, calls to account and exposes the secrets of unbelievers' hearts (14:24-25), and will teach and encourage (14:31).
- **The way of prophecy:** When prophets speak, two or three should do so (14:29), and they can all prophesy one by one (14:31).
- **The future of prophecy:** Prophecies will pass away, because now we only prophesy in part (13:8).

Having summarised Paul's view of prophecy, we now need to examine each of these

⁵³ It may even be that prophecy is an umbrella term that can include all of these speech types (in Romans 12:6-8, prophecy is the only type of speech mentioned).

themes more carefully in order that we can develop a more rigorous Pauline theology of prophecy.

Prophecy and revelation

Prophecy is clearly a manifestation of the Spirit and empowered by God (12:7-8, 10), and this is a particular emphasis of Paul, particularly in chapter 12. This strong link between the Spirit and prophecy in Paul is to be expected given the equally strong links in the old covenant scriptures and Judaism.

In 14:30 Paul makes the same point in a different way, noting that prophecy is prompted by revelation (the verb is used, ἀποκαλύπτω) in a way that indicates Paul presumes the speaker is in control of his speech (i.e. not in an ecstatic trance). Paul also uses the noun ἀποκάλυψις in 14:6 and 14:26:

- In 14:6, Paul might speak in ἀποκάλυψις (revelation), γνῶσις (knowledge), προφητεία (prophecy), or διδασχὴ (teaching).
- In 14:26, the brothers might have a ψαλμός (hymn), διδασχὴ (teaching), ἀποκάλυψις (revelation), γλῶσσα (tongue) or ἑρμηνεία (interpretation).

We will return to 14:6 in the next chapter,⁵⁴ as it appears to describe the content of tongues, which seems to be able to include revelation and prophecy. The suggestion of both these verses is that revelation is one type of empowered-speech amongst others, yet 14:30 implies that prophecy is always prompted by revelation. Given our earlier overview of the diversity of empowered-speech, both statements are probably true. All prophecy is prompted by revelation (14:30), but some empowered-speech has certain distinctives (known to Paul and the Corinthians church, but probably now lost) that enables it to be called ‘revelation’ in a more specific sense. To draw a modern-day analogy, a student might speak of ‘today’s lectures’ (meaning his or her entire timetable), even though the day is actually made up of seminars, workshops, lectures and tutorials. ‘Lectures’ has both a generic and a specific meaning, and it seems that ἀποκάλυψις and probably προφητεία do for the Corinthians and for Paul.

The question of revelation will come up again when we consider the authority of prophecy,⁵⁵ but it is worth briefly examining here. Discussion on revelation usually

⁵⁴ See below, pp. 248f.

⁵⁵ See below, pp. 191f.

focuses on the mode of revelation: visions, dreams, direct oracular speech, ecstasy and so on, but Paul is uninterested in these questions. Packer points out that throughout the scriptures, revelation is generally thought of in other terms:

When the Bible speaks of revelation, the thought intended is of God the Creator actively disclosing to men his power and glory, his nature and character, his will, ways and plans—in short, himself—in order that men may know him.⁵⁶

This suggests that 14:24-25 might describe a revelatory experience that occurs during prophecy. There, Paul imagines a situation whereby an unbeliever enters the congregation whilst prophesying is occurring. The result is that the unbeliever will ‘worship God and declare that God is really among you’. This mode of revelation (God revealing *himself*) is a forgotten element in much contemporary theologising about prophecy,⁵⁷ despite the importance of the Spirit as the presence of God with his people, despite prophecy being a sign that Yahweh was with his people,⁵⁸ and despite the old covenant prophecies that Yahweh’s presence with his people would be a sign of the eschatological age.⁵⁹ If prophesying was a regular occurrence in Corinth and it revealed the presence of God with his people, that would be seen as a sign that the eschatological age had indeed arrived.

To summarise, for Paul and the Corinthians, prophecy is a revelation from God, and a sign of the presence of God. These views are similar to those within Judaism and in other New Testament writings.

Prophecy, status and authority

In 12:28, Paul says that God has appointed prophets second in the church, and most commentators believe that Paul is ‘ranking’ prophets here, behind apostles, but ahead of

⁵⁶ J. I. Packer, ‘Revelation’, *NBD*³, 1014.

⁵⁷ Even Carson, who devotes six pages at the end of his exposition on 1 Corinthians 12-14 to ‘Reflections on Revelation’ not only fails to mention 14:25 in his reflections, but virtually excises the phrase ‘and declare that God is really among you’ from his earlier exposition. Carson, *Showing the Spirit*, 160-165, 116-117.

⁵⁸ Compare with the comments frequently made in Judaism and the old covenant scriptures that Yahweh/the Spirit has ‘left’ and that prophecy had ‘ceased’. Numbers 12:6 explains the connection: ‘If there is a prophet among you, I the LORD make myself known to him’.

⁵⁹ See particularly Jeremiah 31:31-34, and the comments on pp. 88f. Schrage is one of the very few that draws attention to old covenant fulfilment when commenting on 1 Corinthians 14, although he points to the fulfilment of Isaiah 45:14 and 1 Kings 18:39. Schrage, *Der Erste Brief an die Korinther*, 3:414.

teachers.⁶⁰ (We will come later to the question of who was considered to be a prophet when we look at the extent of the prophetic gift.)⁶¹ Paul's battles earlier in this letter against those who opposed his apostolic calling,⁶² may well have removed any hesitancy he might otherwise have felt in listing his own office first. But with Ciampa and Rosner,⁶³ we should be careful not to suggest that this is a hierarchy of authority, but is better described as a hierarchy of value. This assertion is strengthened by Paul's statement in 14:5 that prophecy makes the prophet 'greater' than one who speaks in tongues, because the prophecy will build up the church (i.e. has value for the church). It should also be noted that nowhere in Paul (indeed nowhere in the New Testament) do we find any suggestion that a prophet had any more right than any other Christian to tell another how they should live or what they should do, and later in this very letter, we find that all prophecies are to be judged and that prophets are to give way to one another (14:30), and are to be subject to one another (14:32).

Despite this, historically many have considered prophecy to be authoritative. Grudem has looked at the question in considerable depth,⁶⁴ basing his argument largely on 14:29-38. He gives five reasons that prophecy in the New Testament is not authoritative:

1. **Prophecies require evaluation:** 14:29 says that prophecies should be evaluated (διακρινέτωσαν), according to Grudem not just by other prophets, but by the whole congregation (or the men,⁶⁵ at least). Parts of a prophecy might therefore be rejected as 'erroneous or misleading'.⁶⁶ As Grudem points out, it was the *prophecies* being evaluated or weighed, not the *prophets* themselves.⁶⁷ This is in contrast to the

⁶⁰ Grosheide, *Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 298; Dunn, *Jesus and the Spirit*, 273-274; Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 619; Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 598. Some of these writers restrict their view to just the first three offices/roles listed, and not to the remainder of the list.

⁶¹ See below, pp. 194f.

⁶² 1 Corinthians 4:1-21, 9:1-27.

⁶³ Ciampa and Rosner, *The First Letter to the Corinthians*, 609-610.

⁶⁴ Grudem, *The Gift of Prophecy in 1 Corinthians*, 54-74. Grudem's formulation of authority is not one I am particularly comfortable with (I share the concerns of Turner, *The Holy Spirit and Spiritual Gifts*, 210-211) but the arguments Grudem gives are not dependent on his precise formulation.

⁶⁵ Grudem considers that the Corinthian women were not permitted to weigh the prophecies. See his fifth reason, below.

⁶⁶ Grudem, *The Gift of Prophecy in 1 Corinthians*, 62.

⁶⁷ idem, 63. He also argues that Paul's use of διακρίνω rather than κρίνω is evidence that the prophecies

Old Testament, where a prophet who spoke falsely would be killed for misrepresenting the Lord.⁶⁸

2. **Prophecies are lightly esteemed:** 14:30 suggests that revelation could be interrupted,⁶⁹ meaning some prophecies would be ‘lost forever and never heard by the church’.⁷⁰
3. **The word of God did not originate in Corinth:** Grudem’s third argument is based on 14:36 which states that the ‘word of God’ (which Grudem would consider authoritative) did not originate in the Corinthian congregation.⁷¹
4. **The Corinthian prophets are under Paul’s authority:** Grudem argues briefly that because 14:36-38 puts the prophets under Paul’s authority, their authority must have been less than his.⁷²
5. **Prophetesses could prophesy but not act authoritatively:** 11:5 states that prophetesses could prophesy, but in Grudem’s view 14:34 says they cannot exercise evaluating authority in the congregation,⁷³ nor can they exercise authority over men.⁷⁴ (Grudem is well aware that this final argument will not be accepted by many.)

These arguments of Grudem’s (except the fifth) have been reasonably widely accepted,⁷⁵ though sometimes with caveats,⁷⁶ and others have come to similar conclusions

were to be evaluated, rather than strictly judged, as κρίνω is ‘the term the NT prefers when speaking of judgments where there are only two possibilities, such as “guilty” or “not guilty,” “right” or “wrong,” or “true” or “false”’, idem, 65.

⁶⁸ idem, 66.

⁶⁹ idem, 67-70.

⁷⁰ idem, 67.

⁷¹ idem, 70-71.

⁷² idem, 72.

⁷³ For a similar position to Grudem, see Ann L. Jervis, ‘1 Corinthians 14.34-35: A Reconsideration of Paul’s Limitation of the Free Speech of Some Corinthian Women’, *JSNT*, 17:58 (1995).

⁷⁴ cf. 1 Timothy 2:12.

⁷⁵ Although see Richard B. Gaffin, ‘A Cessationist View,’ in *Are Miraculous Gifts for Today*, ed. Wayne A. Grudem (Leicester: Inter-Varsity Press, 1996), 48-54, for an alternative view.

⁷⁶ See Carson, *Showing the Spirit*, 94-100; Mark J. Cartledge, ‘Charismatic Prophecy and New Testament Prophecy’, *Them*, 17:1 (1991), 18; Witherington, *Conflict and Community in Corinth*, 280; Collins, *First Corinthians*, 519; Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 662-663 and Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 962-963.

independently.⁷⁷

In summary, prophets, are highly valued members of the community, not because their prophecies are authoritative, but because their prophecies are of great value to the church.

The extent of the prophetic gift

The question of the extent of the prophetic gift in 1 Corinthians hinges around two seemingly contradictory statements of Paul: Not all are prophets (12:29),⁷⁸ but Paul really wants them all to prophesy (14:5), and says they should all earnestly desire to prophesy (14:1, 31, 39). If we are to formulate a Pauline theology of prophecy, we need to understand this apparent contradiction.

The contradiction is imagined rather than real, however. First, Paul does not say that not everyone will prophesy, but that not all are prophets, and we ought not assume that all those who prophesy are necessarily prophets. Second, when Paul talks about all prophesying, it is in the context of a desire (his desire in 14:5, their desire elsewhere), not necessarily of actuality. We ought not assume that just because there is a desire to prophesy that prophecy will actually occur.

That is because prophecy has God and revelation as its source,⁷⁹ so no Corinthian could begin to prophesy at will. He had to wait until God revealed something to him.⁸⁰ That is why Paul does not tell the Corinthians to go and prophesy, but that they should desire (ζηλοῦτε) to do so, and presumably pray that they might. At the same time, no-one is excluded from prophesying in chapters 12-14 (see particularly 14:5).⁸¹ There are some restrictions placed on *when* people may prophesy (14:29-31), but no restrictions on *who* should prophesy.⁸² (Some suggest that 14:34-35 appears to forbid women from

⁷⁷ Friedrich et al., *TDNT*, 6:849; Hill, *New Testament Prophecy*, 135. Writing in 1979, Hill had access to Grudem's 1976 PhD thesis, but cites him on just two occasions.

⁷⁸ Formulated as a question, 'Are all prophets?', but expecting the answer 'no'.

⁷⁹ See above, pp. 190f.

⁸⁰ Grudem, *The Gift of Prophecy in 1 Corinthians*, 238-239.

⁸¹ Choi, *Geist und Christliche Existenz*, 66 fn. 51.

⁸² That is, prophecy does not appear to be restricted only to those who held prophetic office (if the office was established in this period) or recognised as prophets.

prophesying, but 11:5 demonstrates that this cannot be the case.)⁸³ That does not mean that at every meeting every Christian prophesied. The ‘all’ (πάντες) in 14:31 very likely refers to all who will be given a prophecy in the meeting, not to all members of the fellowship, although its threefold repetition is very emphatic. Throughout the passage the impression is never given that there were one or two ‘professional’ prophets who would routinely bring a prophecy, but rather that on any given occasion any (although not every) believer in the congregation may be given a prophecy to share.⁸⁴

In summary, the possibility of prophesying is extended to the entire congregation, but that does not necessarily mean that all will prophesy on any particular occasion.

The content of prophecy

Determining the content of new covenant prophecy has always been at the heart of theological investigation into the phenomenon, but whilst Paul says a lot about the effect of prophecy,⁸⁵ he says little about its content, other than consistently underlining that it is intelligible. It is possible, however, that there may be a hint about its content in 13:2.⁸⁶

And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing.

Does having prophetic powers mean understanding ‘all mysteries and all knowledge’, or is this simply Pauline hyperbole? After all, giving away all you have does not necessarily mean delivering your body to be burned (13:3).⁸⁷ Yet there must be some reasonably strong link between prophetic powers and understanding all mysteries and knowledge for 13:2 to make sense. In each of the couplets in 13:2-3 the second half of the couplet describes the very pinnacle of the first. Thus the greatest language of men is actually the language of angels. The greatest demonstration of faith is the ability to move

⁸³ Much ink has been spilt on 14:34-35, but that need not concern us here. I take the view that it is not an interpolation, and that it was the weighing of prophecies by wives that was forbidden. See, on both points, Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 664-673, and below p. 262.

⁸⁴ *idem*, 660-661.

⁸⁵ See below, pp. 198f.

⁸⁶ Gaffin, *Perspectives on Pentecost*, 61.

⁸⁷ Some manuscripts read *καυχῆσθαι* (boast) instead of *καυθήσθαι* (burned). On the text-critical issue see Andreas Lindemann, *Der Erste Korintherbrief* (HNT 9/1; Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 2000), 285-286 and the literature cited there. Whichever variant is chosen makes little difference to this discussion, however.

mountains.⁸⁸ The greatest act of self-sacrifice is giving up your own body. Hence the greatest demonstration of prophetic powers would be to understand all mysteries (μυστήριον) and all knowledge (γνώσις). The correlation would suggest that a moderate demonstration of prophetic powers might be to understand *some* mysteries and *some* knowledge. If so, this indicates that the content of prophecy might include the revelation of mysteries and knowledge.⁸⁹

Prophecy as μυστήριον

Throughout this thesis we have underlined the importance of understanding the historical, cultural and theological contexts of each text, so it is important that we pause momentarily to consider the background to mysteries and knowledge. Both terms find their origin in Judaism,⁹⁰ particularly in apocalyptic literature. Μυστήριον is frequent in the LXX of Daniel where it is used of an ‘eschatological secret’ (see particularly Daniel 2:28). This concept is also apparent in 1 Enoch, and at Qumran.⁹¹

This Jewish concept of ‘eschatological secret’ is carried into 1 Corinthians by Paul,⁹² but with an additional emphasis on the mystery revealed,⁹³ which we can see if we examine how the term is used elsewhere in 1 Corinthians. In 2:7⁹⁴ where it refers to an eschatological secret hidden ‘before the ages’, now revealed (2:10).⁹⁵ The reception of this revelation does not appear to be restricted to Paul alone, because unlike 2:1-5, the rest of chapter 2 is first person plural throughout. It is revealed both to (2:10) and by (2:7, 13) all those who have the Spirit. The mystery itself is ‘Jesus Christ, and him crucified’ (2:2), and ‘what God has prepared for those who love him’ (2:9).⁹⁶ The next occurrence in 4:1 tells us

⁸⁸ cf. Matthew 17:20 and parallels.

⁸⁹ A conclusion that is reinforced by the later use of μυστήριον and γνώσις in relation to tongues-speech (14:2, 6). See Gladd, *Revealing the Mysterion*, 197-198.

⁹⁰ On ‘mystery’ see Raymond E. Brown, *The Semitic Background of the Term ‘Mystery’ in the New Testament* (FBBS 21; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1968), 1-30.

⁹¹ Günter Finkenrath, ‘μυστήριον’, *NIDNTT*, 3:502-503.

⁹² Gladd, *Revealing the Mysterion*, 195-197.

⁹³ Forbes, *Prophecy and Inspired Speech*, 96.

⁹⁴ The NA27 has μυστήριον in 2:1, although several manuscripts have μαρτύριον. If μυστήριον is original, it points forward to 2:7.

⁹⁵ Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 105.

⁹⁶ Markus Bockmuehl, *Revelation and Mystery in Ancient Judaism and Pauline Christianity* (WUNT2; Tübingen:

nothing of the content of μυστήριον, only that Paul is a steward of these mysteries. The final reference in 15:51 seems to be a revelation itself,⁹⁷ concerning the future resurrection of believers.

When we compare these uses of μυστήριον in 1 Corinthians to the rest of the Pauline epistles, we find a very similar pattern. Most often μυστήριον refers to the mystery of Christ, and always to an eschatological secret now revealed, with the blessings usually already realised, but sometimes still to come:⁹⁸

Now to him who is able to strengthen you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery...

... making known to us the mystery of his will, according to his purpose, which he set forth in Christ...

...you can perceive my insight into the mystery of Christ...

This mystery is profound, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church.

To them God chose to make known how great among the Gentiles are the riches of the glory of this mystery, which is Christ in you...

...to reach all the riches of full assurance of understanding and the knowledge of God's mystery, which is Christ...

...pray also for us, that God may open to us a door for the word, to declare the mystery of Christ...

Great indeed, we confess, is the mystery of godliness: He was manifested in the flesh, vindicated by the Spirit...⁹⁹

There is therefore a strong relationship between μυστήριον and Christ, and between μυστήριον and prophecy. If the content of prophecy is μυστήριον and the content of μυστήριον is Christ, that suggests that in Pauline thought, the content of prophecy is the revelation of the mystery of Christ.

Mohr, 1990), 163-164.

⁹⁷ Cf. Romans 11:25-27, and see idem, 170-175.

⁹⁸ Bockmuehl says the two levels are 'the saving purposes of God... in the message of the gospel of Christ', and an 'aspect of God's salvation, especially as this relates to the eschaton', idem, 226. Günther Bornkamm, 'μυστήριον, μυσέω', *TDNT*, 4:819, concludes it 'is firmly connected with the *kerygma* of Christ', and Dunn says, 'God's secret purpose now revealed in Christ and the gospel', Dunn, *Jesus and the Spirit*, 244.

⁹⁹ Romans 16:25; Ephesians 1:9, 3:4, 5:32; Colossians 1:27, 2:2, 4:3; 1 Timothy 3:16.

Prophecy as γνῶσις

If the content of μυστήριον in Paul is relatively easy to determine, γνῶσις is less well defined. In the Septuagint γνῶσις is particularly prominent in the wisdom literature,¹⁰⁰ often in the sense of knowledge of God or from God. Bultmann calls it ‘a spiritual possession resting on revelation’.¹⁰¹ In the New Testament it has kept that meaning, although as might be expected, knowledge of Christ, as well as knowledge of God is prominent.¹⁰² Other than 1 Corinthians 13:2, the only other place in Paul where μυστήριον and γνῶσις occur in close proximity is Colossians 2:2-3, a text that reaches to the heights even more than 13:2’s ‘all mysteries and all knowledge’, as Paul prays that they might ‘reach all the riches of full assurance of understanding and the knowledge [ἐπίγνωσις] of God’s mystery, which is Christ, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge [γνῶσις]’. That perhaps gives some sense of what Paul was getting at in 13:2.

Summary: The content of prophecy

If we bring together these two aspects of Pauline prophecy, we can say that prophecy in 1 Corinthians is an intelligible Spirit-empowered revelation of the knowledge of God’s salvation and the mystery of Christ.

The effect of prophecy

Paul says more about the effects of prophecy than perhaps he does about any other characteristic. This is probably because his great complaint about tongues is that it does not have the positive effect that prophecy has, and therefore almost all of what Paul says about the effect of prophecy is in contrast to the effect of tongues.

Prophecy speaks to people (as opposed to speaking only to God),¹⁰³ builds up the church (as opposed to building up only the speaker),¹⁰⁴ is a sign for believers (as opposed to being

¹⁰⁰ An electronic search of the 1979 edition of Rahlfs’ *Septuaginta* shows that 44 of the 64/65* total occurrences are in Psalms, Odes, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Wisdom of Solomon, Sirach and Psalms of Solomon. (*One occurrence is found only in the alternative text of Daniel 2:30.) The search was performed using *Logos Bible Software 4*, in June 2012.

¹⁰¹ Rudolf Bultmann, ‘Γινώσκω, Γνῶσις, Ἐπιγινώσκω, Ἐπίγνωσις’, *TDNT*, 1:700.

¹⁰² In Paul, see 2 Corinthians 2:14, 4:6, Ephesians 3:9, Philippians 3:8, Colossians 2:3.

¹⁰³ 14:3.

¹⁰⁴ 14:3-5.

a sign for unbelievers),¹⁰⁵ convicts, calls to account and exposes the secrets of unbelievers' hearts¹⁰⁶ (as opposed to causing unbelievers to think the speakers are out of their minds),¹⁰⁷ and will teach and encourage (as opposed to causing confusion).¹⁰⁸

Paul's description of the effects of prophecy is not on its own sufficient to allow us to define prophecy precisely (hence the limitations of functional definitions of prophecy). However, it does give us an opportunity to test existing definitions — because any definition given for prophecy should not be considered correct unless such prophecy could reasonably bring about all the effects that Paul mentions. These are that prophecy is for people (14:3), builds up the church (14:3-5), is a sign for believers (14:22), convicts, calls to account and exposes the secrets of unbelievers' hearts (14:24-25), and teaches and encourages (14:31). It is reasonable suggest that prophecy that is an intelligible Spirit-empowered revelation of the knowledge of God's salvation and the mystery of Christ could indeed bring about such effects (when Gustav Stählin was considering the effect of prophecy, he too concluded that 'the content of NT prophecy is the revelation of the mystery of Christ...'.¹⁰⁹). This does not prove that the understanding of the content of prophecy given above is correct, but it does add some additional corroboration.

To summarise, the effect of prophecy builds up the church through teaching and encouragement, and demonstrates even to outsiders that God is present with his people.

The proper place of prophecy

As he nears the end of chapter 14, Paul draws some practical application for the church, to ensure that their prophesying is done in an orderly way. He says that when prophets speak, two or three should do so, with the others weighing (διακρινέτωσαν) what was said (14:29), and each speaker giving way when a revelation comes to another (14:30). This way, they can all prophesy one by one (14:31).

¹⁰⁵ 14:22.

¹⁰⁶ Paul is not suggesting that the prophets will publically speak some 'secret' knowledge about the misdeeds of the visitor, but rather he hears 'im prophetischen Wort die Wahrheit über sich vernimmt, der er zustimmen muß' (he hears 'in the prophetic word truth concerning himself, with which he must agree'), Schrage, *Der Erste Brief an die Korinther*, 3:413. For more on the content of prophecy (and possible 'secret' knowledge), see above p. 195f.

¹⁰⁷ 14:24-25.

¹⁰⁸ 14:31, 33.

¹⁰⁹ Gustav Stählin, 'παραμυθέομαι, παραμυθία, παραμύθιον', *TDNT*, 5:823.

The limitation on prophecies is more relaxed than the limits on tongues-speech in that only two or three tongues-speakers could speak *in total*,¹¹⁰ whereas two or three prophesiers could speak *in a block*,¹¹¹ with no limits given to the total number of speakers. Unless Paul is suggesting that a prophecy would never be given to more than three people (which is unlikely), the impression given is that after the weighing, another two or three prophets will get their turn until all who wish to speak have spoken ('all' is repeated three times in 14:31).¹¹²

The twin references to 'two or three' speakers is intriguing. Two or three could just be a convenient number, but Paul might also have something else in mind. There are five verses in the New Testament outside 1 Corinthians that refer to 'two or three',¹¹³ and on every occasion the 'two or three' are specified as 'two or three witnesses', a tradition carried over from the old covenant scriptures.¹¹⁴ It may be that Paul considers the prophets as witnesses¹¹⁵ — prophecy was often linked with judicial witness in the gospels and Acts,¹¹⁶ so perhaps that tradition had reached Paul, and he also saw prophecy as a witness to Jesus.¹¹⁷ If so, the task of the congregation to weigh (διακρίνω) what the two or three said takes on a deeper meaning. There is some debate as to what διακρίνω means in this context, with English translations including 'discern', 'weigh', 'judge', 'evaluate', and 'pass judgment'.¹¹⁸ If there are judicial overtones in Paul's thinking here, διακρίνω is a very appropriate response to the testimony of witnesses.

For Paul, what is of most importance, is that prophecy and tongues-speech are orderly, and for the benefit of the whole congregation. Without being overly prescriptive, he gives simple rules that will help ensure this takes place (although far more important

¹¹⁰ Paul says κατὰ δύο ἢ τὸ πλεῖστον τρεῖς, 'only two or at most three' (14:27), with no qualification.

¹¹¹ Here there is no 'only' or 'at most', and there is the additional qualification of δύνασθε γὰρ καθ' ἕνα πάντες προφητεύειν ('for you can all prophesy one by one').

¹¹² Fee, *God's Empowering Presence*, 693; Schrage, *Der Erste Brief an die Korinther*, 3:449.

¹¹³ Matthew 18:16, 20; 2 Corinthians 13:1; 1 Timothy 5:19; Hebrews 10:28.

¹¹⁴ Deuteronomy 17:6 and 19:15.

¹¹⁵ Cf. Romans 3:21, where the old covenant prophets are said to witness concerning the revelation of the righteousness of God (i.e. Jesus).

¹¹⁶ See above, pp. 122f, 145f, 160f.

¹¹⁷ The content of Pauline prophecy has already been defined in Christocentric terms.

¹¹⁸ All of these are appropriate translations, as διακρίνω has a wide range of meanings. See *BDAG*, 231.

than the rules is the right attitude, exemplified by his statements in chapter 13).

The future of prophecy

In his discussion on love, Paul contrasts the permanence of love with the impermanence of prophecy (13:8). Whilst recognising the semi-poetic language of this section, any understanding of prophecy has to be able to explain why prophecies will καταργηθήσονται (pass away), and what Paul means by saying we only prophesy ἐκ μέρους (in part).

We do not have time for a complete exegesis of 13:8-13, but will need to restrict ourselves to a simple exploration to see whether these verses are compatible with our understanding of prophecy. The whole section is chiastic:¹¹⁹

- A Love never ends.
- B As for prophecies, they will pass away; as for tongues, they will cease; as for knowledge, it will pass away.
- C For we know in part and we prophesy in part,
- D but when the perfect comes, the partial will pass away.
- E When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child.
- E' When I became a man, I gave up childish ways.
- D' For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face.
- C' Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I have been fully known.
- B' So now faith, hope, and love abide, these three;
- A' but the greatest of these is love.

Prophecy and knowledge are paralleled (C and C'), and whilst both gifts are very appropriate for the current age they will appear childish in the age to come and will need to be given up, or will pass away. This paralleling might be seen to reinforce our earlier conclusion that prophecy was the revealing of mysteries and knowledge, and if both knowledge and prophecy are concerned with the gospel of Jesus Christ, one might well imagine that the Corinthians' understanding of him on earth would appear childish compared to their understanding of him in the age to come.

¹¹⁹ A similar structure is given by Brad McCoy, 'Chiasmus: An Important Structural Device Commonly Found in Biblical Literature', *CTSJ*, 9:2 (2003), 32, although I discovered his article only after arriving at this structure.

The reference to ‘face to face’ in 13:12¹²⁰ is an idiom common in the old covenant scriptures that denotes personal relationship, and is contrasted here with the indirect revelation received as if via a mirror.¹²¹ This reference to a personal relationship between the prophet and God reinforces our earlier conclusion that revelation in these chapters principally concern a revelation of God himself.¹²²

Therefore 1 Corinthians 13:8-13 does support our earlier readings regarding prophecy and revelation — that prophecy is revelation of the mystery of Christ and knowledge of God’s salvation, and that revelation in 1 Corinthians most often refers to a revelation of the presence of God. The knowledge that the Corinthians have now (and even the prophecy that is a Spirit-empowered testimony of that knowledge) is partial and will pass away in the eschaton because that indirect knowledge will be replaced by a more direct and personal one.

Summary: Characteristics of prophecy

We have now examined seven characteristics of prophecy found in 1 Corinthians 12-14. Any believer in the congregation may receive prophetic empowerment through the Spirit. Prophecy comes as revelation from God, and is a sign of his presence, yet prophecies are valuable not because they are authoritative, but because they build up the church. Prophecy in 1 Corinthians could be defined as an intelligible Spirit-empowered revelation of the knowledge of God’s salvation and the mystery of Christ.

Other possible references to prophecy

Now that we have something like a definition of prophecy in 1 Corinthians, we can

¹²⁰ This is an allusion to Numbers 12:6-8, where Moses is said to see the Lord ‘face to face’, unlike other prophets who see him in dreams and visions, although Rabbinic tradition (Leviticus Rabbah 1:14) says that Moses saw the Lord only through a mirror, reading מַרְאֵה (mar’e, ‘clearly’) as though it meant מַרְאֵה (mar’āh, ‘mirror’). See Ciampa and Rosner, *The First Letter to the Corinthians*, 658-659. For more on the relationship with Numbers 12:6-8 see Dautzenberg, *Urchristliche Prophetie*, 169-185.

¹²¹ The verse has often been interpreted as though ancient mirrors were of poor quality and produced a distorted image. But such a view is a modern one — ancient mirrors were made of polished bronze, and Corinth was renowned throughout the empire as the best source of bronze, so the Corinthians would very likely have considered mirrors to be of exceptional, not poor quality. The problem with the mirror was not that it is ‘dim’ or ‘indistinct’, but that it is indirect. See, amongst others, Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 647-648 and Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 624-625.

¹²² See above, pp. 190f.

examine the rest of the letter for speech that might fit that definition. To do so, we need to look for speech that has some or all of the following characteristics: (a) it is Spirit-empowered, (b) it reveals knowledge, (c) it reveals mysteries. Two candidates present themselves: 2:1-13 and 15:50-55.

1 Corinthians 2:1-13:¹²³ We have already touched on this passage in our earlier discussion.¹²⁴ In it Paul recalls the way he brought the gospel to the Corinthians (2:1-5), and reflects on how all believers can speak in similar ways (2:6-13). It is included here because it refers to Spirit-empowered speech (2:4), revelation from the Spirit (2:10, 12-13), and the imparting of ‘a secret and hidden wisdom of God’ (2:7), which we concluded earlier meant ‘Jesus Christ and him crucified’ (cf. 2:2) and all that the cross achieved for the believers (cf. 2:9). All this is in contrast to the wisdom that the world values. Although Paul does not identify either speech as prophecy, it certainly fits the criteria.

1 Corinthians 15:50-55: This passage was identified as a candidate because in it Paul declares, ‘Behold! I tell you a mystery...’ (15:51), and goes on to speak about what can only be described as ‘what God has prepared for those who love him’, which ‘no eye has seen, nor ear heard, not the heart of man imagined’ (cf. 2:9). Rather than a description of prophecy, this appears to be a *bona fide* revelation of mystery that is still to come, which Bockmuehl helpfully compares with Romans 11:25-27 and 1 Thessalonians 4:13-17.¹²⁵ This future element (Bockmuehl calls it ‘new doctrine’) gives it a somewhat different character to the prophecy we have discussed so far, and of course it is not identified by Paul as prophetic. Nevertheless, the close identification of mystery, revelation and prophecy throughout 1 Corinthians means that it could well be classified as prophetic.¹²⁶

Prophecy in 1 Corinthians and in our earlier study

One of the aims of this thesis was to examine the various New Testament writers views of prophecy independently from one another, but then to compare and contrast those

¹²³ See also Gerhard Dautzenberg, ‘Botschaft und Bedeutung Der Urchristlichen Prophetie Nach Dem Ersten Korintherbrief (2:6-16; 12-14),’ in *Prophetic Vocation in the New Testament and Today*, ed. Johannes Panagopoulos (Supplements to Novum Testamentum 45; Leiden: Brill, 1977), 139-156.

¹²⁴ See above, pp. 196f.

¹²⁵ Bockmuehl, *Revelation and Mystery in Ancient Judaism and Pauline Christianity*, 170-175.

¹²⁶ See also Müller, *Prophetie und Predigt im Neuen Testament*, 224-225.

views. Now that the first task is largely complete, we are able to undertake the second task.

Prophecy in 1 Corinthians and the old covenant scriptures

In our initial study, we identified four eschatological hopes that were relevant to New Testament pneumatology and particularly prominent in the old covenant scriptures, namely universal prophethood, a pouring out of Yahweh's Spirit, a new Spirit within Yahweh's people, and a new covenant.¹²⁷ In 1 Corinthians Paul does not particularly draw attention to these fulfilments, but he does appear to assume them. They are, after all, part of the Corinthians' normative Christian experience,¹²⁸ and they are all apparent to some extent in the letter:

1. **Universal prophethood:** There is a strong emphasis throughout chapters 12-14 on the possibility that anyone might prophesy, and that everyone ought to earnestly desire to do so, which would fulfil old covenant hopes regarding a universal prophethood.¹²⁹ The fact that only some are prophets does not nullify this — it is likely that those who prophesied particularly regularly or helpfully were given that label, but there is no suggestion that prophecy was restricted to them.¹³⁰
2. **An outpouring of the Spirit:** Although Paul does not speak of a 'pouring' or 'outpouring' of the Spirit in 1 Corinthians,¹³¹ he does say in 12:13 that 'in one Spirit we were all baptized... all were made to drink [ἐποτίσθημεν] of one Spirit'. The many metaphors in this passage make it difficult to understand, but some commentators connect it to the old covenant promise of an outpouring of the Spirit.¹³² Carson points out that ποτίζω is used in the Septuagint in connection with the Spirit only in Isaiah 29:10 where it has a meaning very similar to 'pour out'.¹³³

¹²⁷ See the summary above, p. 92.

¹²⁸ See above, pp. 103f.

¹²⁹ Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 595-596.

¹³⁰ See above, pp. 194f.

¹³¹ Although see Romans 5:5 and Titus 3:5-6.

¹³² Rudolf Schnackenberg, *Baptism in the Thought of Paul*, trans. George R. Beasley-Murray (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1964), 85-86; Heinz Dietrich Wendland, *Die Brief an die Korinther* (NTD 7; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1965), 97; Dunn, *Baptism in the Holy Spirit*, 131; Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 591.

¹³³ Carson, *Showing the Spirit*, 46.

But regardless of whether we accept these links, the overarching principle — that the Spirit will be given in abundant measure — is one that is prominent in 1 Corinthians.

3. **A new Spirit in Yahweh's people:** Paul refers to the Spirit being 'in' the Corinthians (3:16 corporately and 6:19 individually), they are the temple, the place where God dwells.
4. **A new covenant:** Paul speaks specifically of a 'new' covenant in 1 Corinthians 11:25, and in a subsequent letter to the Corinthians he will expound that topic in some detail.¹³⁴

The importance of prophecy for Paul in 1 Corinthians 12-14 probably also reflects the importance of prophecy as a sign of the Spirit's presence in Judaism.

Prophecy in 1 Corinthians and in Luke-Acts

There is an important and obvious similarity between Pauline and Lukan prophecy at a basic level: both see prophecy as intelligible, Spirit-empowered speech. But we can of course say more than that, and to do so we will first look at Lukan prophecy through Pauline eyes, and then a Pauline prophecy from Luke's perspective.

Lukan prophecy from a Pauline perspective

To examine Lukan prophecy from a Pauline perspective, we will reflect on the seven characteristics of prophecy we distinguished in 1 Corinthians, and compare each one with our findings in Acts.

Prophecy and revelation: Luke and Paul both agree that prophecy comes from God (i.e. through the Spirit). Unlike Luke, Paul emphasises revelation (ἀποκάλυψις is not used in Acts, with Luke preferring to speak simply the Spirit's empowering or speaking). However, both Paul and Luke link prophecy with a revelation of God himself.¹³⁵ Paul also emphasises prophecy as a revelation of Jesus,¹³⁶ whereas Luke prefers to emphasise

¹³⁴ 2 Corinthians 3:1-18.

¹³⁵ In Acts see above, p. 137, and in 1 Corinthians see above, pp. 190f.

¹³⁶ There are many links between revelation and Jesus in the Pauline literature: 'according to the revelation of the mystery' (Romans 16:25); 'the revealing of our Lord Jesus Christ' (1 Corinthians 1:7); 'revelations of the Lord' (2 Corinthians 12:1); 'revelations' (2 Corinthians 12:7); 'revelation in the knowledge of him' (Ephesians 1:17); 'the mystery was made known to me by revelation' (Ephesians 3:3).

prophecy as a witness to/of Jesus.¹³⁷

Prophecy, status and authority: Prophecy has a high status in both Acts and 1 Corinthians. Both Luke and Paul recognise certain individuals as prophets, without excluding others from prophesying. But in Luke those labelled prophets engage in a different type of prophecy from those not labelled prophets, a concept that is absent from 1 Corinthians. However, in both Acts and 1 Corinthians prophecy is not *prescriptive*, but rather *descriptive* (that is, prophets do not appear to have the right to demand a particular response from their hearers).

The extent of the prophetic gift: Both Luke and Paul indicate that prophecy is widespread, and that a prophecy could be given to any believer.

The content of prophecy: The content of prophecy is obviously one of its most fundamental characteristics. In Luke, it is a testimony to Jesus, in Paul a revelation of the knowledge of God's salvation and the mystery of Christ. Paul's understanding seems to be broader than Luke's (or perhaps it is just more theological), but they are centred in the same place. The witness/testimony theme may just possibly be present in Paul.¹³⁸

The effect of prophecy: Both Luke and Paul have a lot to say about the effect of prophecy. Luke's linking of prophecy and witness means that his emphasis is on the evangelistic value of prophecy, a concept not entirely absent from 1 Corinthians (see 14:24-25). Indeed Paul's description of what might happen if an outsider was to find the Corinthians prophesying is not very different from Luke's description of what happened to the crowd at Pentecost. But Paul's emphasis is that prophecy should be used to build up the church. This outcome is also present in Agabus' first prophecy,¹³⁹ in (Acts 11:24-25 (which was tentatively identified as old covenant style prophecy),¹⁴⁰ and in Acts 15:32 (which, it was concluded, may or may not be prophecy).¹⁴¹ If we can use the findings in 1 Corinthians to help our study in Acts, this would give us more confidence in identifying

'revelation of Jesus Christ' (Galatians 1:12, cf. 1 Peter 1:7, 1:13, Revelation 1:1); 'when the Lord Jesus is revealed' (2 Thessalonians 1:7). Luke does say that Jesus is 'a light for revelation to the Gentiles' (Luke 2:32). See also 'when his glory is revealed' (1 Peter 4:31).

¹³⁷ See above, pp. 122f, 145f, 160f.

¹³⁸ See above, p. 200.

¹³⁹ See above, pp. 153f.

¹⁴⁰ See above, p. 161.

¹⁴¹ See above, pp. 151f.

both of these as examples as prophecy.

The proper place of prophecy: Here Luke and Paul differ, though perhaps only because their circumstances are different. Paul is keen to regulate prophecy (although partly by increasing freedoms), whereas there is no indication from the text of Acts that Luke had any such concerns. Paul is concerned here only with prophecy inside the congregation (although that does not rule out other places for prophecy), whereas in Acts prophecy occurs both in public and private settings, amongst unbelievers and in Christian gatherings.

The future of prophecy: This is a concern only of Paul's, and Luke shows no interest in it.

Pauline prophecy from a Lukan perspective

Having examined those seven characteristics of Pauline prophecy in Luke-Acts, there are two other characteristics to explore that are distinctively Lukan. One is that there appears to be two types of prophecy in Acts, the other is the important issue of the relationship between tongues and prophecy.

How many types of prophecy? In Acts, we identified two different types of prophecy, what we called an 'old covenant style' and a 'new covenant style'.¹⁴² In Paul, we identified an enormous variety of different types of Spirit-empowered speech, many of which related in some way to prophecy.¹⁴³ However, we also determined that the sheer diversity of Spirit-empowered speech in 1 Corinthians was largely a result of Paul wanting to emphasise the diversity of gifts that are needed in the church. It is unlikely that Paul thought there were five or ten or thirteen or any other number of distinct speech gifts, but instead describes a great variety of Spirit-empowered speech that on other occasions he refers to simply as 'prophecy' or 'speaking in tongues'. How do these many speech-types in Corinthians relate to the two speech-types in Luke? The distinctive feature of what we called 'old covenant style' prophesying in Luke was that it was modelled on old covenant prophecies. Yet nothing of what Paul says about prophecy in chapters 12-14 has this quality, indeed, it is quite the opposite.¹⁴⁴ On the other hand, the distinctive feature

¹⁴² See above, pp. 156f.

¹⁴³ See above, pp. 186f.

¹⁴⁴ It is possible, however, that Paul's 'revelation' in 1 Corinthians 15:51-55 could be viewed as similar to

of what we called ‘new covenant style’ prophesying was that it testified to Jesus and was in fulfilment of old covenant promises about the Spirit in the age to come, and we have already identified Corinthian prophecy as having both those features. We can therefore say that Corinthian prophecy has many similarities with Luke’s ‘new covenant style’ prophecy, but few with his ‘old covenant style’.

The relationship between tongues and prophecy: Finally, we can examine the relationship between tongues and prophecy in Acts and 1 Corinthians. On the positive side, both in Acts and 1 Corinthians, tongues and prophecy are closely related. On the negative side, Luke equates tongues and prophecy in Acts, whilst in 1 Corinthians, Paul goes out of his way to distinguish them. However, we must bear in mind that in both Luke and Paul tongues and prophecy have similarities (for example they are both Spirit-empowered speech), but also differences (in particular the language in which the speech occurs). Luke emphasises the similarities, which fits his purpose which was to demonstrate the Spirit had come in fulfilment of Joel 2, which predicted that God’s people would prophesy. However, Paul emphasises the differences, which fits his purpose of ensuring the church is built up and the Corinthians do not worship in a way that excludes the majority of the congregation. We should not assume from this that Luke and Paul viewed the relationship between prophecy and tongues very differently from one another, even though they presented the relationship between prophecy and tongues in very different ways.

Summary: Overall, there are more similarities between Luke and Paul’s concepts of prophecy than there are differences (or at least the similarities are more important than the differences). The three fundamental principles (at least of ‘new covenant style’ prophecy) in Acts, are all there in Paul – Spirit-empowered speech, fulfilment of eschatological promises including prophethood of all believers, and a focus on the person and work of Jesus. The main differences are that Luke shows the gift being used mainly to witness to unbelievers, whilst Paul shows it being used mainly to build up the church, and Luke appears to show two distinct types of prophecy, whilst Paul concentrates on

Luke’s ‘old covenant style’ prophesying. There is certainly an old covenant ‘feel’ to it: the use of ἰδοὺ as an introduction, its oracular and poetic form, the trumpet blast (*cf.* Isaiah 27:13, Joel 2:1, Zephaniah 1:16, Zechariah 9:4, etc.), the citations or allusions to Isaiah 25:8 and Hosea 13:14, and its eschatological concern, all contribute to that – although like the old covenant style prophecies in Acts, it also has a contemporary twist. (See Aune, *Prophecy in Early Christianity*, 250-251 and Bockmuehl, *Revelation and Mystery in Ancient Judaism and Pauline Christianity*, 172).

one type of prophecy with many variations.

Conclusion: The gift of prophecy in 1 Corinthians

We have now examined prophecy throughout 1 Corinthians, and briefly compared it to prophecy in Acts. By looking at the various ways prophecy was described, we identified several key characteristics, which we then used to determine whether there were other references to prophecy in the letter that were not explicitly labelled.

As we have not yet considered the gift of tongues in this letter, we have only done half of our work, but we have at least been able to define prophecy in 1 Corinthians: an intelligible Spirit-empowered revelation of the knowledge of God's salvation and the mystery of Christ.

6) The relationship between tongues and prophecy

In Acts, we saw that Luke considered tongues to be a type of prophecy (specifically prophecy in a ‘foreign’ or Gentile language),¹ and it was therefore necessary to study the gift of tongues as part of our investigation into prophecy. In 1 Corinthians the relationship between tongues and prophecy is equally critical, because prophecy is often described by comparing or contrasting with tongues. This means it is very difficult to be certain about what Paul is saying regarding prophecy unless we are also certain what he is saying concerning tongues. For example, in 14:19 Paul contrasts ‘speaking... words with my mind in order to instruct others’ with speaking in tongues. Does that mean Paul considers prophecy to be speaking instructional words with his mind, and if he does, what does that mean? Because of the contrast with tongues, we can only be certain whether ‘speaking... words with my mind’ refers to prophecy or not, if we know what the contrast means (i.e. speaking with an ‘unfruitful’ mind, and speaking that leads to accusations of being ‘out of their minds’). It is impossible, therefore, to properly investigate Corinthian prophecy unless we are also able to properly understand Corinthian tongues-speech. That means our first task in this chapter is to attempt to describe Corinthian tongues-speech.

Towards a definition of tongues-speech

The problem with trying to define tongues-speech in 1 Corinthians is that our understanding of the critical passages is dependent on our understanding tongues-speech. We cannot define tongues-speech until we have exegeted the passage, and we cannot exegete the passage until we have understood tongues-speech.

We can illustrate the problem by briefly examining the arguments of Thiselton regarding

¹ See above, p. 139.

the gift of interpretation. Thiselton suggests that most scholars have misunderstood all three of the words Paul uses to describe the gift: *διερμηνεύω* (usually translated 'to interpret'), *ἐρμηνεία* (an interpretation) and *διερμηνευτής* (an interpreter). A glance at the lexicons shows that the usual meaning of those words is to interpret, translate, or expound,² all of which presuppose there is meaning in the original material that can be translated or interpreted. However, Thiselton argues that *διερμηνεύω* and its cognates do not necessarily mean 'translate' or 'interpret', but can mean 'to put into words', in a much looser sense.³ This means tongues-speech does not need to be considered as a language that can be interpreted, nor does it necessarily contain propositional content, instead it is inarticulate and unintelligible. It is a 'language of the unconscious released in "sighs too deep for words"'.⁴ Thiselton uses Philo and Josephus as evidence of this use of *διερμηνεύω*, and concludes that in contexts similar to that of 1 Corinthians, they sometimes use *διερμηνεύω* to mean 'to put into words'. Indeed, Thiselton claims 'to put into words' is the *usual* meaning of *διερμηνεύω*, particularly in Philo. Forbes, however, who interacts with Thiselton at some length,⁵ argues that Thiselton's use of the evidence is skewed, and that although *διερμηνεύω* *can* mean 'to put into words', it *usually* means 'translate' or 'interpret',⁶ a point which Thiselton later accepted.⁷ But Thiselton continues to assert that the usual meaning is 'put into words' 'in contexts similar to that of 1 Corinthians'. Thiselton understands the context of 1 Corinthians 12-14 as one that does not refer to human languages, and therefore understands *διερμηνεύω* in that context, which confirms his view. Forbes views the context entirely differently, and therefore understands *διερμηνεύω* differently, in a way that confirms *his* view. If Thiselton is right that the context of 1 Corinthians is not one of language, then he is right that *διερμηνεύω* probably does not refer to translating one language into another. But if Forbes is right that the context of 1 Corinthians is one of language, then he is right that *διερμηνεύω* does refer to translating one language to another.

² See, for example, Ceslas Spicq, *Theological Lexicon of the New Testament*, trans. James D. Ernest, 3 vols. (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1994), 1:317.

³ Anthony C. Thiselton, 'The "Interpretation of Tongues": A New Suggestion in the Light of Greek Usage in Philo and Josephus', *JTS*, 30:1 (1979), 15-36; Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 976.

⁴ Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 985.

⁵ Forbes, *Prophecy and Inspired Speech*, 65-72.

⁶ *idem*, 65.

⁷ Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 976.

This somewhat circular discussion illustrates just one aspect that makes it impossible for us to go to the text of 1 Corinthians 12-14 with an open mind, and determine what Paul meant by tongues-speech. So if it is not possible to have a truly 'open' mind, how should we proceed? The problem is identical to the one that we faced when beginning our study on prophecy. If we apply the earlier solution to this problem, the best approach is not to have an 'open' mind, but to do all that we can to have a 'Pauline' mind. We need to think how Paul thought. If we can achieve that — or something close to that — then that gives us a good chance of correctly understanding Corinthians tongues-speech.

Possible background for tongues-speech

To attempt to think how Paul thought means that we need to understand better the background to tongues-speech in Corinth and in Pauline thought, before we approach the text of 1 Corinthians. Unfortunately, few scholars do this, and those who do rarely provide a credible explanation. For example, Garland devotes just four sentences to the question of tongues in rabbinic and other Jewish traditions, and then dismisses the evidence as 'inconclusive'.⁸ Thiselton's attempt to find a source is the best described, but even this ends in failure:

Harrisville shows, moreover, that the lexicographical background [of γλωσσα] in the NT, the LXX, Greek sources, Qumran, and the post-NT period remains at best inconclusive. Although 35 references occur in the NT, 28 of these belong to 1 Corinthians... The ratio of Paul to Acts and the (spurious) 'longer ending' of Mark is four to one. Holtzmann regarded 1 Corinthians 12-14 as the classic source for the terminology; Weiss believed that Paul borrowed it from Corinth; Paul Feine argued that Paul was responsible for the Christian use of the term, allowing for only magical influence from Judaism. Harrisville examines the seven uses of γλωσσα with λαλεῖν in the LXX and declares: 'We cannot conclude without further ado that the Septuagint usage has in any way influenced the NT.' In secular Greek we encounter barely a single use of γλωσσα with λαλεῖν... The literature in Qumran and the Testament of Job is also problematic... Most of the post-NT references occur in commentaries, homilies, or notes on 1 Corinthians 12-14 (e.g., in Origen, Chrysostom, Theodore, Cyril,

⁸ Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 585. Other examples include Beare, who acknowledges that there is no source for tongues in the gospels, but does not suggest an alternative, Francis Wright Beare, 'Speaking with Tongues: A Critical Survey of the New Testament Evidence', *JBL*, 83:3 (1964), 229-234. Bittlinger tries rather unconvincingly to suggest that Jesus spoke in tongues, Arnold Bittlinger, *Gifts and Graces: A Commentary of 1 Corinthians 12-14*, trans. Herbert Klassen (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1967), 49-50. Other scholars have largely dismissed the attempt.

Theodoret, and Photius)... The one writer who suggests 'ecstatic' consciousness is Tertullian during his Montanist period.⁹

In other words, no matter where Thiselton looks: the LXX, secular Greek sources, Qumran or the church fathers, he cannot find any credible source of the phenomenon outside of 1 Corinthians itself. Yet Turner rightly says that New Testament pneumatological beliefs 'did not fall ready-made from heaven amidst the tongues and fire of Pentecost',¹⁰ and it is difficult to think of any other New Testament doctrine or practice that rose spontaneously without any roots in the Old Testament or the sayings of Jesus.¹¹

However, Thiselton (and others who consider background) may be too pessimistic. Those writers tend to examine background *after* they have defined tongues-speech, and not before. As a consequence they tend to look for the background of one particular view of tongues-speech, rather than look for background of any view of tongues-speech. If we can broaden our search, we might be able to find possible influences on this aspect of Paul's theology that others have overlooked.

In our earlier examination of the background to New Testament pneumatology we identified four possible sources: Graeco-Roman culture, intertestamental Judaism, the old covenant scriptures, and personal experience of the Spirit. Unfortunately however, there are an enormous number of different views of tongues, at least thirteen according to Mark Cartledge.¹² Looking for thirteen different views in four different backgrounds is not possible in the space that we have available. However, we can simplify our task by narrowing those thirteen views down to three: (1) inarticulate speech;¹³ (2) speech in heavenly/angelic languages;¹⁴ and (3) speech in 'foreign' languages.¹⁵ That reduces the

⁹ Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 972. See also Fitzmyer, *First Corinthians*, 468-470.

¹⁰ Turner, *The Holy Spirit and Spiritual Gifts*, 3. Elsewhere he adds, 'It is also virtually beyond dispute that any version of "the Spirit of prophecy" available to Luke must *ultimately* be rooted in Judaism', Turner, 'The Spirit of Prophecy and the Power of Authoritative Preaching in Luke-Acts: A Question of Origins', 67, emphasis original. See also Witherington, *Jesus the Seer*, 307-308 and Dunn, *Jesus and the Spirit*, 228.

¹¹ Mark 16:17 ('And these signs will accompany those who believe... they will speak in new tongues') is not an escape here. As Dunn puts it, the passage 'is universally accepted as a second-century addition to Mark's gospel', Dunn, *Jesus and the Spirit*, 246. See also Metzger, *Textual Commentary*, 104-105.

¹² See Cartledge, 'The Nature and Function of New Testament Glossolalia', 136-140.

¹³ E.g. Dunn, *Jesus and the Spirit*, 242-246; Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 1117-1118.

¹⁴ E.g. Poirier, *The Tongues of Angels*, NR.

number of permutations from 52 to a much more manageable 12.

Graeco-Roman background

Inarticulate speech

Inarticulate or ecstatic speech was a fairly common feature of Hellenistic religions, and was known as mantic prophesying. Paul's use of the word *μαίνομαι* ('mad' or 'insane') in 1 Corinthians 14:23 is often taken as evidence that Corinthian tongues-speech was akin to mantic prophecy. However, we have already determined that Paul was not strongly influenced by Graeco-Roman religious thought,¹⁶ and however influential Graeco-Roman religions were on the Corinthian congregation, 1 Corinthians remains a Pauline epistle that reflects Pauline theology. Paul speaks 'in tongues more than all of you' (14:18),¹⁷ and wants them all to speak in tongues (14:5), which surely means that Paul does not consider tongues to be pagan.

More importantly, the evidence accumulated by Christopher Forbes shows that Paul's description of tongues-speech is significantly different to Graeco-Roman ecstatic glossolalia.¹⁸

In the case of early Christian glossolalia, I have argued that no convincing parallels whatsoever have been found within the traditions of Graeco-Roman religion, as they were known in the environment of the New Testament, whether it be at the level of terminology, phenomena or concept.¹⁹

Forbes' warnings have been widely heeded by later scholars,²⁰ and Thiselton (who is by no means an uncritical follower of Forbes) writes:

The main thrust of Christopher Forbes's warnings against assuming that tongues denotes ecstatic speech on the basis of overly selective and unrepresentative

¹⁵ E.g. Gundry, 'Ecstatic Utterance', 299-307; Ford, 'Toward a Theology of "Speaking in Tongues"', 16-17; Ralph Shallis, *Zungenreden Aus Biblischer Sicht* (Bielefeld: Christliche Literatur-Verbreitung, 1986), 19-20, 40-44; and Forbes, *Prophecy and Inspired Speech*, 56-65.

¹⁶ See above, p. 44f.

¹⁷ See Fee, *God's Empowering Presence*, 889. Fee defends a 'high' view of tongues at some length in Gordon D. Fee, 'Tongues — Least of the Gifts? Some Exegetical Observations on 1 Corinthians 12-14', *Pneuma*, 2:1 (1980).

¹⁸ Forbes, *Prophecy and Inspired Speech*, 103-170, 279-315.

¹⁹ *idem*, 316.

²⁰ See the works cited above, fn. 97, p. 18.

examples of 'inspired speech' in Graeco-Roman texts should be heeded and accepted. The instances of irrational frenzy... often familiar from classes in school should not be taken as models for an understanding of 1 Corinthians 12-14... Forbes suspects the approach of history-of-religion writers since Reitzenstein of special pleading, and his wide review of primary sources in Graeco-Roman literature entirely vindicates his scepticism.²¹

Heavenly or angelic languages

There is no clear evidence of heavenly or angelic languages in Graeco-Roman culture.

'Foreign' languages

Again, there is no clear evidence that speaking in 'foreign' languages was part of Graeco-Roman religious practice.

Intertestamental Judaism

Inarticulate speech

There was no expectation of inarticulate speech at the eschaton in Judaism, nor any indication that inarticulate speech was valued.

Heavenly or angelic languages

There has been a recent resurgence in interest regarding possible Jewish sources for ecstatic or heavenly languages, culminating in a full-length monograph from John Poirier.²² The only possible pre-Christian evidence showing a belief in heavenly languages is in the Testament of Job 48-50.²³ Unfortunately, the Testament is impossible to date with certainty, and commentators are divided as to whether it post-dates or pre-dates Pauline Christianity, and as to whether it is a Jewish document, a Christian document, or a Jewish document with Christian interpolation.²⁴ As a result, it is impossible to be at all certain whether that tradition is old enough or sufficiently widely known to have had any

²¹ Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 971. For further warning on the dangers of attaching Greek ideas to biblical concepts, see Barclay, 'Πνευματικός in the Social Dialect of Pauline Christianity,' 160.

²² Poirier, *The Tongues of Angels*.

²³ See, particularly, idem, 63-77.

²⁴ See the discussion in James R. Davila, *The Provenance of the Pseudepigrapha: Jewish, Christian, or Other?* (Supplements to the Journal for the Study of Judaism 105; Leiden: Brill, 2005), 195-199. For a survey of scholarly suggestions regarding provenance, see Maria Haralambakis, 'The Study of the Provenance of the Testament of Job' (paper presented at the Society of Biblical Literational International Meeting, London, 2011), 2-3.

influence on Paul.

'Foreign' languages

Foreign or Gentile languages were routinely seen by those in Judaism as inferior to Jewish languages, and Hebrew was the language of God and of heaven.²⁵ As a consequence Gentile languages were not valued or hoped for. There was, however, a hope expressed in several Jewish sources that there would be a mass turning of the Gentiles to Yahweh (Tobit 14:6; Psalms of Solomon 17:34).²⁶ This Jewish hope came from the old covenant scriptures, particularly the prophets, and we will therefore explore it in more detail below.²⁷

The old covenant scriptures

Inarticulate speech

There is no clear reference to inarticulate speech in the old covenant scriptures, unless 1 Samuel 10:5-13, and 19:18-24 are an exception. Both passages are ambiguous, however, and even if they do describe inarticulate speech it is hard to be confident that the author is describing such speech approvingly.

Heavenly or angelic languages

Angels and God (through the prophets) spoke frequently throughout the old covenant scriptures, but with no indication that the language of heaven was different from the language of earth. Neither angels nor Yahweh require interpretation or are unable to be understood.

'Foreign' languages

Gentile languages are sometimes seen as a curse in the old covenant scriptures, a point that Paul picks up on in 1 Corinthians 14:21 with a quotation from Isaiah 28:11-12. However, whilst hearing Gentile languages in the old covenant was a sign of defeat and oppression, there is at least one passage in Isaiah that seems to suggest that will not always be the case. Isaiah 45:23 says that in the eschaton 'every tongue shall swear

²⁵ See the discussion above, pp. 141-142.

²⁶ The hope was sometimes expressed more in terms of submission than praise (Sirach 36:1-9), and even then was not universally held. See Gary Gilbert, 'Gentiles, Jewish Attitudes Towards', *The Eerdmans Dictionary of Early Judaism*, 672.

²⁷ See below, pp. 216f.

allegiance' (in the LXX, ἐξομολογήσεται πᾶσα γλῶσσα τῷ θεῷ ['every tongue shall praise²⁸ God']), a verse that Paul cites in Romans 14:11 and clearly alludes to in Philippians 2:11.²⁹ Several other passages (Jeremiah 16:19; Psalm 22:28; Isaiah 56:6-7, 66:23; Micah 4:1-5; Zechariah 14:16; Malachi 1:11, 14) also indicate Gentiles turning to Yahweh *en masse* in the eschaton,³⁰ and one prophesies that the speech of the Gentiles will be turned into a pure speech (Zephaniah 3:9, *cf.* Isaiah 19:18). This was a vital aspect of Paul's theology, and in an important passage in Romans 15:8-12, he cites 2 Samuel 22:50 (Psalm 18:49), Deuteronomy 32:43, Psalm 117:1 and Isaiah 11:10, to reinforce his claim that Jew and Gentile would 'together... with one voice glorify [God]', and 'the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy' (Romans 15:6, 9) in fulfilment of the 'promises given to the patriarchs'. Significantly for us, Paul's emphasis is not just on a turning to Yahweh, but on corporate worship, Jew and Gentile together.³¹ The language of this worship is not prominent in any of these scriptural quotations, but Paul did not expect Gentiles to praise God in Hebrew or Aramaic. The praising of God in 'foreign' or Gentile languages was therefore a sign to Paul that the eschaton had arrived, and God was fulfilling his promises. Although only some of these old covenant passages speak of language directly, the idea of God being praised by Gentiles (and therefore in Gentile languages) as a fulfilment of old covenant scriptures was obviously vital to Paul's apostolic mission.

Personal experience

1 Corinthians 14:18 makes it clear that Paul not only experienced others speaking in tongues, but he himself was a tongues-speaker. However, we have no account of Paul actually speaking in tongues, and the only account of Paul witnessing tongues-speech first-hand in Acts probably postdates Paul's letter to Corinth (Acts 19:6). However, it is possible that before Paul wrote 1 Corinthians he had heard of the tongues-speaking at

²⁸ On ἐξομολογέω in this context see Douglas J. Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans* (NICNT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), 847 fn. 106.

²⁹ Gordon Fee (who rejects the idea that Corinthian tongues-speech is in human languages) also rejects that 'tongue' in Isaiah 45:23 refers to language, believing instead that it refers to the organ of the mouth. See Gordon D. Fee, *Paul's Letter to the Philippians* (NICNT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995), 225 fn. 236.

³⁰ Joseph Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 40-55* (AB 19a; New York: Doubleday, 1974), 262.

³¹ Romans 15:6. See Thomas Schreiner, *Romans* (BECNT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 756-757.

Pentecost.³² Even if he had not, Luke says that Paul was prominent at the Council of Jerusalem (Acts 15:2-4, 12) where Cornelius' speaking in tongues was a major feature in the discussion (15:14, cf. 10:46, 11:15). Unfortunately however, although Paul was aware of the gift of tongues, and his experience of tongues-speech may have been extensive, this evidence does not help us distinguish whether this experience was of inarticulate speech, heavenly languages or 'foreign' languages.

Summary: The background to tongues-speech

Our examination of possible backgrounds to tongues-speech has indicated that there is very little reason to think that Paul would have expected inarticulate speech as a gift of the Spirit, unless perhaps through a particular unrecorded experience of his own. There is a possibility that Jewish tradition might have given him a belief in an angelic language that could be spoken by humans under inspiration, but the dating evidence is uncertain, and there is no evidence that suggests Paul was familiar with the Testament of Job.

However, the background for 'foreign' or Gentile languages is strong, both because the one background source Paul uses explicitly (Isaiah 28) refers to 'foreign' languages, and because Romans 14-15 makes it certain that Paul was familiar with the tradition of Gentiles praising God and that it was vitally important to him as a missionary to the Gentiles. Yet the background does not point specifically to *miraculous* speaking in Gentile languages — in fact, the background points away from the miraculous and towards the idea that God's people would speak in 'foreign' languages because they themselves were 'foreign', and not because they had received any miraculous gift (other than the gift of salvation, of course).

Some may object and suggest that the eschatological hope of every tongue praising God cannot be what Paul refers to as tongues-speech, because the eschatological hope is positive, whilst Paul's view of tongues-speech is negative (proved, some would say by his reference to Isaiah 28:11-12 in 1 Corinthians 14:21). Yet Paul's view of tongues-speech is not negative — in fact he is incredibly positive about it, wishing that they could all speak

³² Paul refers to Pentecost in 1 Corinthians 16:8. Would Paul have expected the Corinthians to know the date of all the Jewish feasts? If not, it is possible that Pentecost was already being remembered by the early Christians. See Carson, *Showing the Spirit*, 83; Gundry, 'Ecstatic Utterance', 300; Turner, *The Holy Spirit and Spiritual Gifts*, 224; Bruce Chilton, 'Festivals and Holy Days: Jewish,' in *DNTB*, ed. Craig A. Evans and Stanley E. Porter (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2000), 377. (Also Acts 10:16 and Bock, *Acts*, 95.)

in tongues, and claiming that he speaks in tongues more than they do. Paul's point is not that tongues-speech is a bad thing, but that it is an inappropriate gift to exercise in the assembly (14:19), unless it is interpreted (14:27-28). The objection does not stand.

None of this proves that Paul did not consider speaking in tongues to be inarticulate speech, or speaking in angelic languages, but it does suggest that we ought to give more consideration to the possibility that Paul viewed speaking in tongues as the praising of God in 'foreign' or Gentile languages, that had been learned rather than miraculously given. This possibility, whilst it has had occasional airings at a popular level, has hardly ever been argued for in an academic context.³³ Could this forgotten view unlock some of the mystery concerning the relationship between tongues and prophecy in 1 Corinthians?

Language in first-century Corinth and in the church

Before we answer that question, we have one more job to do. Earlier, we examined Graeco-Roman background to see if it would influence Paul towards inarticulate speech, heavenly languages or 'foreign' languages, and concluded that because Graeco-Roman religion had almost no influence on Paul, there would be no influence from this background. However, if we are exploring the hypothesis that tongues-speech in Corinth would not necessarily be perceived by others as supernatural, but was in learned 'Gentile' languages, that changes how we should examine Graeco-Roman background. It means that we should briefly re-examine Graeco-Roman background, this time looking at the use of language in Graeco-Roman culture (or at least the use of language in first-century Corinthian Graeco-Roman culture).

Language-use in first-century Corinth

Dunn rightly argues that 1 Corinthians can only be understood if it is read against the background of its historical context.³⁴ Corinth, of course, was famously multi-cultural, a 'melting pot of cultures, philosophies, lifestyles'.³⁵ Its position at the intersection of major trade routes meant that a great deal of trade (and hence taxes) came through the

³³ I am aware only of Zerhusen, 'The Problem Tongues in 1 Cor 14', 139-152 (although see also the less academic works cited in fn. 29, p. 140, and the comments on p. 237).

³⁴ Dunn, 'Reconstructions of Corinthian Christianity and the Interpretation of 1 Corinthians,' 308-309.

³⁵ Scott J. Hafemann, 'Corinthians, Letters to the', *DPL*, 173.

city. It was 'a crossroads for the ideas and traffic of the world'.³⁶ Many traders from all over the empire plied their trade in Corinth, particularly during the Isthmian games, a biennial event second only to the Olympic games in importance.

Yet Corinth was not a Greek city, but a Roman city in Greece. Roman Corinth was established around 44 B.C. as a colony on the site of Greek Corinth which had been sacked just over 100 years previously. The Roman nature of the later city has long been recognised by classicists, but David Gill has noted that this has sometimes been neglected by biblical scholars:

New Testament scholarship should be trying to read the Pauline Corinthian correspondence against the background of a Roman city... It is right for both classical archaeologists and New Testament scholars to stress the Roman nature of the city which was visited by Paul in the first century A. D.³⁷

There is so much evidence in Corinth for Romanisation,³⁸ that Richard Osler has concluded that it was 'one of the vibrant cultural forces in Corinth well into the first century A.D.'³⁹ Classicist Anthony Spawforth says 'it is one of its most striking features'.⁴⁰ Even Wayne Meeks, who thinks this point has been exaggerated,⁴¹ has to admit that Corinth was given 'more and more the appearance of a Roman city', 'the government was typical of a Roman colony' so that 'in the first century virtually all public inscriptions were in Latin', and 'the proportion of Italian pottery to eastern wares was much higher than, for example, in nearby Athens'.⁴²

³⁶ idem, 172.

³⁷ David W. J. Gill, 'Corinth: A Roman Colony in Achaea', *BZ*, 37:2 (1993), 264.

³⁸ See the brief comparison with Argos, Athens, and Knossos in Andrea M. Berlin, 'Romanization and Anti-Romanization in Pre-Revolt Galilee,' in *The First Jewish Revolt: Archaeology, History, and Ideology*, ed. Andrea M. Berlin and J. Andrew Overman (London: Routledge, 2002), 68.

³⁹ Richard E. Oster, 'When Men Wore Veils to Worship: The Historical Context of 1 Corinthians 11.4', *NTS*, 34:4 (1988), 493.

⁴⁰ Antony J. S. Spawforth, 'Roman Corinth: the Formation of a Colonial Elite,' in *Roman Onomastics in the Greek East: Social and Political Aspects*, ed. A. D. Rizakis (Meletemata 21; Athens: Research Centre for Greek and Roman Antiquity, National Hellenic Research Foundation, 1996), 175. See also Bruce W. Winter, *After Paul Left Corinth: The Influence of Secular Ethics and Social Change* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001), 22; and Theissen, *The Social Setting of Pauline Christianity*, 158.

⁴¹ Wayne A. Meeks, *The First Urban Christians: The Social World of the Apostle Paul* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003²), 47.

⁴² idem. David Gill suggests that Meeks 'seems to misunderstand the changes in Greece during the

But of course Meeks is right to point out that it would be foolish to give the impression that there were *no* Greeks in Corinth, a point also made by Katherine Edwards nearly 80 years ago,⁴³ and re-emphasised in a recent study by Ben Millis.⁴⁴ Millis' study is important, because he examines the evidence for both the Greek and the Roman nature of the city. Millis argues that the early colonists were not Roman veterans as is often thought,⁴⁵ but mainly freedmen.⁴⁶ He then goes on to examine languages in Corinth, concluding that Latin was the 'dominant public language' for more than the first 150 years of Corinth's existence,⁴⁷ with Latin inscriptions outnumbering Greek ones 'by a factor of just over 25:1'.⁴⁸ Of particular interest to Millis is that civic inscriptions are exclusively Latin, whilst inscriptions related to the Isthmian games are exclusively Greek. He suggests that this mean the choice of language was not dictated by the origin of the

Hadrianic period'. Gill, 'In Search of the Social Elite in the Corinthian Church', 327 fn. 335. Chrys Caragounis also considerably underplays the Roman nature of Corinth in a strident article defending Corinth's Greekness, Chrys C. Caragounis, 'A House Church in Corinth? An Inquiry into the Structure of Early Corinthian Christianity,' in *Αποστολος Παυλος Και Κορινθος*, vol. 1, ed. Constantine J. Belezos (Athens: Psychogios Publications, 2009), 370-381. However, a close reading of his article reveals that his conclusions apply to the Corinth of 'ordinary' people, and if one reads his article with that in mind, there is more common ground than might otherwise be noticed.

⁴³ Katharine M. Edwards, *Coins 1896-1929* (Corinth: Results of Excavations Conducted by the American School of Classical Studies at Athens 6; Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1933), 6. See also Jerome Murphy-O'Connor, *St Paul's Corinth: Texts and Archaeology* (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2002³), 8, and Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 3-4.

⁴⁴ Benjamin W. Millis, 'The Social and Ethnic Origins of the Colonists in Early Roman Corinth,' in *Corinth in Context: Comparative Studies on Religion and Society*, ed. Steven J. Friesen, Daniel N. Schowalter and James C. Walters (Supplements to *Novum Testamentum* 134; Leiden: Brill, 2010).

⁴⁵ Despite literary evidence that points in this direction (see the citations from Strabo, Appian and Plutarch on idem, 18-19), Millis argues that this is contradicted by the lack of any archaeological evidence to support it.

⁴⁶ See also Spawforth, 'Roman Corinth,' 167-182.

⁴⁷ That takes us to roughly the beginning of the second century A.D.

⁴⁸ Millis, 'The Social and Ethnic Origins of the Colonists in Early Roman Corinth,' 23. Engels gives the count of 101:3, Donald Engels, *Roman Corinth: An Alternative Model for the Classical City* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990), 71. Engels' work has not met with universal approval — see, for example, Antony J. S. Spawforth, 'Review of "Roman Corinth and the Ancient Urban Economy" by Donald Engels', *CLR*, 42:1 (1992); Richard P. Saller, 'Review of "Roman Corinth: An Alternative Model for the Classical City" by Donald Engels', *CP*, 86:4 (1991) — but the broad thrust of his conclusions on the issues referred to here are common amongst both biblical scholars and classicists.

person putting up the inscription, but rather by the context of the inscription itself.⁴⁹

This, and other evidence, leads Millis to suggest that ‘a significant percentage of the population was capable of drawing upon both Greek and Roman traditions’. Yet Latin was preferred in the public sphere because ‘the use of Latin was a mark of status and could be useful to denote one’s social level within the community or the group with which one wished to be identified’.⁵⁰

Latin seemed to be preferred in the public square, but what language was used in the homes of ordinary Corinthians? An examination of Corinthian graffiti shows that here, Greek outnumbers Latin by a very significant margin in both ‘public’ graffiti (on walls and so on), in makers’ marks on pottery, in owners’ marks on pottery, and in masons’ marks on stonework.⁵¹ In each case only *one* Latin mark has been found, compared with between half-a-dozen and several dozen Greek marks. Makers’ marks on other items are also ‘almost exclusively’ Greek.⁵²

So Greek predominated on ‘everyday’ objects, whilst Latin predominated in public inscriptions. At the same time the Greek public inscriptions concerning the Isthmian games, and occasional bilingual funerary inscriptions, suggest that the élite would not have been exclusively Roman in outlook, but instead ‘straddle[d] the cultural divide’, whilst ‘the lower strata seem more solidly Greek in outlook’. The élite ‘evinced a familiarity and ease with Roman culture and language’, whilst ‘what evidence there is for society’s lower strata perhaps suggests... at least a non-Roman origin’.⁵³

Other studies support Millis’ conclusions, and also add an interesting twist. When describing Latin as the dominant public language in Corinth, scholars generally qualify

⁴⁹ As Biville puts it, someone’s choice of language in any context ‘would have been indicative of their socio-cultural background and their discursive strategies’. Frédérique Biville, ‘The Graeco-Romans and Graeco-Latin: A Terminological Framework for Cases of Bilingualism,’ in *Bilingualism in Ancient Society: Language Contact and the Written Text*, ed. J. N. Adams, M. Janse and S. Swain (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 79.

⁵⁰ Millis, ‘The Social and Ethnic Origins of the Colonists in Early Roman Corinth,’ 25.

⁵¹ *idem*, 26-28. The personal marks on pottery is the most significant of these pieces of evidence as it is numerous, relatively easy to date, and gives a very close connection with Corinthian citizens (unlike the makers’ marks which could have originated outside the city).

⁵² *idem*, 29.

⁵³ *idem*, 32.

that with 'prior to the reign of Hadrian' (117-138 A.D.),⁵⁴ because in the first part of the second century Greek begins to take the upper hand. Engels notes that prior to Hadrian 97% of inscriptions were Latin, but during Hadrian's reign it suddenly drops to 40%, and from Hadrian to Gallienus (138 to 268 A.D.) it is down to 23%.⁵⁵ Either the ethnic composition of the city is changing, or the relative status of the two languages is changing, or perhaps both.

A closer examination of the evidence suggests that the momentum of the Greek language had been building for some time before the apparent breakthrough during Hadrian's reign.⁵⁶ Spawforth notes that the earliest evidence for Greeks holding office at Corinth dates to the time of Claudius (41 to 54 A.D.),⁵⁷ which he later describes as a 'significant step' in the integration of Roman Corinth and the Greek world.⁵⁸ But even whilst Greeks were beginning to take office, one still had to emphasise one's Roman identity in order to succeed.⁵⁹ As Engels puts it:

The city's elite, at least through the early third century, were anxious to retain their Roman identity... While the general population was becoming Hellenized, the elite wished to emphasize their Italian identities and their status as full Roman citizens...⁶⁰

During this period, Corinthian society was both Roman and Greek,⁶¹ and the city could

⁵⁴ See, for example Cynthia L. Thompson, 'Hairstyles, Head-Coverings, and St Paul: Portraits from Roman Corinth', *BA*, 51:2 (1988), 100, Engels, *Roman Corinth*, 71, Millis, 'The Social and Ethnic Origins of the Colonists in Early Roman Corinth,' 23. Some scholars date the change to the previous emperor, Trajan (ruled 98 to 117 A.D.). See Jorma Kaimio, *The Romans and the Greek Language* (Commentationes Humanarum Litterarum 64; Helsinki: Societas Scientiarum Fennica, 1979), 85-86 and the literature cited there.

⁵⁵ Engels, *Roman Corinth*, 71.

⁵⁶ For a summary of recent scholarship on the impact of the changing identity of Roman Corinth on the Corinthian church, see James C. Walters, 'Civic Identity in Roman Corinth and its Impact on Early Christians,' in *Urban Religion in Roman Corinth: Interdisciplinary Approaches*, ed. Daniel N. Schowalter and Steven J. Friesen (Harvard Theological Studies 53; Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2005), 397-417.

⁵⁷ Spawforth, 'Roman Corinth,' 173-174. See also Walters, 'Civic Identity in Roman Corinth,' 397.

⁵⁸ Spawforth, 'Roman Corinth,' 175.

⁵⁹ On Roman civic identity in Corinth see Brian J. Tucker, *You Belong to Christ: Paul and the Formation of Society in 1 Corinthians 1-4* (Eugene: Pickwick Publications, 2010), 93-105.

⁶⁰ Engels, *Roman Corinth*, 69-70, 72-73.

⁶¹ For more on the Greekness and the Romanness of first-century Corinth, see Robert S. Dutch, *The Educated Elite in 1 Corinthians: Education and Community Conflict in Graeco-Roman Context* (JSNTSup 271;

present ‘different faces in different circumstances and contexts’ —publically, the face was almost always Roman; privately it was often Greek.⁶² As a consequence, Greek citizens could feel pressure to adopt a Roman ‘face’ in public contexts. J. N. Adams is one of the world’s leading authorities on the Latin language in this period. He points out:

[There was] an attitude that unless speakers know and use the dominant language of a state, they do not strictly belong. Sometimes, indeed, an assertive group who interpret their language as a feature of their national identity may even attempt to impose it on fellow citizens against an inexorable trend.⁶³

Elsewhere he adds:

[In] the eastern Empire... Latin was used from time to time to assert Roman political supremacy symbolically...⁶⁴

Specifically in Corinth, this meant that there was considerably more social status in Latin culture than there was in Greek culture:

The non-Romans residing in Corinth were legally classified as *incolae*. They were not citizens of the colony, and they could not vote, hold magistracies, or be members of the curia... Although ethnic Greeks were a substantial portion of Corinth’s population... unless they were granted Roman citizenship, they were not members of the elite. No building is known to have been built, repaired, or restored by an individual with a Greek name, and since they were not citizens, they could not control the city’s political institutions or officiate in the Isthmian and Caesarean Games.⁶⁵

Other scholars agree. Antony Spawforth notes that of the early élite, ‘out of 37 cognomina, all but eight are Latin’,⁶⁶ and David Gill points to a Greek family who ‘set up an inscription in Latin at Corinth, but in Athens, Epidauros and Sparta, the same text was

Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 2005), 47-56. However, Dutch admits that he emphasises the Greek aspects (in line with his central thesis). He also does not give sufficient consideration to whether different social groups identified more with one particular culture. See also Mary E. Hoskins Walbank, ‘Aspects of Corinthian Coinage in the Late 1st and Early 2nd Centuries A.C.’, in *Corinth, The Centenary: 1896-1996*, ed. Charles K. Williams and Nancy Bookidis (Corinth 20; Athens: American School of Classical Studies at Athens, 2003), 343-344.

⁶² Millis, ‘The Social and Ethnic Origins of the Colonists in Early Roman Corinth,’ 34-35. See also Meeks, *The First Urban Christians*, 47, who warns ‘that the fashion approved for public display may not have represented quite accurately the ordinary languages of the population’.

⁶³ Adams, ‘“Romanitas” and the Latin Language’, 185.

⁶⁴ Adams, *Bilingualism and the Latin Language*, 754.

⁶⁵ Engels, *Roman Corinth*, 70.

⁶⁶ Spawforth, ‘Roman Corinth,’ 175.

set up in Greek'.⁶⁷

Many other writers reach the same conclusions regarding the use of Greek and Latin in first-century Corinth: 'Greek was the *lingua franca* of the Roman empire in the first century and clearly a common language of the Corinthian congregation. Latin was the language of the élite.'⁶⁸ 'At the time of Paul, social prestige was identified with the Latin language and Roman culture'.⁶⁹

Social status in the Corinthian church

The language differences between the élite and non-élite is particularly interesting for us, because an increasing number of commentators consider the presence of an élite group within the Corinthian church to be a significant factor in many of the issues which Paul takes up.⁷⁰ Indeed, we have already argued that the problems in chapters 12-14 were probably caused by the tongue-speakers wrongly believing their ability to speak in tongues made them more spiritual and 'greater' than others.⁷¹ The evidence from 1 Corinthians is that the élite were a minority group within the church who had high social status and were relatively wealthy. That such a group existed can be seen from 1:26, 'not many of you were wise [σοφοί] according to worldly standards, not many were powerful [δυνατοί], not many were of noble birth [εὐγενεῖς]'. Not many, but clearly some.⁷²

⁶⁷ Gill, 'In Search of the Social Elite in the Corinthian Church', 327. Elsewhere he adds, 'This deliberate choice of Latin for public inscriptions underlines the view that Corinth was considered to be the centre of *Romanitas* in the province', Gill, 'Corinth: A Roman Colony in Achaëa', 263. For the inscription, see L. R. Taylor and Allen B. West, 'The Euryclids in Latin Inscriptions from Corinth', *AJA*, 30:4 (1926), 389-400.

⁶⁸ Winter, *After Paul Left Corinth*, 24-25. See also Robert M. Grant, *Paul in the Roman World: The Conflict at Corinth* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2001), 19; Clarke, *Secular and Christian Leadership in Corinth*, 10; Craig S. Keener, *1-2 Corinthians* (NCBC; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 7; and Kistemaker, *Exposition of the First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 4.

⁶⁹ Eva Maria Lassen, 'The Use of The Father Image in Imperial Propaganda and 1 Corinthians 4:14-21', *TynBul*, 42:1 (1991), 133.

⁷⁰ E.g. Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 6; Witherington, *Conflict and Community in Corinth*, 22-24; Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 24-29; and especially Gill, 'In Search of the Social Elite in the Corinthian Church', 330-337.

⁷¹ See above, pp. 180-182.

⁷² See Clarke, *Secular and Christian Leadership in Corinth*, 41-46; Bruce W. Winter, *Philo and Paul among the Sophists: Alexandrian and Corinthian Responses to a Julio-Claudian Movement* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002), 199-200.

The classic treatment of the social status of Corinthian believers is by Theissen,⁷³ and the criticism from Meggitt does not change Theissen's basic argument.⁷⁴ (At best Meggitt reduces the evidence for the presence of a few élite within the Corinthian congregation, but he does not *remove* it,⁷⁵ and even without any data from 1 Corinthians, Acts still supports the view of the consensus.⁷⁶)

As we have already suggested,⁷⁷ there are strong indications in the letter that the élite are bringing secular practices into the church, and causing many of the divisions and leadership problems that existed. The honour and status system that was so much a part of Graeco-Roman culture very likely propelled the social élite into positions of leadership within the Corinthian church, not because they excelled in Christian character or gifting, but because their importance outside the church gave them status within it.⁷⁸ It is precisely this attitude that Paul considers antithetical to the cross.

Bilingualism in the first-century

Our study of languages in first-century Corinth has revealed that the Latin language was associated with the élite, whilst the lower classes spoke Greek. So what would be the result when the élite mixed with the lower classes, as was happening in the Corinthian church? We have been very fortunate up to now to be able to present evidence from the right place for almost exactly the right time period. That is a luxury rarely enjoyed in such studies, and we have no precise record of what happened in a situation where Greek and Roman speakers come together in a social setting in mid first-century Corinth (not outside 1 Corinthians, anyway!). However, there is evidence from the first-century that has been garnered from a range of cities that are similar to Corinth, so we can still have a fair idea of what might have gone on.

⁷³ Theissen, *The Social Setting of Pauline Christianity*, 69-119.

⁷⁴ Justin J. Meggitt, *Paul, Poverty and Survival* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1998), 99-153.

⁷⁵ For example, even if the terms in 1:26 are more ambiguous than previously realised, that does not mean 1:26 can simply be written off, as Meggitt appears to do, *idem*, 106.

⁷⁶ Gerd Theissen, 'The Social Structure of Pauline Communities: Some Critical Remarks on J. J. Meggitt, *Paul, Poverty and Survival*', *JSNT*, 24:2 (2001), 69.

⁷⁷ See above, p. 182.

⁷⁸ Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 5-6; Tucker, *You Belong to Christ: Paul and the Formation of Society in 1 Corinthians 1-4*, 106-113.

In a recent collection of essays on bilingualism in ancient society, Frédérique Biville was given the task of setting the framework of Greek/Latin discussion.⁷⁹ She makes it clear that bilingualism was very much a part of the Graeco-Roman world, but it was not universal, as the many references in the ancient literature to professional interpreters, translators and even handbooks of bilingual conversation demonstrate.⁸⁰ Neither was it symmetrical, so it ‘was considerably more developed and more common on the Roman than the Greek side’,⁸¹ and likely to be universal only ‘in the upper echelons of society’.⁸² In other words, you were more likely to find Latin speakers able to communicate in Greek than you were Greek-speakers able to converse in Latin,⁸³ and more likely to find bilingual abilities among the élite than amongst ordinary citizens. Even amongst those who were bilingual, there was obviously a considerable range of abilities. But one’s proficiency of one or both languages was ‘a matter of fundamental importance’.⁸⁴ According to Suetonius, the emperor Claudius (who reigned from 41 A.D. to 54 A.D.) saw both Latin and Greek as ‘our tongues’,⁸⁵ and Nero (54 A.D. to 68 A.D.) and Titus (79 A.D. to 81 A.D.) were also apparently fully bilingual.⁸⁶ On the other hand, the earlier emperors had a different attitude to language. Augustus (27 B.C. to 14 A.D.) ‘did not speak [Greek] fluently and would not risk writing it’, although he enjoyed Greek poetry and ‘reading the writers of both tongues’,⁸⁷ and Tiberius (14 A.D. to 37 A.D.), ‘spoke Greek readily and fluently, yet he would not use it on all occasions, and especially eschewed it in the senate’.⁸⁸ Even Claudius once deprived a Roman citizen of his citizenship because of his

⁷⁹ Biville, ‘The Graeco-Romans and Graeco-Latin,’ 77-102.

⁸⁰ *idem*, 84-85. These handbooks were not unlike modern-day phrasebooks for holiday-makers.

⁸¹ *idem*, 77.

⁸² *idem*, 82.

⁸³ Although Caragounis overstates the case when he suggests, ‘No Roman who did not know Greek could be considered educated’, Caragounis, ‘A House Church in Corinth?’, 380.

⁸⁴ Biville, ‘The Graeco-Romans and Graeco-Latin,’ 82.

⁸⁵ Suetonius, *Claudius* 42.1. Claudius ‘even wrote historical works in Greek’ (42.2). Suetonius was particularly interested in language, as his *On Grammarians and Rhetoricians* demonstrates.

⁸⁶ Suetonius, *Nero* 7.2, 20.2; *Titus* 3.2. Biville suggests Claudius’ description of Greek as one of ‘our’ languages is an example of Roman desire to ‘take over the language and culture of Greece’, Biville, ‘The Graeco-Romans and Graeco-Latin,’ 92.

⁸⁷ Suetonius, *Augustus* 89.1. This, and each of the following translations are from Loeb.

⁸⁸ Suetonius, *Tiberius* 71. The paragraph continues, ‘Again, when the word ἔμβλημα was read in a decree of the senate, he recommended that it be changed and a native word substituted for the foreign one; and

inability to speak Latin (although that is not to suggest that Latin was a requirement for citizenship).⁸⁹ The decades leading up to Paul's writing of 1 Corinthians were therefore ruled by the emperors with perhaps the most negative attitudes towards the Greek language.

Augustus' reluctance to publicly use a second language he was not entirely comfortable with is understandable by anyone who has faced the same struggles. Indeed, one can imagine the emperor would be particularly reluctant to make errors or appear stumbling in his speech in front of his subjects. But Tiberius' attitude to Greek is perhaps harder to understand, as he was able to speak Greek but often chose not to. We have already noted the relationship between language and power, and many Greeks saw their language as superior to Latin,⁹⁰ as the Romans knew only too well. Simon Swain suggests that the Roman love of Greek literature put them in a particularly difficult position, as they found themselves 'competing with Greeks for the cultural high ground their power required them to occupy'. This left them with 'the insuperable problem of trying to supplant what they themselves acknowledged to be the best',⁹¹ and it gave them 'a sense of cultural inferiority and in some of them a consequent linguistic aggression'.⁹²

Romans therefore tended to restrict their admiration for Greek to its place as a 'classical language', whilst Latin was seen as 'the language that is now living'.⁹³ Some Romans were suspicious of those who spoke Greek too fluently,⁹⁴ and according to Cicero, Lucullus even deliberately 'interspersed a few barbarisms and solecisms [into his history] as a clear

if one could not be found, that the idea be expressed by several words, if necessary, and by periphrasis. On another occasion, when a soldier was asked in Greek to give testimony, he forbade him to answer except in Latin.' For more details see Kaimio, *The Romans and the Greek Language*, 132-133.

⁸⁹ Suetonius, *Claudius* 16, and Cassius Dio 60.17.4. See idem, 134-136.

⁹⁰ Simon Swain, *Hellenism and Empire: Language, Classicism, and Power in the Greek World AD 50-250* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 17-42. He concludes, 'in their own speech [upper-class Greeks] wanted the encroachments of Latin as little as an educated Frenchman welcomes those of English'.

⁹¹ S. Swain, 'Bilingualism in Cicero? The Evidence of Code-Switching' in *Bilingualism in Ancient Society: Language Contact and the Written Text*, ed. J. N. Adams, M. Janse and S. Swain (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 131.

⁹² Adams, *Bilingualism and the Latin Language*, 10.

⁹³ Swain, 'Bilingualism in Cicero?,' 132.

⁹⁴ Biville, 'The Graeco-Romans and Graeco-Latin,' 87.

proof that it was the work of a Roman'.⁹⁵

All this helps explain why some Romans, including Tiberius, were reluctant to use the Greek language in some settings. Disdaining Greek, and choosing Latin instead underlined the Roman claim to power.⁹⁶

The use of Greek in public, as in a speech, particularly if there were Greeks in the audience, might be considered demeaning, in that it could be interpreted as an act of deference out of key with the political dominance of the Romans.⁹⁷

The choice between Greek and Latin therefore became a key weapon in the politics of the day:

There was a persistent sense that Greeks in particular should have Latin inflicted on them from time to time by Romans as a show of Roman superiority... There is evidence that periodically Romans foisted Latin on Greek audiences as an aggressive and symbolic act of Romanness... occasionally when a clear expression of Roman power was felt to be appropriate Latin speakers were prepared to use their language even when there could be no expectation that the hearers would understand what was being said.⁹⁸

So how might all this affect the church in Corinth? Hopefully, it is already clear. Roman identity was associated with the élite in Corinth, and was particularly likely to be asserted in the mid-first century, as the city was beginning to become more Greek in outlook, and the élite felt its Romanness therefore needed to be protected. (Spawforth suggests the leading Greeks in Argos thought of the Corinthians as 'jumped-up Roman colonists' around this time).⁹⁹ We know from 1:26 that the majority of the Corinthian

⁹⁵ Cicero, *Letters to Atticus* 1.19. Cicero disapproved of this practice — he wanted to show his (Roman) mastery of Greek.

⁹⁶ Barbara Levick, 'The Latin Inscriptions of Asia Minor,' in *Acta Colloquii Epigraphici Latini Helsingiae* 3.-6. Sept. 1991 *Habiti*, ed. Heikki Solin, Olli Salomies and Uta-Maria Liertz (Commentationes Humanarum Litterarum 104; Helsinki: Societas Scientiarum Fennica, 1995), 396, cited by Adams, "'Romanitas" and the Latin Language', 199. Tucker rightly says that language was 'a primary means of determining ingroup and outgroup status', Tucker, *You Belong to Christ: Paul and the Formation of Society in 1 Corinthians 1-4*, 104.

⁹⁷ Adams, *Bilingualism and the Latin Language*, 756.

⁹⁸ Adams, "'Romanitas" and the Latin Language', 198. He cites Cicero recording he had been criticised by an opponent: 'he said that it was improper that I had spoken in a Greek senate; and that I had spoken Greek before Greeks was absolutely intolerable'. See also Biville, 'The Graeco-Romans and Graeco-Latin,' 93. For more on 'Roman language nationalism and Greek' see Kaimio, *The Romans and the Greek Language*, 325-326.

⁹⁹ The opinion is dated by Spawforth to the late 50s A.D. Antony J. S. Spawforth, 'Corinth, Argos, and the

church were not élite, and the evidence above suggests this would mean they were Greek speakers, and unlikely to be bilingual. On the other hand, the few in the congregation who were part of the élite would be more likely to be bilingual, whilst used to reading, speaking and hearing only Latin in public contexts. They would therefore probably prefer to speak Latin themselves, particularly in public, both for reasons of status, and perhaps because their rhetoric was not as polished in Greek as it was in Latin.¹⁰⁰

Cultural values and the Corinthian church

So how likely was it that these attitudes to language found their way into the church? Although we have found evidence that could explain why the élite might want to speak in the language with which they were most familiar, even though many could not understand it, we have also expressed a wariness for assuming that just because something is happening in the Corinthian culture, it must be happening in the church. (After all, we have already rejected the idea that tongues-speaking was imported from Corinthian cults, despite evidence for such cults in the city.) So although there is evidence that there was a general trend in cities like Corinth for the Roman language and culture to find its way into local institutions, and ‘induce them to adopt Roman ways’,¹⁰¹ we need also to establish evidence from 1 Corinthians itself.

In an important recent study, John Barclay has noted that one of the most noteworthy features of church life in Corinth ‘is the absence of conflict in the relationship between Christians and “outsiders”’.¹⁰² He suggests the reason for this absence of conflict is two-fold: an unusual toleration of Christianity within the city,¹⁰³ and that ‘the leading

Imperial Cult: Pseudo-Julian, Letters 198’, *Hesp.*, 63:2 (1994), 229.

¹⁰⁰ We know that the rhetoric quality of speech was important to the Corinthians (although not to Paul). See 1 Corinthians 2:1-4.

¹⁰¹ Edward T. Salmon, *Roman Colonization under the Republic* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1970), 148-149.

¹⁰² He goes on to add, ‘the believers in Corinth appear neither to feel hostility towards, nor to experience hostility from, non-Christians... In fact there are plenty of signs suggesting the social acceptability of the Corinthian Christians... In the Corinthians’ easy dealings with the world Paul detects a failure to comprehend the counter-cultural impact of the message of the cross (1.18-2.5); the wisdom of the world to which they are so attracted is, he insists, a dangerous enemy of the gospel... In Corinth such things needed to be said, and with heavy emphasis.’ John M. G. Barclay, ‘Thessalonica and Corinth: Social Contrasts in Pauline Christianity’, *JSNT*, 47 (1992), 57-59.

¹⁰³ See also Acts 18:10.

converts deliberately played down the potential offensiveness of their faith'.¹⁰⁴ This was partly because 'the more the Corinthians understood their faith as a special endowment of knowledge and a special acquisition of spiritual skills, the less they would expect or embrace hostility...'.¹⁰⁵

Horrell rightly understands that this insight needs to be related to the question of the élite in the congregation,¹⁰⁶ and Gerd Theissen has argued powerfully that social status was *carried into* the congregation, not *formed inside* it.¹⁰⁷ As Garland writes:

Most, if not all, of the problems that Paul addresses were hatched from the influence of this setting. Values that were antithetical to the message of the cross... Secular wisdom — which reflected the code of conduct of the social elites... had its hold on members of the church... Socially pretentious and self-important individuals appear to have dominated the church. It is likely that they flaunted their symbols of status, wisdom, influence, and family pedigree and looked down on others of lesser status. They appear to have wanted to preserve the social barriers of class and status that permeated their social world but were nullified in the cross of Christ. For some, the Christian community had become simply another arena to compete for status according to the societal norms.¹⁰⁸

There is good evidence throughout 1 Corinthians to suggest that the ethical values of the surrounding society had penetrated the Corinthian church, and that is one of the key things that Paul objects to. Indeed, there is far more evidence for the infiltration of secular values, than there is for the infiltration of secular religious practices. Ethically, there is often little to choose between the Christians and the rest of Corinth,¹⁰⁹ but theologically, although the Corinthians are in need of some correction, they appear to remain distinctively Christian.¹¹⁰ This may suggest that a proposal for tongues-speech

¹⁰⁴ Barclay, 'Thessalonica and Corinth', 69.

¹⁰⁵ idem, 71. 2 Corinthians 1:3-11 would suggest that the Corinthians responded to Paul's appeals, and that suffering followed as a result.

¹⁰⁶ Horrell, *The Social Ethos of the Corinthian Correspondence*, 120.

¹⁰⁷ Theissen, *The Social Setting of Pauline Christianity*, 69-119. See also David W. J. Gill, 'Acts and the Urban Élites,' in *The Book of Acts in its Graeco-Roman Setting*, ed. David W. J. Gill and Conrad Gempf (The Book of Acts in its First Century Setting 2, Bruce W. Winter ed.; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994), 110-113.

¹⁰⁸ Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 5-6. Garland possibly overstates the case, but nevertheless, the basic position stands.

¹⁰⁹ See particularly 1 Corinthians 5:1.

¹¹⁰ The theological correction that Paul offers in the letter is usually linked to ethical teaching, and rarely

that finds its cause in the values of the surrounding society is more likely to be correct than one that finds its cause in secular religious practice, if all else is equal. Despite the criticism of Meggitt,¹¹¹ John Hiigel is right to say, ‘We make the best sense of the situation in Corinth when we account for both the social *and* the theological factors in their thinking’.¹¹²

That said, there may be some evidence that also suggests that the ethical values of the city are affecting Corinthian worship. Jerome Murphy-O’Connor believes that the problems of 1 Corinthians 11 were caused by the Corinthian élite who were seeking to bring Roman social values into their worship:

Though on Greek soil, the city was a Roman colony whose official language at the time of Paul was Latin and whose government structure was modeled on that of Rome. It may be that some upper-class members of the community (cf. 1 Cor 1:26) adopted the Roman custom, while others followed the Greek tradition.¹¹³

David Gill, on the same subject, is even more certain. He suggests that the men wanted to cover their heads in Christian worship, because they were ‘adopting a form of dress during worship which drew attention to their élite status’.¹¹⁴ A man who uncovered his head ‘acknowledged the presence of other people who were worthy of honour’.¹¹⁵ In short, ‘members of [the] social élite were wanting to establish a Roman element into

to soteriology, Christology and the like.

¹¹¹ Meggitt argues that ancient sources tend only to give the view of the élite, and that more notice must be given to the ‘undocumented dead’. Yet in practice this often means *no* ancient sources can be relied upon, precisely because the majority non-élite are undocumented. Meggitt, *Paul, Poverty and Survival*, and Meggitt, ‘Sources,’ 242-243. Whilst he is right to warn of the dangers of too quickly coming to conclusions which radically affect exegesis, his extreme pessimism is unwarranted, as Theissen ably demonstrates (Theissen, *The Social Setting of Pauline Christianity*; Theissen, ‘Social Conflicts in the Corinthian Community’). See also Holmberg, ‘The Methods of Historical Reconstruction in the Scholarly “Recovery” of Corinthian Christianity,’ 261-267.

¹¹² Hiigel, *Leadership in 1 Corinthians*, 89, emphasis added. See also Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 40; Barclay, ‘Thessalonica and Corinth’, 61, 69; Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 7-8; Horrell, *The Social Ethos of the Corinthian Correspondence*, 119-120; Theissen, *The Social Setting of Pauline Christianity*, 123.

¹¹³ Jerome Murphy-O’Connor, ‘1 Corinthians 11:2-16 Once Again’, *CBQ*, 50:2 (1988), 267. As the title of his article indicates, Murphy-O’Connor is thinking of the issue of headcoverings.

¹¹⁴ Gill, ‘The Importance of Roman Portraiture for Head-Coverings in 1 Corinthians 11:2-16’, 250.

¹¹⁵ *idem*, 251.

their worship'.¹¹⁶

If Gill, Oster and Murphy-O'Connor are right, this means that even without the evidence of 1 Corinthians 12-14, there is some evidence that Corinthian social values were beginning to affect worship styles in the church. Yet even if they are wrong, there is significant evidence that Corinthian social values were having a negative impact on the church, particularly because the élite were failing to honour other members. That, coupled with the substantial evidence that in mid first-century Corinth some élites would be likely to speak Latin instead of Greek as a display of their status, makes it likely that — regardless of 1 Corinthians 12-14 — we might expect the use of language to be a divisive issue in the Corinthian church, and a tool used by the élite to assert their power and status over the less privileged.

A possible definition for tongues-speech

The detailed investigation of the possible backgrounds suggested that the most likely background to γλωσσα λαλεῖν (tongues-speech) was the eschatological praising of Yahweh in Gentile languages, a tradition that was not only known by Paul, but vital to his own calling. A further investigation into the function of language in Corinthian culture in the mid first-century revealed that if tongues-speech was in languages that were learned, one language (Latin) would have been particularly valued by the élite, and been as divisive as 1 Corinthians 12-13 suggests. None of this background study is new, but rarely, if ever, have they been discussed in the context of the gift of tongues. Together, they add an interesting new dimension to the study of tongues and prophecy.

Yet however interesting this is, it is only background information. We have not yet explored the text of 1 Corinthians 12-14 in any detail, and until we do so, we cannot be sure whether tongues are learned languages or not.

We began this chapter by pointing out one of the key problems in understanding

¹¹⁶ idem, 260. See also Oster, 'When Men Wore Veils to Worship: The Historical Context of 1 Corinthians 11.4', 481-505 and W. Gerald Kendrick, 'Authority, Women, and Angels: Translating 1 Corinthians 11:10', *BT*, 46:3 (1995), 342. BeDuhn also suggests that there may have been 'a tension between Roman colonial practice and the indigenous Greek custom', Jason David BeDuhn, "'Because of the Angels": Unveiling Paul's Anthropology in 1 Corinthians 11', *JBL*, 118:2 (1999), 306. For images of Roman men covering their heads to worship, see Thompson, 'Hairstyles, Head-Coverings, and St Paul: Portraits from Roman Corinth', especially the classic image of Augustus making a sacrifice at Corinth on p. 101.

Corinthian tongues-speech is that we cannot define tongues-speech until we have exegeted the passage, and we cannot exegete the passage until we have understood tongues-speech. All of the work above on background has been designed to break that hermeneutical circle, to ensure that in the fullest possible way we approach the text of 1 Corinthians thinking as Paul thought — as a first-century Jewish Christian in a Graeco-Roman world. Having done the work on background, we now need to take that work into 1 Corinthians 12-14 and see whether or not this background fits the text. If it does, then we have a credible alternative to the existing suggests for tongues-speech. If it does not, then it will be back to the drawing board.

This means we need a formal definition of tongues-speech in the light of this background, which we can then place into 1 Corinthians and see how well it fits. In formulating our definition we can use the conclusions of the background study, but we can also add additional undisputed information from 1 Corinthians, in particular the fact that tongues-speech is Spirit-empowered and that it is not understood by the congregation until it is interpreted.

This definition needs to be carefully framed to assert that tongues-speech is a supernatural empowerment. Tongues-speech is not idle chit-chat in another language, but *Spirit-empowered speech* in another language. It cannot be produced on demand, but only when the Spirit empowers it. Tongues-speech is no less supernatural than prophecy, as it is equally Spirit-empowered, and equally revelatory.¹¹⁷ Those who do not have the help of the Spirit cannot ‘speak in tongues’ (i.e. produce Spirit-empowered speech in another language), even if they can speak that language fluently. This Spirit-empowerment helps to explain why tongues-speech is edifying to the speaker, and why interpreted tongues-speech is as edifying to the congregation as prophecy is. In addition to this, the gift is not just supernatural, but theologically spectacular. Gentiles praising God in Gentile languages fulfils long-awaited old covenant promises, and therefore is a gift of great significance.

Formulating a definition for tongues-speech also shapes a particular understanding of the gift of interpretation, but it needs to be emphasised that the gift of interpretation is more than the learned ability to translate from one language into another. Some of the

¹¹⁷ For a discussion on the revelatory nature of prophecy, see above pp. 190f.

gifts of the Spirit seem quite ordinary, although they were all useful in the church,¹¹⁸ and they are all considered valuable gifts. This is particularly true in 12:28 where the gifts listed include ἀντιλήψεις (helping) and κυβερνήσεις (guiding). Most scholars accept that those gifts are not ‘supernatural endowments’,¹¹⁹ so there is no reason to think that interpretation must be a ‘supernatural endowment’, either. What seems to happen in these cases is that the Spirit takes existing abilities and empowers the believer to use those abilities for the good of the church. The gift of interpretation probably functions in a similar way. It is a gift of the Spirit, even though it is not directly revelatory in the way that prophecy and tongues are. Interpretation (in this context) is a gift of the Spirit because the interpreter would require the Spirit’s help to put Spirit-empowered tongues-speech into words the congregation can understand without losing its spiritual power. In a multilingual setting like that in Corinth, to have those present who could be called upon to provide such a ministry would certainly be a gift of the Spirit.

With that in mind, we can present a formal definition:

Tongues-speech in Corinth is Spirit-empowered speech uttered in the preferred language of the speaker, which is unknown to the majority of the congregation and therefore requires interpretation.

An historical parallel to Corinthian tongues-speech?

Before we move to the text of 1 Corinthians 12-14, there is the possibility of an interesting historical parallel that we should also consider. During the time of the Reformation Latin was viewed by many as an élite language that gave a sense of spirituality to the one who spoke that language in the congregation, even though most in the congregation did not understand what was being said. That is remarkably similar to what this proposal suggests happened in first-century Corinth. This is already beneficial, as a concrete historical parallel demonstrates that the scenario envisaged for Corinth *could* have happened (although it certainly does not demonstrate it *did* happen).

But we can also use this historical parallel to supply an additional test to our proposal. If our proposal is correct, we would expect that those who discussed the use of this élite

¹¹⁸ Lang, *Die Briefe an die Korinther*, 178.

¹¹⁹ Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 618-619; Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 599-600; Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 1019-1022; Ciampa and Rosner, *The First Letter to the Corinthians*, 613-614.

language during the Reformation would readily apply 1 Corinthians 12-14 to their own situation. If they fail to do so, that may indicate that the passage does not convey the meaning we have suggested it does. We do not have the space to undertake a detailed historical study of the use of Latin in the Church during the Reformation, and will therefore content ourselves with a brief overview of the treatment of 1 Corinthians 14 by three of the leading figures during this period: Erasmus, Luther and Calvin, and all three see strong parallels between 1 Corinthians 14 and the use of Latin in the Church of their own day.

Erasmus uses 1 Corinthians 14 to argue that Latin should not be spoken in the Church:

St. Paul says he would rather speak five words with a reasonable meaning in them than ten thousand in an unknown tongue. They chant nowadays in our churches in what is an unknown tongue and nothing else, while you will not hear a sermon once in six months telling people to amend their lives... Why will they not listen to St. Paul?... A set of creatures who ought to be lamenting their sins fancy they can please God by gurgling in their throats.¹²⁰

Rather surprisingly, Martin Luther provides a more moderate perspective than Erasmus. He argues from 1 Corinthians 14 that the church should allow Latin to be spoken, so long as it is interpreted:

I have read in I Cor. 14 that he who speaks with tongues is to be silent in the congregation when no one understands anything of what he says. One tends however to skip over the other words: 'Unless there is someone to interpret.' That is, St. Paul permits speaking with tongues, 'if at the same time it is interpreted,' so that one understands it... For whoever goes to the sacrament understanding these words in German... does not merely hear speaking with tongues, but something which has real meaning. On the other hand he who does not comprehend or understand these words in his heart... would not be helped if a thousand preachers stood around his ears and shouted themselves into a frenzy with such words... [It] has come the custom in all lands, to read the gospel immediately before the sermon in Latin, which St. Paul calls speaking in tongues in the congregation.¹²¹

But Erasmus does have the support of Calvin, who also argues for ordinary languages to

¹²⁰ Erasmus' comments on 1 Corinthians 14:19, cited by James A. Froude, *Life and Letters of Erasmus* (London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1894), 115-116.

¹²¹ Martin Luther, 'Against the Heavenly Prophets in the Matter of Images and Sacraments,' in *Church and Ministry II*, ed. Conrad Bergendoff, trans. Conrad Bergendoff and Bernhard Erling (Luther's Works 40; Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1958 [1525]), 141-142.

be used instead of Latin:

It is also plain that the public prayers are not to be couched in Greek among the Latins, nor in Latin among the French or English (as hitherto has been every where practised), but in the vulgar tongue, so that all present may understand them, since they ought to be used for the edification of the whole Church, which cannot be in the least degree benefited by a sound not understood. Those who are not moved by any reason of humanity or charity, ought at least to be somewhat moved by the authority of Paul, whose words are by no means ambiguous: 'When thou shalt bless with the spirit, how shall he that occupieth the room of the unlearned say, Amen, at thy giving of thanks, seeing he understandeth not what thou sayest? For thou verily givest thanks, but the other is not edified,' (1 Cor. 14:16, 17). How then can one sufficiently admire the unbridled license of the Papists, who, while the Apostle publicly protests against it, hesitate not to bawl out the most verbose prayers in a foreign tongue, prayers of which they themselves sometimes do not understand one syllable, and which they have no wish that others should understand?¹²²

These three passages demonstrate that these theologians readily saw the relevance of 1 Corinthians 14 to their own situation, where Latin was spoken in the church, even though most in the congregation did not understand it. That does not mean all of these men understood tongues-speech in exactly the way that we have defined it here. Calvin, for example, thought the language was miraculously given, but Peter Jensen argues that Erasmus allowed for the possibility that the language was learned,¹²³ there are hints that this view was shared by the early reformer John Colet (1467-1519),¹²⁴ and it was certainly the view of Martin Luther.¹²⁵

It was assumed by Luther that the Scriptures would be read in Latin (Luther was writing long before his own translation project had been completed), and as we have seen, he

¹²² John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, trans. Henry Beveridge, 2 vols. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1970), 2:182.

¹²³ Peter F. Jensen, 'Calvin, Charismatics and Miracles', *EvQ*, 51:3 (1979), 134.

¹²⁴ See John Colet, *John Colet's Commentary on First Corinthians: A New Edition of the Latin Text, with Translation, Annotations, and Introduction*, trans. Bernard O'Kelly and Catherine A. L. Jarrott (MRTS 21; Binghampton: Center for Medieval and Early Renaissance Studies, State University of New York, 1985), 273. He writes, 'Now the Corinthians were vainglorious, and they prided themselves on their skill with languages... Skill in tongues is good, but without understanding it is an empty noise; the man who speaks thus is one speaking into the air, a speaker of an alien tongue.' Colet served as Dean of St. Paul's Cathedral, London from 1505.

¹²⁵ Robert K. Wetmore, 'The Theology of Spiritual Gifts in Luther and Calvin: A Comparison' (Unpublished ThD Thesis, St. Louis: Concordia Seminary, 1992), 81-82.

described this as ‘speaking in tongues’. He considered prophecy to be the explanation of the scripture because he argues that, ‘the ability to explain the Scriptures is the noblest, the best prophetic gift’, and ‘prophecy is that one rightly interprets and can explain the Scriptures’.¹²⁶

Yet it is clear elsewhere that Luther’s view of tongues-speech goes beyond the mere *reading* of scripture. He says, for example, ‘Whoever comes forward, and wants to read, teach, or preach, and yet speaks with tongues, that is, speaks Latin instead of German, or some unknown language, he is to be silent and preach to himself alone.’¹²⁷ Teaching and preaching, when done in a language unknown to the congregation, is also considered to be speaking in tongues.

These statements make it clear that Luther’s view of *prophecy* is somewhat different to the one expressed here. In particular, Luther considers that prophecy centres on the Scriptures, whilst it has been argued that Paul viewed it as a revelation of the knowledge of God’s salvation and the mystery of Christ. Moreover, Luther takes a somewhat mechanical view of prophecy, downplaying the role of the Spirit which was an important distinctive of prophecy, and which later reformers (particularly Calvin) would emphasise. Nevertheless, Luther’s position is remarkably similar to the model put forward here – congregational speech in another language. His view of the gift of interpretation is also similar: “‘Interpretation”, I believe, is meant by this. It is a gift when one language is translated into another’,¹²⁸ which meant that interpreted tongues are equivalent to prophecy.¹²⁹ He also taught from 14:6 that revelation, knowledge, prophecy or teaching formed the content of interpreted tongues speech.¹³⁰

¹²⁶ The first citation is from ‘Sermon on the Second Sunday after Epiphany, 1525’, the second from ‘Sermon on the Tenth Sunday after Trinity’, cited by *idem*, 79.

¹²⁷ Luther, ‘Against the Heavenly Prophets in the Matter of Images and Sacraments,’ 40:142.

¹²⁸ ‘Sermon on Saturday before Boniface Day, 1524’, cited by Wetmore, ‘The Theology of Spiritual Gifts in Luther and Calvin: A Comparison’, 82.

¹²⁹ Luther argued that scriptures read in a foreign language (presumably Latin, Greek or Hebrew) are ‘called by Paul in I Corinthians 14 “speaking in tongues”’. The exposition of the text in the vernacular ‘he calls “interpreting” or “prophesying” or “speaking with sense or understanding”.’ Martin Luther, ‘Concerning the Order of Public Worship,’ in *Liturgy and Hymns*, ed. Ulrich S. Leupold, trans. Paul Zeller Strodach and Ulrich S. Leupold (Luther’s Works 53; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1958 [1523]), 12.

¹³⁰ Luther saw prophecy as ‘the interpretation of the writing of prophets’, instruction as preaching faith, knowledge as ‘advice and discrimination in outward usages and custom’, and revelation as ‘the capacity

None of this proves much about what was going on in first-century Corinth, but it has some value as corroborative evidence. If Calvin, Luther, and Erasmus had not identified parallels between their own situation and first-century Corinth, that would have brought doubt on the proposal. But more importantly, the parallels demonstrate that the language-situation envisaged in Corinth (that the élite spoke in Latin which no-one else understood, partly because it made them look more important and more spiritual) is not without precedent.

Prophecy and tongues in 1 Corinthians 12-14

In the previous chapter we formulated a definition for new covenant prophecy in 1 Corinthians, and in this chapter we have done the same for tongues-speech. Both definitions were initially formulated in the same way, through a careful study of possible background to the speech.

But what we have not yet done is tested the definition for tongues in 1 Corinthians 12-14, nor have we examined how these two gifts relate to one another. This latter task is the primary purpose of this chapter, as we are investigating tongues with the express purpose of increasing our understanding of prophecy. We will therefore now undertake an exegetical overview of 1 Corinthians 12-14, concentrating on those portions where the proposed view of tongues needs to be particularly tested, or where it adds to the understanding of prophecy we have already formulated in the previous chapter. Consequently, I will provide only brief summaries of chapters 12-13, where the exegesis differs little whatever view of tongues is accepted, but in chapter 14 we will go into considerably more detail.

Summary of 1 Corinthians 12-13

12:1-3¹³¹ Paul is replying to Corinthian concern about the spiritual (v1a). The élite were unwilling to allow everyone to speak in the congregation, in case they dishonoured Jesus (v3a). But, ironically, it is the élite who are without

to hit upon something in Scripture that not everyone discovers'. Martin Luther, 'Psalm 117,' in *Selected Psalms III*, ed. Jaroslav Pelikan, trans. Edward Sittler (Luther's Works 14; St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1958 [1519]), 36.

¹³¹ For a fuller discussion of this passage, see above, pp. 183f.

knowledge (v1b).¹³² In their pagan days, they worshipped idols who were mute (v2), and perhaps uneducated pagans could not be trusted to speak in that context. But God is not mute, and Christians do not speak on their own, but in the Spirit of God (v3a). As a consequence, there is nothing to fear. No-one speaking in the Spirit of God can curse Jesus, instead they will bless him.

12:4-11 There are wide varieties of gifts, services, activities and manifestations of the Spirit, but they all come from the same God (vv4-7). He sovereignly distributes them to each one (v11). Paul lists several gifts, beginning with the word of wisdom and the word of knowledge (probably because speaking σοφία and γνῶσις were valued by the élite, and that forced them to recognise there were gifts other than tongues).¹³³ Other gifts include faith, healings, workings of power, prophecy, distinguishing between spirits,¹³⁴ kinds of tongues,¹³⁵ and the interpretation of tongues. The list does not include the more service-orientated and ‘ordinary’ gifts that tend to also appear in other lists (cf. 12:28-30, Romans 12:6-8), probably because in this first list Paul wants to emphasise the gifts the Corinthians already value.¹³⁶

Γένη (‘kinds of tongues’, 12:10) is interesting.¹³⁷ If γλῶσσα does mean ordinary

¹³² A translation of v1 could be, ‘Now concerning the spiritual, brothers, I do not want you to be without knowledge’.

¹³³ See above, pp. 187f.

¹³⁴ It is possible that ‘spirits’ in the context means ‘prophecies’, as it may also do in 14:32, 1 John 4:1, and Revelation 22:6. If so, this gift would refer to the judging of prophecies in 14:29.

¹³⁵ Γλῶσσα could be translated as either ‘language’ or ‘tongue’. The argument against tongues is substantial: (1) In modern English ‘tongue’ is rarely used to mean ‘language’; (2) In a Christian context ‘speaking in tongues’ is associated with a particular type of inarticulate speech common in charismatic and Pentecostal churches which few scholars argue is the same as γλῶσσα in 12-14. (3) Most modern English versions do not translate γλῶσσα as ‘tongue’ when it does not refer the organ of the body. The ESV and NIV, for example, only use ‘tongue’ where it is possibly ambiguous (Romans 14:11, Philippians 2:11) but normally use ‘language’ (Revelation 5:9, 7:9, 10:11, 11:9, 13:7, 14:6, 17:15). Nevertheless, Paul is using γλῶσσα in a technical sense in these chapters, and tongues-speech is more than ordinary speech in a ‘foreign’ language. The translation of γλῶσσα should reflect this technical use, so with some reluctance I will retain the traditional ‘tongue’.

¹³⁶ Schrage, *Der Erste Brief an die Korinther*, 3:148.

¹³⁷ Suggestions as to what ‘kinds’ means by proponents of other solutions include a public type and a private type (Benny C. Aker, ‘The Gift of Tongues in 1 Corinthians 14:1-5’, *Paraclete*, 29:1 (1995), 21), an Acts 2 type and a 1 Corinthians type (Carson, *Showing the Spirit*, 99-100), or a Corinthian type and a

languages, γένη will refer to the different national and ethnic languages that could be spoken. By using it here, in the plural, Paul is acknowledging that the ability to speak in any language is a gift, not just the ability to speak in the language of the élite. Γένος is a word especially suited to speak of ordinary languages, as it tends to be used in contexts of nationality or race. (Paul's three other uses of γένος outside 1 Corinthians refer to the people of Israel,¹³⁸ and outside the Pauline epistles there are fifteen more occurrences, and thirteen of them likely refer to race, kin or nation.¹³⁹) More importantly, in 14:10 Paul undoubtedly uses γένος to mean different national languages.¹⁴⁰

12:12-27 Having established the variety of gifts which come from one source, Paul goes on to affirm the variety of members of the church who also come from one 'source', they were baptised in one Spirit, into one body, and drinking of one Spirit (vv12-13).¹⁴¹ Like a human body,¹⁴² the various members of the church are necessarily different from one another, performing different functions — and the church needs them all (vv14-21). This is the opposite of what seems to be the view of the élite — that the church needs the élite, but the élite do not need the church. In fact, here Paul turns many Corinthian values on their heads — the weak are indispensable, the dishonourable are honoured, the unpresentable are to be treated with modesty (vv22-24). The church therefore is bound together, and if one suffers, all suffer (vv25-26).

modern type (Turner, *The Holy Spirit and Spiritual Gifts*, 304). Forbes, *Prophecy and Inspired Speech*, 99, suggests that there is one type with a variety of functions — for example, inspired prayer/praise, as a sign, and as revelation. Witherington even suggests that tongues is 'speech in an unknown or forgotten language', which is therefore 'a kind of tongues... a sort of speech'. He is rightly dismissed by Thiselton, not least because 'Witherington uses "kind" in the singular, while Paul uses γένη, kinds or species, in the plural'. See Witherington, *Conflict and Community in Corinth*, 258 and Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 971-972, emphasis original.

¹³⁸ 2 Corinthians 11:6, Galatians 1:14, Philippians 3:5.

¹³⁹ The exceptions are Matthew 13:47 and Mark 9:29 (hence also Matthew 17:21, probably a scribal insertion). On Matthew 17:21 see Metzger, *Textual Commentary*, 35.

¹⁴⁰ Although there it is γένη φωνῶν rather than γένη γλωσσῶν. See the discussion below, pp. 250f.

¹⁴¹ Verse 13 raises all kinds of interesting issues, but because they do not particularly relate to the issue of prophecy and tongues, we are going to leave them aside.

¹⁴² The metaphor is commonly used in Judaism. See Hans-Josef Klauck, *Herrenmahl und Hellenistischer Kult: Eine Religionsgeschichtliche Untersuchung zum Ersten Korintherbrief* (NTAbh 15; Münster, Westfalen: Aschendorff, 1982), 340-343.

12:28-31 Paul began the chapter by talking of the variety of gifts from one source, then he spoke of the variety of members in one body, and now he brings the two together. A diversity of gifts distributed amongst many members means there are several roles (apostles, prophets and teachers) and services (helping, guiding and various tongues), all placed by God in the church (v28). Obviously not everyone has the same role or can be used in the same service (vv29-30). Tongues and interpretation (as always) are last on the list, almost certainly because Paul is trying to lower the value they have for the Corinthians. Yet despite celebrating variety and mutual dependency, Paul is not suggesting that all gifts are equal (v31), and therefore he says that the Corinthians should be zealous for the greater gifts. They probably think they are already doing that by being zealous for tongues, but Paul is now going to explain how the value of gifts are to be correctly measured.

13:1-3 Chapter 13 therefore serves as the centrepiece of Paul's argument. What matters is not gifts, but love (vv1-2). Even generosity without love is nothing (the élite were probably very generous, for example in their patronage of the church which met in their homes). Paul is calling for a change of attitude from those who are puffed up. Although it is only peripheral to what Paul is trying to say, verses 1-2 give us some insight into the nature of the gifts of tongues and prophecy.¹⁴³ Some commentators suggest Paul viewed tongues as a language of heaven, specifically of angels (v1).¹⁴⁴ Various reasons are given: Jewish sources refer to angelic languages which could be spoken whilst under inspiration;¹⁴⁵ or perhaps the Corinthians had an over-realised eschatology.¹⁴⁶ But as we have seen, the only relevant Jewish source (the Testament of Job) is problematic to date, and the relevant passage may well have suffered from Christian interpolation.¹⁴⁷ How then should the reference to tongues of angels

¹⁴³ On prophecy, see above, pp. 195f.

¹⁴⁴ For example, Fee argues that 'most likely this is either Paul's or their understanding (or both) of "speaking in tongues"'. Fee, *God's Empowering Presence*, 630.

¹⁴⁵ Poirier, *The Tongues of Angels*, 47-141.

¹⁴⁶ Fee, *God's Empowering Presence*, 630-631.

¹⁴⁷ See Forbes, *Prophecy and Inspired Speech*, 183-186, and above p. 215.

be understood? Despite objections from Garland,¹⁴⁸ hyperbole is running throughout 13:1-3. When prophetic powers reach their hypothetical peak, the speaker can understand all mysteries and knowledge, but that is not anyone's actual experience now.¹⁴⁹ Even Paul would not claim to know 'all mysteries and all knowledge', he does not move mountains and he is not delivering up his body to be burned. One day perhaps he will be able to 'understand all mysteries and all knowledge', and maybe then he will speak in the language of angels, too. But at the moment he can do neither. The simple point he is making by referring to the language of angels is that when the gift of tongues reaches its *hypothetical* peak, the speaker would be able to speak the most elite language of all, the language of angels.¹⁵⁰

13:4-7 Paul goes on to describe what love is, emphasising its sacrificial nature that puts others first.

13:8-13 Love is therefore everlasting, unlike the gifts the Corinthians value.¹⁵¹ If tongues are ordinary languages, it makes sense that they will cease (παύομαι, 13:8) at the parousia.¹⁵² Paul's choice of words is probably significant. Unlike tongues, prophecy and knowledge are said to 'pass away' (καταργέομαι). The change may be 'stylistic variation',¹⁵³ although also unlike prophecy and knowledge, tongues are never said to be 'partial' (ἐκ μέρους), and according to Paul the passing away is because of the partial nature of the gifts (13:9-10). Paul will be aware that the multiplicity of languages is the result of a curse (Genesis 11), so rather than being made complete in the eschaton they will simply cease. (The cessation of languages in the eschaton is also a very good

¹⁴⁸ Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 611.

¹⁴⁹ Gundry, 'Ecstatic Utterance', 301.

¹⁵⁰ Wilkinson, 'Tongues and Prophecy in Acts and 1st Corinthians', 4.

¹⁵¹ We have already discussed this passage in relation to prophecy. See above, pp. 201f.

¹⁵² Cessationists sometimes argue that τὸ τέλειον refers to the closing of the canon, for example Myron J. Houghton, 'A Reexamination of 1 Corinthians 13:8-13', *BSac*, 153:611 (1996). This unconvincing position has thankfully been rejected by many contemporary cessationists. Farnell calls it 'tenuous', and Gaffin says it is not credible exegesis. See Farnell, 'The New Testament Prophetic Gift', 358; Gaffin, *Perspectives on Pentecost*, 109. Also Robert L. Thomas, "'Tongues... Will Cease'", *JETS*, 17:2 (1974), 81-83; Stanley D. Toussaint, 'First Corinthians Thirteen and the Tongues Question', *BSac*, 120:480 (1963), 312.

¹⁵³ Carson, *Showing the Spirit*, 66.

argument against tongues being a heavenly or angelic language.)¹⁵⁴

Exegesis of 1 Corinthians 14

The gift of tongues is much more to the fore in chapter 14 than in the previous two chapters, and we will therefore provide a more thorough exegesis of this chapter, although still resisting the temptation to be distracted by issues that do not relate to the relationship between tongues and prophecy. I will provide a fairly literal translation for each section,¹⁵⁵ followed by detailed exegetical comments.

1 Corinthians 14:1-5

¹Pursue love, and strive for the spiritual [gifts],¹⁵⁶ but especially that you may prophesy. ²For the one who speaks in a tongue does not speak to people but to God, because no one understands,¹⁵⁷ but by the Spirit¹⁵⁸ he speaks mysteries. ³But the one who prophesies speaks to people edification and encouragement and consolation. ⁴The one who speaks in a tongue edifies himself, but the one who prophesies edifies the church. ⁵Now I want you all to speak in tongues, but more that you may prophesy. The one who prophesies is greater than the one who speaks in tongues, unless he interprets, in order that the church may receive edification.

In **14:2a** Paul writes that the tongues-speaker does not speak to people ‘but to God’. It is unlikely to be the content of the speech that makes it speech ‘to God’, because we know that if the speech is interpreted, it is edifying for the congregation (interpretation implies the content of the interpreted speech is equivalent to that of the original speech). Nor does it mean that the tongues-speaker deliberately directed his speech towards God,¹⁵⁹ but rather that God is the only one present who understands what the

¹⁵⁴ Schnabel, ‘Urchristliche Glossolie’, 82.

¹⁵⁵ The translation is my own, but based on *The Lexham English Bible*, (Bellingham: Logos Bible Software, 2012⁴).

¹⁵⁶ It may be better not to add the word ‘gifts’ in the translation, as it does not appear in the Greek text. Paul has earlier referred to ministries, activities and manifestations, and no doubt intends all to be included as part of the ‘spiritual’. Nevertheless, *χαρίσματα* is used generically in 12:31, so ‘gifts’ is used here to reflect that usage.

¹⁵⁷ In a non-literal translation the phrase could be translated with a gloss, ‘for no one *else* understands’.

¹⁵⁸ The choice between ‘spirit’ and ‘Spirit’ is not an easy one. ‘Spirit’ is probably better because of the parallels with 12:1-11, and because when Paul wants to refer to ‘spirit’ in these chapters he tends to use *τὸ πνεῦμά μου* (‘my spirit’) for clarity.

¹⁵⁹ Schrage, *Der Erste Brief an die Korinther*, 3:384.

speaker means (so in non-worship contexts [14:9], when God is not 'present', the same type of speech is described as the speaker speaking into the air). That means it is the lack of understanding in the congregation that makes this speech 'to God' (cf. v28).

14:2b also says that 'no-one' will understand the tongues-speaker. It is possible that this is hyperbole on Paul's part (after all, he thinks it possible that there will be an interpreter present), but it is equally possible that it is often literally true. It is likely that church gatherings were relatively small affairs, with most estimates suggesting around 40 people, and it is unlikely that every meeting involved the entire congregation.¹⁶⁰ If a relatively small number of people gather, it is more likely that *no one* else would know the language.¹⁶¹ But more importantly, the emphasis on 'each in turn', 'let the first be silent', 'prophecy one by one', 'God is not a God of confusion, but a God of peace',¹⁶² almost certainly suggests the Corinthian habit had been to have more than one speaker speaking simultaneously. Perhaps they did so because they did not want to 'lose' the Spirit-empowerment that came to them, or perhaps because they valued the speech for the speech's sake and therefore did not consider that listeners were even needed. If several tongues-speakers were speaking simultaneously, it would be even more probable that there would be no-one *listening* who would understand, because the likely scenario is that the few who could understand tongues-speech were all speaking.

In **14:2c** we do not need to choose whether Paul uses μυστήρια (mysteries) to describe the contents of the tongues-speech or to denote its unintelligibility,¹⁶³ the term is doubly-appropriate because it indicates both.¹⁶⁴ The use of μυστήρια in relation to tongues-speech is important, because it suggests that the content of tongues-speech is broadly the same as that of prophecy (cf. 13:2), which we determined earlier was a revelation of Christ.¹⁶⁵ Μυστήρια is a very suitable word in this context, because it draws attention to the hiddenness that comes from the lack of understanding (nothing was *revealed* to the

¹⁶⁰ See the discussion in Murphy-O'Connor, *St Paul's Corinth*, 178-184.

¹⁶¹ Even if the congregation size was significantly bigger than 40 people, the principle still stands, because the following point (multiple speakers speaking simultaneously) suggests that it is the *proportion* of tongue-speakers that needs to be small, rather than their absolute number.

¹⁶² 14:27-33.

¹⁶³ Contra Choi, *Geist und Christliche Existenz*, 67.

¹⁶⁴ Schrage, *Der Erste Brief an die Korinther*, 3:385.

¹⁶⁵ Scippa, *La Glossolalia Nel Nuovo Testamento*, 56-58.

congregation, it remained a mystery), but it is not intended to bring to mind the speech common at pagan mystery cults.¹⁶⁶

14:4 confirms that speaking in tongues does have some value, because through it the speaker ‘edifies himself’. Some suggest that Paul is being pejorative, and that ἑαυτὸν οἰκοδομεῖ should be translated ‘puffs up himself’. Fee is right to reject this,¹⁶⁷ as when Paul wishes to be pejorative when describing self-edification, he consistently does so by using φυσιοῦμαι and φυσιώω as negatives (‘puffed up’),¹⁶⁸ whilst reserving οἰκοδομέω and οἰκοδομή as positives (‘build up’).¹⁶⁹ The tongues-speech would edify the speaker both by the experience of Spirit-empowerment, but also by the speakers’ own understanding of what he is saying. Although many commentators resist the idea that the speaker understood his own speech, Paul consistently links edification and understanding throughout the epistle. Almost without exception, each time edification is spoken of, it is in the immediate context of understanding, and when a lack of edification is spoken of, it is in the immediate context of *not* understanding.¹⁷⁰ It would therefore be surprising if Paul intended to say here that the speaker would be edified even though he failed to understand his own speech. When taken together with later statements that the speaker may be able to interpret his own speech (vv5, 13), it is highly likely that Paul intends to suggest the speaker understood his own speech.

14:5 causes a difficulty for most interpreters, because Paul’s claim that ‘I want you all to speak in tongues’ seems incongruous given that he appears not to value tongues highly.¹⁷¹ It is likely that Paul means either (a) he would like the entire congregation to be truly multilingual, or (b) he is referring to an expressed wish of the élite that *they* wish everyone could speak as they did, and agreeing to it whilst at the same time overriding it

¹⁶⁶ For more on μυστήριον see above, pp. 195f.

¹⁶⁷ Fee, *God’s Empowering Presence*, 657. Thiselton remains agnostic, Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 1095.

¹⁶⁸ 1 Corinthians 4:6, 18, 19, 5:2, 8:1, 13:4.

¹⁶⁹ 1 Corinthians 8:1, 10, 10:23, 14:4, 5, 12, 17, 26.

¹⁷⁰ 1 Corinthians 14:2-5, 11-12, 16-17. The only possible exception is 14:26, but as a summarising statement, the context of intelligibility that has run throughout the chapter has done its work.

¹⁷¹ Some scholars seek to soften the meaning of θέλω, so that it is ‘conciliatory rather than commendatory’ (e.g. H. Wayne House, ‘Tongues and the Mystery Religions of Corinth’, *BSac*, 140:558 (1983), 143), but, ‘to mean simply the permissive I am willing does not do justice to the force of the verb’, Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 1097.

(just as many suggest he does in 6:12). The former is much more likely, however, particularly if we understand it as an aspiration rather than a statement of purpose.¹⁷² Paul's desire is not that the lower classes should better themselves by learning to do what only the élite can do, but rather he wants each one to look out for the interests of others. He could not very well say to the Romans that they should speak Greek, without also saying to the Greeks that they should be willing to speak Latin if possible. However, learning to speak in another language ought not be prioritised while there are more beneficial things to pursue — prophecy, and the greater gifts (cf. 12:31).

Paul also again inverts the Corinthian value-system by describing prophesiers as 'greater than the one who speaks in tongues'. Their greatness stems from the capacity of prophecy to edify the church. It is tempting to see a connection to Jesus' statements on the greatness of prophesiers in relation to John the Baptist,¹⁷³ but although they express similar ideas about prophecy it is unlikely that Paul had Jesus' words in mind.

Finally there is the reminder that the tongues-speaker might be able to interpret his own speech. Interpretation is first mentioned in 12:10, where it is simply listed as a spiritual gift. It is mentioned again in 12:30 as part of another list, where it is suggested that not all interpret. The next reference is here in 14:5 where Paul notes that interpretation can raise the value of tongues-speech to the same level as prophecy — something Paul values highly. The ESV and RSV translate the verse as 'unless someone interprets', but most other versions rightly have 'unless he or she [i.e. the tongues-speaker] interprets' (ἐκτός εἰ μὴ διερμηνεύῃ).¹⁷⁴ This means that of the four occasions where Paul speaks of interpretation, one refers to the tongues-speaker himself interpreting (14:5), one refers to the tongues-speaker praying that he would be able to interpret (14:13), one refers to an unspecified person interpreting (14:26), and very likely the fourth refers to one of a group of tongues-speakers doing the interpreting (14:27). The impression given is that the job of tongues-speaking and interpreting was often (but perhaps not always) carried

¹⁷² 'Aspiration', is a better term than 'exaggeration' (used, for example, by Masalles, *La Profecía En la Asamblea Cristiana*, 215).

¹⁷³ On which see above, pp. 110f.

¹⁷⁴ Hans Conzelmann, *1 Corinthians*, trans. James W. Leitch (Hermeneia; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1975), 235; Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 659; Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 1098; Ciampa and Rosner, *The First Letter to the Corinthians*, 676. More tentatively Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 635; Collins, *First Corinthians*, 494.

out by the same people. You might expect this if tongues-speaking is in the language of the speakers' preference and there is a minority language-group in the community. You would probably not expect this if the Spirit was uniformly distributing various 'miraculous' gifts around the congregation in a way that meant every member was useful.

Paul's words in 14:5 also imply that interpreted tongues have the same value and the same effect as prophecy, which suggests a strong similarity between the two types of speech.

1 Corinthians 14:6-12

⁶But now, brothers, if I come to you speaking in tongues, how do I benefit you, unless I speak to you either in a revelation or in a [message of] knowledge or in a prophecy or in a teaching? ⁷Likewise, the inanimate things which produce a sound, whether flute or lyre, if they do not produce a distinction in the tones, how will it be known what is played on the flute or on the lyre? ⁸For indeed, if the trumpet produces an indistinct sound, who will prepare for battle? ⁹And so you through the tongue, unless you produce a recognisable message,¹⁷⁵ how will it be known what is spoken? For you will be speaking into the air. ¹⁰There are probably so many kinds of languages in the world, and none without meaning. ¹¹Therefore, if I do not know the meaning of the language, I will be a barbarian to the one who is speaking, and the one who is speaking will be a barbarian in my judgment. ¹²In this way also you, since you are zealous for spirits, seek for the edification of the church, in order that you may abound.

In **14:6**, Paul imagines that he comes to the Corinthians 'speaking in tongues'. In doing so, he reverses the role of the élite from speakers to listeners, to help them better understand what listening to unintelligible speech feels like.¹⁷⁶ If our understanding of tongues-speech is correct, the tongues-speakers would understand Paul's tongues-speech if he came speaking Latin,¹⁷⁷ and therefore he would be speaking to them a revelation, in a prophecy, and so on. (Like all the lists in these chapters, it is illustrative not

¹⁷⁵ The Greek is λόγος (literally 'word'), but that might give the impression to some English readers of a single word, abstracted from even a sentence, whereas in this context λόγος means 'communication whereby the mind finds expression' (see the brief discussion below).

¹⁷⁶ Strobel calls Paul's imaginary visit speaking in tongues an 'absurde Möglichkeit' (absurd possibility), but 14:18 says it would be quite possible for Paul to undertake such a visit if he wished. August Strobel, *Der Erste Brief an die Korinther* (ZBK 6,1; Zürich: Theologischer Verlag Zürich, 1989), 215.

¹⁷⁷ On the possibility of Paul speaking Latin, see below, pp. 256f.

exhaustive.¹⁷⁸) But he hopes they can also imagine him speaking other languages (Aramaic or Hebrew), which they will not understand, and therefore *to them* there is no revelation, prophecy, etc., and hence no benefit. The use of ὑμῖν (to you) suggests that although the content of tongues-speech is *always* revelation, knowledge, etc., it may not always be that *to them* (i.e. they may not be able to perceive its true content because they find it unintelligible). The verse again underlines Paul's emphasis on the importance of the content of the speech, which needs to be understandable. In terms of the relationship between tongues and prophecy, 14:6 implies that there can be various types of tongues-speech, including prophecy, and further suggests that prophecy is different from revelation, knowledge or teaching (although we should be careful about reading too much into this statement).¹⁷⁹

14:7 provides an illustration of the problem. If there is no διαστολήν (distinction) in the sound¹⁸⁰ of a musical instrument no-one will know what tune is played. This is even more important when the music contains a message, **14:8**, such as a trumpet sounding the call for battle. The relevance of the illustration to the speech in languages is obvious, but Paul spells it out regardless, in **14:9**. If the message is not εὔσημον λόγον (a recognisable message) no-one will know what was said, and they will just be speaking into the air. It is the message that matters, not just the experience of hearing something. Λόγον is usually inadequately translated here as 'speech'¹⁸¹ but the primary meaning of λόγος is 'communication whereby the mind finds expression'.¹⁸² But more importantly, if in 14:9 γλῶσσα means languages (rather than the organ of the mouth),¹⁸³ this use of λόγος again underlines that the content of tongues-speech is not meaningless, but does contain a message, even if that message is sometimes unintelligible to the hearer.

Thiselton suggests that the comparison between tongues-speech and 'inarticulate sounds

¹⁷⁸ Schrage, *Der Erste Brief an die Korinther*, 3:390-391.

¹⁷⁹ See above, pp. 186f.

¹⁸⁰ The word I have translated 'sound' is φθόγγοις, which can mean 'voice', and is probably used to create a link to 14:10 where φωνῶν (languages) are introduced.

¹⁸¹ ASV, Douay-Rheims, ESV, HCSB, NAB, NASB, NRSV, RSV (the KJV, NIV, NKJV, TNIV all use 'words').

¹⁸² *BDAG*, 599. The other meanings, which obviously do not apply here, are 'computation, reckoning', and 'the independent personified expression of God'.

¹⁸³ In 14:10-11 Paul deliberately changes his vocabulary to ensure there is no danger of two different concepts getting confused. It is likely he would do the same here if γλῶσσα took a different meaning from every other usage in chapters 12-14.

of musical instruments... hardly describes a language system awaiting “translation”,¹⁸⁴ but it is, after all, only an illustration. Using the same logic, one might reply by saying that the comparison with national and ethnic languages in **14:10** hardly describes inarticulate groans, as Thiselton suggests it does. As Paul begins to use national and ethnic languages in this illustration, he deliberately switches from γλῶσσα to φωνή in vv10-11, which has led some commentators to suggest the change in vocabulary means γλῶσσα cannot refer to national and ethnic languages, because that is the meaning of φωνή in this context.¹⁸⁵ However, as φωνή usually means ‘voice’,¹⁸⁶ if φωνή means ordinary languages here, how much more does γλῶσσα? A comparison of 14:11-12 with 14:6-9 also shows that the two paragraphs have very similar structures, which strengthens the case that they both refer to similar types of speech (that is, speech in recognisable human languages):

	14:6-9	14:11-12
Scenario (first person)	But now, brothers, if I come to you speaking in tongues, how do I benefit you, unless I speak to you either in a revelation or in a [word of] knowledge or in a prophecy or in a teaching?	But if I do not know the meaning of the language, I will be a barbarian to the one who is speaking, and the one who is speaking will be a barbarian in my judgement.
Analogy (third person)	Likewise, the inanimate things which produce a sound, whether flute or lyre, if they do not produce a distinction in the tones, how will it be known what is played on the flute or on the lyre? For indeed, if the trumpet produces an indistinct sound, who will prepare for battle?	
Application (second person)	And so you through the tongue, unless you produce a recognisable message, how will it be known what is spoken? For you will be speaking into the air.	In this way also you, since you are zealous of spiritual gifts, seek for the edification of the church, in order that you may abound.

The change in vocabulary is explained not by Paul wanting to make a distinction between ordinary languages and ‘tongues-languages’, but because he wants to make a distinction between ordinary speech (φωνή) and Spirit-empowered speech (γλῶσσα). In addition,

¹⁸⁴ Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 977; Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 636.

¹⁸⁵ Rightly rejected by Gundry, ‘Ecstatic Utterance’, 306 fn. 302. See also Hovenden, *Speaking in Tongues*, 129 fn. 114.

¹⁸⁶ *BDAG*, 1072. Φωνή occurs 139 times in NA27, and this is the only time it has the meaning of ‘language’.

φωνή also creates a link to the Septuagint of the Babel story in Genesis 11:1, 7 which may help to prepare the way for Paul's later argument that uninterpreted tongues are a sign of a curse, not of blessing. More obviously, it permits the play on words with ἄφωνος ('without meaning') at the end of verse 10.

Moving to **14:11**, Paul's reference to barbarians (βάρβαρος) is pointed,¹⁸⁷ particularly in suggesting that the hearers will view the speakers (i.e. the élite) as barbarians. If the élite were speaking in tongues partly to portray the superiority of their Romanness, it is hard to imagine a less flattering verdict on their attempt, given the way the Greeks saw themselves as superior to the barbarians and their lack of culture.¹⁸⁸

Paul then concludes the paragraph in **14:12** by reminding them once again of the importance of 'spirits' (i.e. Spirit-empowered utterances)¹⁸⁹ being able to edify the whole church.

1 Corinthians 14:13-19

¹³Therefore the one who speaks in a tongue must pray that he may interpret. ¹⁴For if I pray in a tongue, my spirit prays but my mind is unproductive. ¹⁵Therefore what should I do?¹⁹⁰ I will pray with my spirit, but I will also pray with my mind. I will sing praise with my spirit, but I will also sing praise with my mind. ¹⁶For otherwise, if you praise in your spirit, how will the one who fills the place of the outsider say the 'amen' at your thanksgiving, because he does not know what you are saying? ¹⁷For indeed you are giving thanks well, but the other person is not edified. ¹⁸I give thanks to God that I speak in tongues more than all of you, ¹⁹but in the church I prefer to speak five words with my mind, in order that I may instruct others, than ten thousand words in a tongue.

In **14:13**, the tongues-speaker is encouraged to pray that he/she would be able to interpret his/her own speech. Perhaps prayer is needed due to the speaker's perceived lack of fluency in the common language (although it may be that the tongues-speaker can communicate well enough, but just not with the rhetorical flourishes a native Greek speaker may manage). The context of chapter 12 makes Paul's urging even more

¹⁸⁷ Choi, *Geist und Christliche Existenz*, 81.

¹⁸⁸ Ulrich Heckel, 'Paulus und die Charismatiker: Zur Theologischen Einordnung Der Geistesgaben in 1 Kor. 12-14', *TBei*, 23 (1992), 119-120.

¹⁸⁹ See above, fn. 44, p. 186.

¹⁹⁰ Literally, 'Therefore what is it?'

interesting. In chapter 12 there was a great emphasis on the diversity of gifts, and on the fact that no individual possesses all the gifts, and therefore the individual members of the church need one another. In that context, you might imagine that Paul would encourage the Corinthian tongue-speakers to find others to interpret, but instead much of the emphasis in chapter 14 is on the speakers themselves doing the interpretation. This again lends weight to the idea that the gift of interpretation is not a miraculous gift that could be given to anyone, but instead is a gift given as the Spirit empowers an existing proficiency. If the gift of interpretation is given in a miraculous way not linked to an existing proficiency, there is no reason to think the gift could not be given to any member of the congregation.¹⁹¹ That tongues-speech and interpretation require an existing proficiency also explains why Paul never suggests the speaker prays for others to interpret, because much of the time no-one else understood (*cf.* 14:2).¹⁹²

That brings us to **14:14-15**. It is vital we study these verses in detail, because they (along with v19 and v23) are often used to argue that the tongues-speech was inarticulate or ecstatic. That is because in 14:14 Paul says that a tongue-speaker's mind is ἄκαρπός (translated above as 'unproductive'). In 14:15 and 14:19 he implies that tongue-speakers speak only with their spirit, not with their mind, and in 14:23 he suggests that unbelievers will think tongue-speakers are μαίνεσθε ('out of their minds').

Unfortunately 14:14-15 is a little tricky to unpick, partly because of the difficulty in understanding the phrase τὸ πνεῦμά μου ('my spirit') in this context. Garland is right to reject the idea that it refers to the Holy Spirit,¹⁹³ as Paul would not describe the Spirit as 'my Spirit'.¹⁹⁴ In Paul, the spirit of a man is that part of him that is in closest communion with God,¹⁹⁵ and Paul's other uses of 'my spirit' reinforce that connection.¹⁹⁶ Therefore the phrase 'when I pray in a tongue my spirit prays' means that his prayer in tongues has

¹⁹¹ Particularly when, as most suggest, the interpreters and tongues-speakers are not from the same group.

¹⁹² See above, p. 248.

¹⁹³ C. K. Barrett, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians* (BNTC 7; Peabody: Hendrickson, 1968), 320.

¹⁹⁴ Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 639, against Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 670. Barrett himself says the suggestion is 'intolerable', Barrett, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 320.

¹⁹⁵ 1 Corinthians 6:17 is the clearest and contextually most important reference. But the thought is found throughout the Pauline literature: Romans 1:9, 8:16, Galatians 6:18, Philippians 4:23, 2 Timothy 4:22, Philemon 25. See also James D. G. Dunn, 'πνεῦμα (NT)', *NIDNTT*, 3:693.

¹⁹⁶ Romans 1:9, 8:16 (our spirit); 2 Corinthians 2:13. (See also Luke 1:47, 23:46; Acts 7:59.)

arisen through a close sense of God's presence and help (i.e. through the empowering of the Spirit). The Corinthian tongue-speakers would almost certainly have agreed with this assessment, in fact it is probably one of the arguments they would use to justify their speaking in tongues. However, whilst Paul accepts that tongues-speech is an immediate expression of Spirit-empowerment, he criticises it because it leaves the mind ἄκαρπός (unproductive).

Most commentators assume that ἄκαρπός means that the mind is disengaged, and Fee thinks it demonstrates the speech is unintelligible even to the speaker.¹⁹⁷ But Paul is not saying that tongues-speech fails to engage the mind, rather that it does not cause the mind to do anything productive. In the context of these chapters, 'productive' means 'of benefit to the congregation', which is Paul's constant emphasis in the whole chapter.¹⁹⁸ ἄκαρπός is used on six other occasions in the New Testament,¹⁹⁹ and its meaning every time is to do with a lack of positive effect. Paul's point is that when someone speaks in tongues without interpretation, their mind (which could be used to provide an interpretation) is not being used to its full advantage, and has no positive effect on the congregation.

So whilst tongues-speech is a genuine expression of one's spirit, Paul insists it must be accompanied by an additional expression of the mind, i.e. interpretation. The contrast between mind and spirit does not mean that tongues-speech is non-rational, but neither does it mean that interpretation is not a gift of the Spirit. Instead it confirms our earlier assertion that whilst both tongues and interpretation are gifts of the Spirit, interpretation is not revelatory in the way that tongues and prophecy are, but the Spirit uses a learned linguistic proficiency.²⁰⁰ It is likely that because interpretation was not an immediate expression of Spirit-empowerment, it was not valued by the spiritual élite. Paul counters this in two ways: first by underlining the fact that without interpretation

¹⁹⁷ Gordon D. Fee, 'Toward a Pauline Theology of Glossolalia', *Crux*, 31:1 (1995), 26. See also Vern Sheridan Poythress, 'The Nature of Corinthian Glossolalia: Possible Options', *WTJ*, 40:1 (1977), 131. Fee does however also admit that it is 'a very difficult sentence', that 'the point of this sentence is less than certain' and that the difficulties are 'seldom noted by interpreters', Fee, *God's Empowering Presence*, 669, emphasis original.

¹⁹⁸ See Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 1111.

¹⁹⁹ Matthew 13:22, Mark 4:19, Ephesians 5:11, Titus 3:14, 2 Peter 1:8, and Jude 12.

²⁰⁰ See above, p. 252.

the mind is unproductive (the élite valued wisdom and knowledge, and therefore would not want an unproductive mind), and second by underlining that without interpretation others are not edified. Whilst the Corinthian tongues-speakers devalue interpretation because they perceive it to be less ‘spiritual’, Paul devalues tongues because he considers it is less useful. Paul’s solution is that they not only pray with their spirit (i.e. speak in tongues), but also pray with their mind (i.e. interpret the prayer for the sake of others). Together this two-stage speech has the same value as prophecy (14:5).

14:14-15 suggests that speaking in tongues could actually involve praying in tongues, or singing praise in tongues, but tongues-speech is not primarily prayer,²⁰¹ as 14:6 shows. It is likely that Paul chose to use the examples of prayer and praise to give him a ‘from the lesser to the greater’ argument (*qal wāḥômer*). Prayer and praise are more obviously directed towards God than (for example) teaching yet interpretation is required even for these types of speech, because prayer and praise benefit from an ‘amen’, **14:16**. Therefore if even prayers should be interpreted, how much more should other, more public forms of speech?

The phrase ὁ ἀναπληρῶν τὸν τόπον τοῦ ἰδιώτου (translated here as ‘fills the place of the outsider’) is a skilful one. In religious contexts, ἰδιώτης can be used to speak of a non-member who participated in pagan ritual, but that is unlikely to be its meaning here, and Fee is right to reject the idea that it means a catechumen or inquirer.²⁰² In secular Greek it could mean an ‘outsider’ not fully part of a group, and could also be used in contexts where it signified an ordinary citizen not a ruler, or a layman not an orator.²⁰³ In this context it means an ordinary believer not a member of the élite. (That they are believers and not outside the faith is indicated by Paul’s use of the phrase ἀναπληρῶν τὸν τόπον [‘who takes the place’], and by the inference that they would have been edified and said ‘amen’ had they not been prevented from understanding.) It is hard to imagine a better phrase to describe someone who is not a member of the élite and does not have an

²⁰¹ E.g. Lang, *Die Briefe an die Korinther*, 194.

²⁰² Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 672-673. A catechumen is a person receiving initiatory religious instruction.

²⁰³ Heinrich Schlier, ‘ἰδιώτης’, *TDNT*, 3:214-216. See also Peter Artz-Grabner et al., *1. Korinther* (PK 2; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2006), 2:455-456; Mary Katherine Birge, *The Language of Belonging: A Rhetorical Analysis of Kinship Language in First Corinthians* (Leuven: Peeters, 2002), 170-171 and Adolf Schlatter, *Paulus Der Bote Jesu: Eine Deutung Seiner Briefe an die Korinther* (Stuttgart: Calwer, 1969⁴), 377-378.

advanced education, is not part of the ruling class, and therefore is made to feel an outsider because he does not know Latin.²⁰⁴ There is nothing wrong in the thanksgiving, **14:17**, but there is something wrong if someone is being excluded from being edified.

Paul's claim in **14:18** to speak in tongues more (μᾶλλον) than the Corinthians is surprising to many,²⁰⁵ given the relatively low value he seems to place on the gift. Yet despite being able to speak in tongues more than the Corinthians, this does not mean he would do so in the congregation, **14:19**. Thiselton and Fee conclude that this means tongues are not appropriate in the assembly and should only be used in private devotions,²⁰⁶ but Paul does not forbid speaking in tongues in the assembly (14:39). Μᾶλλον could be taken quantitatively or qualitatively. If it is taken quantitatively²⁰⁷ it suggests Paul frequently knows the Spirit's empowering when he is speaking as part of his missionary work amongst those whose first language is not Greek.²⁰⁸ If taken qualitatively it would suggest Paul views his speaking in tongues as more powerful than theirs. This is less likely, as we would not expect Paul to express such a boastful view, although where the Corinthians are concerned he has been known to make 'boastful'

²⁰⁴ Carson says it has 'intrinsic genius', Carson, *Showing the Spirit*, 116.

²⁰⁵ Fee, *God's Empowering Presence*, 674. Massales suggests it only a 'elemento retórico' and is 'hiperbólico', but it would be a weak argument of Paul's if that was the case (Masalles, *La Profecía En la Asamblea Cristiana*, 264). Stendahl rather unfairly attributes the phrase to Paul's 'arrogant exuberance' that gives him an 'annoying' tendency 'to claim that he is the greatest in everything'. Krister Stendahl, 'Glossolalia and the Charismatic Movement,' in *God's Christ and His People: Studies in Honour of Hils Alstrup Dahl*, ed. J. Jervell and Wayne A. Meeks (Oslo: Univeritetsforlaget, 1977), 122-123.

²⁰⁶ Thiselton rightly says, 'Virtually all commentators appear to agree that ἐν ἐκκλησίᾳ has the force of in the assembled congregation'. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 1117. Given the strained nature of the relationship between Paul and some in the Corinthian church, it is likely that he could back up his claim to speak in tongues more than all of them, which would be very difficult if he only experienced such speech in private devotions.

²⁰⁷ As Schrage, *Der Erste Brief an die Korinther*, 403.

²⁰⁸ This position is taken by Harvey J. S. Blaney, 'St. Paul's Posture on Speaking in Unknown Tongues', *WThJ*, 8 (1973), 57, and rather weakly by W. C. Klein, 'The Church and its Prophets', *ATHR*, 44:1 (1962), 7. At the time Paul writes his letter he is in Ephesus (16:8), where Luke tells us he was friendly with high-ranking Roman officials (Acts 19:31), whose language preferences would have been very similar to the Corinthian élite. It is therefore not unreasonable to suppose that as Paul was lecturing daily in Tyrannus' hall (Acts 19:9) some of his discussions would have been in Latin, and that he experienced Spirit-empowerment during them.

claims in order to counter their own boasting.²⁰⁹

All this assumes Paul could speak in languages other than Greek. Is this a fair assumption? Luke says he was able to speak the ‘Hebrew’ language (which may mean Hebrew or Aramaic),²¹⁰ and the fact that the voice on the Damascus road was in Hebrew or Aramaic probably suggests one of those languages was his mother-tongue.²¹¹ Yet Latin would have been useful to him in his missionary endeavours, even if it was not strictly necessary to communicate. As someone who to the Jews became like a Jew, who made himself a servant of all, becoming all things to all people,²¹² it is quite likely that Paul would have wanted to be able to communicate with Romans in their own language, and a knowledge of Latin would also have been a great help to him in his frequent encounters with Roman officials and the Roman legal system.²¹³ In addition, he was a Roman citizen, and Tajra argues that at this time Roman citizens were expected to be fluent in Latin, citing Dio Cassius (c. 43 A.D.):

...when the man failed to understand what was said, [Claudius] took away his citizenship, saying that it was not proper for a man to be a Roman who had no knowledge of the Romans’ language.²¹⁴

As a consequence there are several suggestions in the scholarly literature that Paul knew and spoke at least some Latin before he wrote 1 Corinthians.²¹⁵

²⁰⁹ 2 Corinthians 11:21-12:12.

²¹⁰ Acts 21:40, 22:2.

²¹¹ Acts 26:14. Bruce, *Paul: Apostle of the Free Spirit*, 43.

²¹² 1 Corinthians 9:20-22.

²¹³ Harry W. Tajra, *The Trial of St Paul: A Juridical Exegesis of the Second Half of the Acts of the Apostles* (WUNT2 35; Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1989), 86.

²¹⁴ Dio Cassius, LX, 17.4, cited by idem. It is too much to say that it was *required* that Roman citizens could speak Latin, and Dio Cassius appears not to approve of Claudius’ actions. But around this time, there was a re-emphasis on the importance of Latin, particularly in official contexts (see above, pp. 227f). For more on the link between the Latin language and Roman citizenship see Adams, ‘“Romanitas” and the Latin Language’, 185-188.

²¹⁵ Winter states (in the context of 1 Corinthians) that ‘it should not surprise us that he was capable of conversing in Latin’, Winter, *After Paul Left Corinth*, 24. See also Robert L. Reymond, *Paul: Missionary, Theologian* (Fearn: Christian Focus, 2000), 47, and the comments of F. F. Bruce: Bruce, *Paul: Apostle of the Free Spirit*, 315-316; Bruce, ‘St. Paul in Macedonia’, 120; Bruce, ‘Languages (Latin)’, 4:221.

1 Corinthians 14:20-25

²⁰Brothers, do not become children in your understanding, but with respect to wickedness be as a child, and in your understanding be mature. ²¹In the law it is written:

‘By those who speak a foreign language
and by the lips of foreigners²¹⁶

I will speak to this people,

and not even in this way will they obey me,’

says the Lord. ²²So then, tongues are for a sign not to those who believe, but to unbelievers, but prophecy is not for unbelievers, but for those who believe.

²³Therefore, if the whole church comes together at the same time and all speak in tongues, and outsiders or unbelievers enter, will they not say that you are out of your minds? ²⁴But if all prophesy, and some unbeliever or outsider enters, he is convicted by all, he is judged by all, ²⁵the secret things of his heart become evident, and so, falling on his face, he will worship God, proclaiming, ‘God is truly among you!’

Paul begins in **14:20** with a request for understanding and maturity, virtues the Corinthians would hardly take issue with. He then cites Isaiah 28:11-12 in **14:21** which has caused much consternation over the years, partly because many interpreters do not see its relevance to the situation in Corinth.²¹⁷ Yet it is relevant because the context of Isaiah 28 is that judgement has come on the people, and one way in which the judgement is felt is that ‘foreign’ voices are heard in the house of God. The parallel with the situation in Corinth is striking, particularly if the tongues-speech in Corinth were ordinary languages that were ‘foreign’ to the worshippers.²¹⁸ The tongue-speakers seem to think that the prevalence of languages that are foreign²¹⁹ to the hearers is a sign of blessing, but Paul uses this quotation from Isaiah to show the opposite is true.²²⁰ This does not contradict our earlier assertion that Paul viewed praise in Gentile languages as positive. Theologically, praise in Gentile languages remains positive (hence Paul’s own speaking in

²¹⁶ Literally ‘of others’ (ἐτέρων), but translated here as ‘of foreigners’ given its close proximity to ἑτερογλώσσοις (foreign language).

²¹⁷ E.g. Christopher D. Stanley, *Arguing with Scripture: The Rhetoric of Quotations on the Letters of Paul* (London: T & T Clark, 2004), 90-96.

²¹⁸ Other than in this citation, Paul avoids describing any language or person as ‘foreign’ — it is just λαλῶν γλώσσαις, never λαλῶν ἑτέροις γλώσσαις. That is because he does not consider the Roman members of the church as foreigners, nor can he afford to give that impression.

²¹⁹ ἑτερογλώσσοις emphasises the ‘foreign’.

²²⁰ Birge, *The Language of Belonging*, 164.

tongues, and his aspiration that they should do likewise), but the positive is turned into a negative if those languages are used in a way that makes the speaker a foreigner to God's people. The problem is not the language, which is positive, but the way the language is used (i.e. without interpretation). Paul's point is a simple one, however — God would only speak through languages his people would not understand if he wanted to judge, and not bless.²²¹

In **14:22** Paul takes the opportunity to apply this lesson to the Corinthian church,²²² but the verse appears to contradict verses 23-25, and is therefore thought of as one of the most difficult verses in the entire letter.²²³ But despite the problems with vv23-25, verse 22 is clear enough: uninterpreted tongues are not appropriate for the assembly of believers because God is not going to talk to *his* people who *do* want to listen to him through languages they do not understand. Unintelligibility is therefore a sign of judgement for unbelievers, intelligibility a sign of blessing for believers.²²⁴

So how does that connect with verses 23-25? Paul says in verse 22 that tongues-speech is for unbelievers, but in 14:23 it does unbelievers no good at all. Prophecy, on the other hand, which Paul said was not for unbelievers, seems to do unbelievers a great deal of good (14:24-25).

The basic principle is that unintelligible speech from God is a sign of judgement, whilst intelligible speech from God is a sign of blessing. In the Corinthian context that means

²²¹ God describes them as 'this people', not 'my people'. Oswalt says this phrase 'emphasized the distance between them and God'. Oswalt, *Isaiah 1-39*, 513.

²²² The ὥστε at the beginning of verse 22 makes the connection back to the quotation from Isaiah. This connection is ignored by some, e.g. Karl Olav Sandnes, 'Prophecy — a Sign for Believers (1 Cor 14:20-25)', *Bib*, 77:1 (1996), 15.

²²³ Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 1122, cf. Schrage's pessimistic conclusion, Schrage, *Der Erste Brief an die Korinther*, 3:406. Gladstone gives a good overview of some of the interpretative difficulties, even if his own view is unnecessarily imaginative, Robert J. Gladstone, 'Sign Language in the Assembly: How Are Tongues a Sign to the Unbeliever in 1 Cor 14:20-25', *AJPS*, 2:2 (1999). The same could be said of B. C. Johanson, 'Tongues, a Sign for Unbelievers?: A Structural and Exegetical Study of I Corinthians XIV. 20-25', *NTS*, 25:2 (1979), 180-203, and David E. Lanier, 'With Stammering Lips and Another Tongue: 1 Cor 14:20-22 and Isa 28:11-12', *CTR*, 5:2 (1991), 259-286. Smit is the most pessimistic, 'The problem of this verse lies in the fact that it does not fit in with the context. In particular the contradiction with the adjacent illustrations is insoluble', Joop F. M. Smit, 'Tongues and Prophecy: Deciphering 1 Cor 14:22', *Bib*, 75:2 (1994), 175.

²²⁴ This helps explain why tongues were positive in Acts. Unlike in Corinth, tongues were intelligible in Acts — not because the tongues were different, but because the audience was.

uninterpreted tongues cannot be the blessing the tongues-speakers believe them to be — and because they are not a blessing, they will not convince unbelievers that God should be listened to ('even then they will not listen to me'). Paul proves his point by painting a picture: if everyone speaks in tongues, and an unbeliever (i.e. a pagan) comes in, he will see great confusion, lots of incomprehension and conclude the tongues-speakers are out of their minds. A verdict of madness from outsiders does not mean that the speech must be inarticulate or ecstatic. In fact, all of the other occurrences of *μαίνομαι* are accusations made against speech that is quite true and rational, but appears wild to the hearers (because they refuse to accept it, or cannot understand the claims).²²⁵ Acts 2 also provides a perfect parallel. Many considered the speakers at Pentecost to be drunk — a not dissimilar reaction to the accusation of madness — even though the tongues were genuine languages. All of the tongues were intelligible to some people, but most of the tongues were not intelligible to most people, and that combined with the excited state of the speakers, was sufficient to bring the accusation of drunkenness. Even in Acts, non-tongues prophecy was required before evangelistic good was done.

Paul's words in 14:23 are carefully chosen. *Μαίνεσθε* takes on a double-meaning, pointing both to the absurdity of a situation where people cannot understand what is said, but also to the pagan-like incomprehensibility of the speech.²²⁶ (A feature of much Graeco-Roman ritual was that the gods and oracles did not speak clearly, preferring enigmatic sayings and riddles to plain speech.)²²⁷ Paul's tactic in bringing in the verdict of outsiders is equally skilful. In the Isaiah quotation, God had spoken through an outsider (a foreigner in that case), so in Paul's scenario it is another outsider (a pagan) who delivers God's verdict against tongues-speech. Just as importantly, the tongue-speakers were particularly concerned with how the church might appear to the wider Corinthian populace (as much for their own reputations as for the good of the church),²²⁸ and may

²²⁵ John 10:20 (used concerning Jesus' claim that he would take his life back up again); Acts 12:15 (used of Rhoda's claim that Peter had escaped from prison and was at the door); Acts 26:24-25 (used of Paul's claim that Jesus had risen from the dead).

²²⁶ On the latter see Fitzmyer, *First Corinthians*, 521-522.

²²⁷ See Aune, *Prophecy in Early Christianity*, 51-52, who says that obscurity was 'an essential element'. Pagan worship could be as incomprehensible as Corinthian worship, even when Greek was used.

²²⁸ Barclay, 'Thessalonica and Corinth', 69.

have argued that tongues-speech had an evangelistic benefit,²²⁹ by associating Christianity with the élite. By appealing to those *outside* the church, whose opinions were likely to have been valued by the Corinthian élite, Paul adds an extra argument to the doctrinal and ethical ones he has already made against uninterpreted tongues-speech.

The contrast to prophecy in **19:24-25** is marked — if an unbeliever was to encounter Christians prophesying they would have an overwhelming sense of the presence of God.²³⁰ That does not contradict Paul's earlier statement that prophecy is for believers — he has already said in 12:1-3 that only those speaking by the Spirit of God can say Jesus is Lord (i.e. can prophesy). Yet because the outsider is able to understand the content of the speech, he will also recognise its genuineness and its source, and fall down on his face and worship God.

1 Corinthians 14:26-33a

²⁶Therefore what should you do,²³¹ brothers? Whenever you come together, each has a psalm, has a teaching, has a revelation, has a tongue, or has an interpretation. All must be for edification. ²⁷If anyone speaks in a tongue (two or at most three, and in turn), one must interpret. ²⁸But if there is no interpreter, he must be silent in the church, but let him speak to himself and to God. ²⁹Let two or three prophets speak, and the others judge. ³⁰And if something is revealed to another who is seated, the first must be silent. ³¹For you are all able to prophesy one at a time, in order that all may learn and all may be encouraged, ³²and the spirits of prophets are subject to prophets. ³³For God is not of disorder but of peace.

In **14:26** Paul explains how the Corinthians should apply the lessons learned from this illustration. Whatever it is a person has (a psalm, a teaching, a revelation or a tongues or an interpretation), it must be for edification. Surprisingly prophecy is not mentioned by Paul here — which probably means he considered all of these forms of speech to be prophetic.²³² Psalms have not been mentioned previously, but probably reflect the type of speech resulting from singing praise (14:15-16), and is added to reinforce the constant theme of variety. For the first time there is an indication that someone other than the

²²⁹ So C. D. Isbell, 'Glossolalia and Propheteialia: A Study of 1 Corinthians 14', *WThJ*, 10 (1975), 18; Choi, *Geist und Christliche Existenz*, 97.

²³⁰ See above, p. 191.

²³¹ Literally, 'Therefore what is it?'

²³² Just as in 14:6 he probably saw all the forms of speech mentioned there as types of tongues-speech.

tongue-speaker might provide the interpretation.

Paul restricts tongues-speech in **14:27** to two or three tongues-speakers permitted to speak in turn, and εἷς ('one') must interpret. (Some English translations have 'someone', but the text says εἷς not τὶς.) It is possible that εἷς functions as a pronoun,²³³ but it is more likely that one of the 'two or three' will do the interpreting,²³⁴ which is what you would expect if the two or three are all intending to speak in the same language.

If there is no interpreter, there can be no speech, **14:28**, which suggests it was possible for the tongues-speaker to determine before he spoke whether or not an interpreter was present.²³⁵ If no interpreter can be found then what could have become Spirit-empowered tongues-speech will become silent Spirit-empowered prayer to God. Commentators have long puzzled over why God would give such a speech in the assembly if it could not be useful, but Paul suggests that alongside the gift of Spirit-empowerment, God also gives responsibility to the tongues-speaker to ensure his speech can be interpreted²³⁶ in one of three ways: those most confident would interpret their own speech (14:5), those least confident would look for others to interpret (14:27), and those unsure would pray for help (14:13).²³⁷

We have discussed the speaking and judging of prophecies in **14:29-31** earlier,²³⁸ and there is no need to repeat that here. In **14:32**, ('the spirits of prophets are subject to prophets') there is a question as to the meaning of πνεύματα (spirits) in this context.

²³³ Collins, *First Corinthians*, 518; Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 1138.

²³⁴ Robert Somerville, *La première épître de Paul aux Corinthiens*, 2 vols. (Vaux-sur-Seine: Éditions de la Faculté de Théologie Évangélique, 2001-2005), 2:163.

²³⁵ Delling, who takes the ecstatic view, acknowledges the problem. 'It is possible to ascertain before the service begins, whether an "interpreter" is present... before the beginning of the service enquiry should be made whether such a man was available'. He solves the problem by continuing, 'Clearly the gift of translating did not come to a man fortuitously; it was generally a permanent possession'. Delling, *Worship in the New Testament*, 34. Quite how this gift functions is not, however, explained. Most commentators simply say they do not know how the tongues-speaker would know: Carson, *Showing the Spirit*, 118; Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 659.

²³⁶ As we saw earlier, Roman proficiency in Greek was much higher than Greek proficiency in Latin, so most if not all tongues-speakers should be able to put their speech in Greek, even if it consequently would not be as eloquent as they would wish. See above, p. 228.

²³⁷ Contra Choi, *Geist und Christliche Existenz*, 82-83.

²³⁸ See above, p. 199f.

There are four possibilities: the Holy Spirit,²³⁹ angelic spirits,²⁴⁰ human spirits (cf. 14:14),²⁴¹ or a manifestation/utterance (i.e. a prophecy).²⁴² The first two are both very unlikely (the Holy Spirit is ruled out by the plural, angelic spirits are not part of Pauline thought), and there is little to choose between the latter two (the outcome is the same in both cases. However, it is more likely that πνεῦμα in 12:10, and 14:12 and here refers to Spirit-empowered utterances.²⁴³

Paul's instructions are necessary, **14:33a**, because otherwise there would be ἀκαταστασία (disorder), which reinforces how important chapter 13 was in Paul's whole argument.²⁴⁴ Paul's purpose is not to control worship, but to help the Corinthians worship in ways which are loving towards one another.

1 Corinthians 14:33b-36

As in all the churches of the saints, ³⁴the wives²⁴⁵ must be silent in the churches, for it is not permitted for them to speak, but they must be in submission, just as the law also says. ³⁵But if they want to learn something, let them ask their own husbands at home, for it is shameful for a wife to speak in church. ³⁶Or has the word of God gone out from you, or has it come to you only?

This section does not relate directly to prophecy, so despite the considerable interest this passage has generated, my comments will be brief. I reject the view that this portion is a later addition,²⁴⁶ and accept Wayne Grudem's argument that Paul's prohibition is on women *judging* or weighing prophecies, rather than any kind of speech (for how, otherwise, could we make sense of 1 Corinthians 11)?²⁴⁷ It may be that Paul is particularly

²³⁹ E.g. Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 696.

²⁴⁰ Cf. *Shepherd of Hermas* Mandate XI.9.

²⁴¹ E.g. Witherington, *Conflict and Community in Corinth*, 287.

²⁴² E.g. Conzelmann, *1 Corinthians*, 245.

²⁴³ See above, fn. 44, p. 186.

²⁴⁴ Cf. James 3:16. James says disorder results from jealousy and selfish ambition.

²⁴⁵ Γυναικες could mean 'women', but because of the references to their own husbands in v35, it likely means 'wives' in this context (see also v35b).

²⁴⁶ As argued, for example, by Franz-Josef Ortkemper, *1. Korintherbrief* (SKKNT 7; Stuttgart: Katholisches Bibelwerk, 1993), 140-141.

²⁴⁷ Wayne A. Grudem, 'Prophecy — Yes, but Teaching — No: Paul's Consistent Advocacy of Women's Participation without Governing Authority', *JETS*, 30:1 (1987), 19-23, following Margaret E. Thrall, *I and II Corinthians* (CBC; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1965), 102. See also James B. Hurley, *Man*

prohibiting wives from judging their own husbands' speech, rather than women more generally. With either of these interpretations, these verses do not reverse the universality of prophecy already expressed earlier in the chapter.

1 Corinthians 14:37-40

³⁷If anyone thinks he is a prophet or spiritual, he should know that which I write to you is of the Lord. ³⁸But if anyone does not know this, he is not known.²⁴⁸ ³⁹So then, my brothers and sisters,²⁴⁹ be zealous to prophesy, and do not prevent speaking with tongues. ⁴⁰But let all things be done decently and in order.

As Paul closes, he again has the élite firmly in his sights. 'If anyone thinks' he is spiritual is almost certainly pejorative, having in view those who are puffed up in their own minds.²⁵⁰ The reference to ἀγνοεῖ ('does not know') is also somewhat barbed, as knowledge was something the élite valued highly.²⁵¹

But more importantly, Paul's conclusion is that all the Corinthians should be zealous to prophesy, whilst speaking in tongues should be tolerated but not encouraged. Paul's preference is that the tongues-speakers should simply prophesy in Greek whenever possible.

Summary

In this exegesis we have tested the proposal that tongues-speech is Spirit-empowered speech uttered in the preferred language of the speaker. Whilst no proposal for tongues-speech is without its difficulties, it appears that this proposal does fit the text of 1 Corinthians 12-14 well.

and Woman in Biblical Perspective (Leicester: Inter-Varsity Press, 1981), 188, 191-194; and Don A. Carson, "Silent in the Churches": On the Role of Women in 1 Corinthians 14:33b-36,' in *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood*, ed. Wayne A. Grudem and John Piper (Wheaton: Crossway, 1991), 142-144.

²⁴⁸ Or 'if anyone does not know this, he is ignorant' (many manuscripts have ἀγνοεῖτω instead of ἀγνοεῖται).

²⁴⁹ ἀδελφοί could include both men and women, and as many today would understand 'brothers' as referring to only men, 'brothers and sisters' is a better translation in that women prophesy in chapter 11 (and are not, I believe, excluded in 14:33 — see above, p. 262).

²⁵⁰ Masalles, *La Profecía En la Asamblea Cristiana*, 186.

²⁵¹ On irony in 1 Corinthians 14, see Choi, *Geist und Christliche Existenz*, 56-57, although one's view of tongues-speech inevitably changes which statements one views as ironic.

A comparison with Luke's view of tongues-speech

Before concluding this chapter, it may be helpful to briefly compare Paul's view with Luke's description of tongues-speech at Pentecost (which was miraculously given language). The two descriptions of tongues-speech are obviously different from one another, but there are sufficient similarities to enable the Corinthians to claim that their tongues-speech was in continuity with that of Pentecost, had they known of it. In particular, tongues-speech in both Luke and Paul is Spirit-empowered, very closely linked to prophecy, and both are in non-Jewish languages. The evangelistic benefit of Lukan and Pauline tongues-speech is very different, and yet that can be explained simply by the different settings — in Acts 2 the tongues-speech was in the languages of the hearer, whilst in 1 Corinthians 14 it is the language of the speaker. That said, the evangelistic benefit of the tongues-speech in Acts is often overstated. Whilst it certainly appears to have drawn a crowd, many thought the tongues meant the disciples were drunk, and it was only after non-tongues prophecy that people in the crowd came to believe. There are therefore perhaps less differences between Corinthian and Lukan tongues-speech than are often suggested.

Equally, our finding here may help us to be more certain about some aspects in Acts, in particular the Cornelius episode. We suggested there,²⁵² that it was possible that Cornelius was speaking in a language he had learned (co-incidentally, also Latin), rather than one that was miraculously given. That possibility has now been given extra weight through our brief study of the background to Pauline tongues-speech. This study suggested that Gentiles praising God would be seen as a sign of eschatological promise, and if Peter and his Jewish brothers could recognise that the praise was genuinely a result of Spirit-empowerment (through comparison with their own experience in Acts 2, and perhaps elsewhere), this would have been sufficient to cause them to accept the Gentiles in the way that God had himself done. If the tongues in Acts 10 were not miraculously given, that makes it likely that they were also not miraculously given in Acts 19, as the situation in Acts 19 is much closer to Acts 10 than to Acts 2. There is still insufficient data to be certain about this, but our findings in 1 Corinthians make it more likely.

²⁵² See above, pp. 166f.

Conclusion: The relationship between tongues and prophecy

The purpose of this chapter was to clarify an understanding of tongues-speech in order that we might be able to gain additional insight into the gift of prophecy. Unlike most other exegeses of 1 Corinthians 12-14, we were able to employ the same methodology for determining an understanding of tongues-speech as we used for prophecy. In defining tongues, we were careful to formulate a definition that fitted the cultural context of the Corinthian church (both the problem of the élite within the church, and the problem of languages outside), did not violate Paul's own theology (e.g. by suggesting he indulges in pagan-like worship practices), and fits the text of 1 Corinthians 12-14.

This definition led us to draw different conclusions regarding the relationship between tongues and prophecy in 1 Corinthians. In particular, most scholars believe that Paul is differentiating between controlled and uncontrolled speech, or between articulate and inarticulate speech. Yet the only fundamental difference we have noted between the two types of speech is that the tongues cannot be understood whilst the prophecies can.²⁵³ So how might these conclusions affect our understanding of prophecy?

Although we have consistently emphasised the supernatural element in both tongues and prophecy (both are Spirit-empowered), the proposed setting for this inspired speech is more controlled and 'ordinary' than many other proposals. This may suggest that the phenomenon associated with prophecy may not be as dazzling as some scholars claim, even though prophecy's effects are still significant. The consequence of this is that it makes the possibility of universal prophecy more likely — that is, if prophecy is outwardly spectacular, it would be hard to see that it was widespread in the earliest church, despite many hints at universal prophethood. Yet if prophecy does not draw attention to itself, its lack of prominence in some parts of the New Testament would be expected, and would not indicate that prophecy is rare. This is an important finding, as whilst many scholars are willing to affirm the prophethood of all believers theologically, few are willing to affirm that prophecy was widespread.

²⁵³ Choi, *Geist und Christliche Existenz*, 73, notes four differences: the addressee, its character, who it edifies, and the effect on others. Choi's table is correct, but I am arguing that character (what Choi refers to as *unverständlich* vs. *verständlich*) is the only *fundamental* difference, and the other differences are the consequences of that.

Even more important is that this view of tongues-speech is compatible with our understanding of prophecy. This matters, because if it were not so, we may need to rethink some of the conclusions reached concerning prophecy. For example, if we had concluded that tongues-speech was modelled after Graeco-Roman religious practices, that would have called into question our entire methodology with regard to prophecy, where we rejected a Graeco-Roman religious source on principle. It was therefore vital that we have been able to articulate an understanding of tongues-speech using a methodology that is compatible with the methodology we used for prophecy. In that sense the work in this chapter has not changed our view of prophecy, but strengthened it.

To be sure, one does not have to accept this view of tongues to be able to accept the earlier findings regarding prophecy. But at the same time, the earlier view of prophecy fits rather better with this view of tongues than with other views, both because of their shared methodology and because of the final conclusion, below.

Finally, this chapter has shown a very close connection between tongues and prophecy, closer than between other models. According to our earlier findings, prophecy is an intelligible Spirit-empowered revelation of the knowledge of God's salvation and the mystery of Christ.²⁵⁴ We have now defined tongues as Spirit-empowered speech uttered in the preferred language of the speaker. Of course, tongues does not *reveal* the mystery of Christ (because no-one understands), but the speaker is nevertheless speaking mysteries (14:2), which when interpreted will then be revealed. Likewise 14:6 suggests that the content of tongues (when interpreted) includes both revelation and knowledge, and even prophecy. That means the definition we have given for prophecy, could equally be applied to tongues (having changed 'intelligible' to 'unintelligible' of course). This reinforces our earlier conclusion that Paul did not intend his readers to clearly differentiate between all 'types' of Spirit-empowered speech, and at times he appears to consider many of them as prophecy. For example, when Paul begins to draw to a conclusion in 14:26 he lists the type of speech that someone may have (a hymn, a teaching, a revelation or a tongue or an interpretation), but prophecy is not listed, despite the rest of the chapter being all about prophecy and tongues. Paul does not give further instructions of how to bring teaching, or hymns or revelation. That may mean

²⁵⁴ See above, p. 209.

that the Corinthians already knew how to bring teachings, hymns and revelations to the congregation, but it is more likely that Paul considered his instructions regarding prophecy to cover these types of speech as well — which probably means he considered all of these forms of speech to be prophetic in a broad sense.

But by its nature, tongues-speech did require separate instruction — not because it was materially different from prophecy, but simply because of its unintelligibility to the majority of the congregation. Because tongues-speech is not materially different from prophecy (apart from the language), it is obviously essential that we have examined it in detail in this chapter. Even though this chapter has not changed our view of prophecy, without it our study of prophecy would not be complete.

7) Prophecy elsewhere in the New Testament

Having thoroughly investigated prophecy (including tongues) in the gospels, Acts and 1 Corinthians, it is now necessary to examine the remainder of the New Testament. Glossolalia is not referred to directly outside of Acts and 1 Corinthians,¹ so the investigation is limited to prophecy in the narrowest sense.² We will follow the same methodology as we have done in previous chapters,³ looking for two types of contemporary⁴ speech:

1. Speech identified as prophetic or coming from those described as prophets.
2. Other speech that is Spirit-empowered, or meets the definition of prophecy we determined from Luke or Paul.

We will consider the book of Revelation shortly, but let us first examine the epistles.

¹ Some scholars identify other examples of Spirit-empowered speech as glossolalia. We will deal with these suggestions in the pages that follow.

² Various scholars (e.g. Christian Blumenthal, *Prophetie und Gericht: Der Judasbrief Als Zeugnis Urchristlicher Prophetie* (Bonner Biblische Beiträge 156; Bonn: V & R Unipress, 2008)) identify different parts of the New Testament as prophetic oracles. Some of these we perhaps might classify as 'old covenant style' prophecy (as we did for 1 Corinthians 15, see above p. 203). But as our concern is for what we call 'new covenant style prophecy', we will continue to examine only those passages that meet the criteria outlined.

³ Some (e.g. A. J. M. Wedderburn, 'Romans 8:26 — Towards a Theology of Glossolalia', *SJT*, 28:4 (1975), 369-377; Gerd Theissen, *Psychological Aspects of Pauline Theology* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1987), 332-341; Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 984f) would see Romans 8:26 as describing glossolalia, but the phenomenon described there is not glossolalia as defined in the previous chapter. We will not examine Romans 8:26 because it does not meet the criteria we have laid out (in particular, it is not identified as speech), and it is not even clear from the text that the Spirit empowers 'groanings', or the Spirit 'groans' on behalf of believers (the latter is more likely, see Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 525-526).

⁴ That is we exclude references to prophecy in the old covenant. We will also exclude the reference to the non-Christian prophet in Titus 1:12.

Prophecy and Spirit-empowered speech in the epistles

A quick examination of the words προφητεύω, προφήτης and προφητεία reveal that contemporary prophesying is referred to briefly in Romans 12:6, 1 Thessalonians 5:20, 1 Timothy 1:18, and 4:14 and possibly⁵ Ephesians 2:20, 3:5 and 4:11. 1 John 4:1 also refers to contemporary false prophets (ψευδοπροφήτης). All of these passages mention prophets or prophecy almost in passing, and therefore our comments on them will be brief. There are also various references to Spirit-empowered speech scattered throughout the remaining epistles, which also need to be considered (Romans 8:15 and Galatians 4:6, 1 Thessalonians 1:5, 2 Thessalonians 2:1-2, 1 John 4:2-3 and Jude 20).

Prophecy in the epistles

Romans 12:6: Paul says very little about contemporary prophecy in Romans, and what he does say has been the subject of much debate. The disputed phrase is εἴτε προφητείαν κατὰ τὴν ἀναλογίαν τῆς πίστεως which could mean ‘if prophecy, in proportion to our faith’, or ‘if prophecy, use it according to the standard of faith’.⁶ As Fee points out, ‘everything about this phrase bristles with difficulty’.⁷ There are three exegetical questions that affect the translation: (1) The relationship with 12:3. (2) The meaning of ἀναλογίαν. (3) The significance (or otherwise) of the article in front of πίστεως. That said, no matter how we view this verse, it is going to make little difference regarding our understanding of Paul’s view of contemporary prophecy, which is a relief given the sheer number of different interpretations. If Paul means the Romans should prophesy in proportion to their faith, then those with more faith will be able to prophesy in more significant ways than those with less faith,⁸ or the prophet should prophesy in accordance to the ‘expression of faith’ that he was given in that moment,⁹ or rather less likely, the prophetic gift will be ‘manifested according to its capacity to build up faith’.¹⁰ If Paul means that prophecy must always correspond to the measure of faith, then

⁵ There is some debate in Ephesians as to whether the prophets are contemporary or ancient. See the discussion below, p. 272.

⁶ The translations are from the ESV and HCSB.

⁷ Fee, *God’s Empowering Presence*, 607.

⁸ E.g. Dunn, *Romans 9-16*, 727-728; Schreiner, *Romans*, 656.

⁹ E.g. Fee, *God’s Empowering Presence*, 608-610.

¹⁰ Brendan Byrne, *Romans* (SP 6; Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1996), 367.

prophecy should meet the standards of the Christian faith¹¹ (possibly as judged by the congregation)¹² or match the standards of the speaker's faith in Christ.¹³ None of these explanations are incompatible with the understanding we have of prophecy from 1 Corinthians. But given the difficulty of being clear about Paul's meaning, what is probably of more interest is that Paul's reference to prophecy is so brief. This suggests that the phenomenon was known and understood in the Roman church,¹⁴ and did not require further explanation. Prophecy does not appear to have been a phenomenon restricted to isolated pockets of early Christianity. Also of interest is that as in 1 Corinthians, the context of Romans 12 also shows that prophecy edifies the body and is an expression of love and service.

1 Thessalonians 5:19-21: Yet again, there is a clear link between the work of the Spirit and prophecy in these verses.¹⁵ In closing his letter, Paul briefly reminds the Thessalonians not to quench the Spirit, nor despise prophecy. Instead, just as in 1 Corinthians 14, prophecy should be tested (although here the verb is δοκιμάζω rather than διακρίνω), indeed everything must be examined, and the good held on to. But why might some in Thessalonica despise (ἐξουθενεῖτε) prophecies? ἐξουθενέω is a strong word and a surprising one¹⁶ — it suggests scorn or contempt,¹⁷ or at least disdain.¹⁸ Suggestions include that it was because tongues were preferred over prophecy,¹⁹ because prophecy was ecstatic,²⁰ because they did not want speculation about the parousia,²¹

¹¹ E.g. Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *Romans* (AB 33; New York: Doubleday, 1993), 647.

¹² E.g. Robert Jewett and Roy D. Kotansky, *Romans* (Hermeneia; Minneapolis: Fortress, 2007), 747.

¹³ E.g. Adolf Schlatter, *Romans: The Righteousness of God*, trans. Siegfried S. Schatzmann (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1995), 233; Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 765-766; Charles E. B. Cranfield, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, 2 vols. (ICC; Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1975-1979), 2:621.

¹⁴ Dunn, *Romans 9-16*, 726; Jewett and Kotansky, *Romans*, 746.

¹⁵ See Abraham J. Malherbe, *The Letters to the Thessalonians* (AB 32b; New York: Doubleday, 2000), 330-332 for the connections between quenching the Spirit and despising prophecy.

¹⁶ idem, 332.

¹⁷ "Εξουθενέω", *EDNT*, 2:9; J. I. Packer, "Εξουθενέω", *NIDNTT*, 1:74; Leon Morris, *The First and Second Letters to the Thessalonians* (NICNT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991²), 177, fn. 166.

¹⁸ *BDAG*, 352.

¹⁹ Gaffin, *Perspectives on Pentecost*, 71. See also F. F. Bruce, *1 and 2 Thessalonians* (WBC 45; Dallas: Word, 1982), 125.

²⁰ See, for example, Dunn, *Jesus and the Spirit*, 269.

because the leaders wanted to retain their authority,²² and because prophecy was beginning to be considered sceptically even in Graeco-Roman culture.²³ None of these suggestions are particularly likely if we have understood prophecy correctly in the previous chapters. But one option that has often been overlooked is that prophecy was looked down upon not because it was too *spectacular*, but because it was too *ordinary*. In some ways this was the situation in Corinth — prophecy was considered inferior to the more outwardly impressive tongues. Here there is no mention of tongues as a competitor, but the very ubiquity²⁴ of prophecy may mean it began to be considered unimportant, or taken for granted. One might have thought that an intelligible Spirit-empowered revelation of the knowledge of God's salvation and the mystery of Christ would be very impressive, but 1 Corinthians 1:21-25 gives ample evidence that sometimes, at least, such speech was not always viewed as impressive at all.

1 Timothy 1:18, 4:14: These two verses refer to prophecies spoken earlier that included some element of foretelling regarding the nature of Timothy's future ministry, and suggest that a gift of Timothy's was in some way linked to the prophecies. This is probably similar to the episode Luke records in Acts 13:1-4.²⁵ There, through the prophets and teachers, the Holy Spirit 'told' the church to set apart two men for ministry, and it seems likely that something similar happened to Timothy. The passage in Acts was discussed briefly earlier,²⁶ where it was concluded (somewhat tentatively) that the prophecies should be classified as 'old covenant style'. That would suggest that these prophecies towards Timothy may be similar, and if so we can note that as in Acts, this type of prophesying seems to be rarer than what we call new covenant style prophecies.

²¹ Morris, *The First and Second Letters to the Thessalonians*, 176-177.

²² Wanamaker, *The Epistles to the Thessalonians*, 202-203.

²³ Gene L. Green, *The Letters to the Thessalonians* (PNTC; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002), 262-264.

²⁴ As in Romans, the very brief way it is referred to suggests it was considered a common expression of the Spirit's activity. See Gordon D. Fee, *The First and Second Letters to the Thessalonians* (NICNT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009), 220.

²⁵ George W. Knight, *The Pastoral Epistles* (NIGTC; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1992), 108; I. Howard Marshall and Philip H. Towner, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Pastoral Epistles* (ICC; London: T & T Clark, 1999), 566; William D. Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles* (WBC 46; Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2000), 263; Luke Timothy Johnson, *The First and Second Letters to Timothy* (AB 35a; New York: Doubleday, 2001), 184; Philip H. Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus* (NICNT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006), 156.

²⁶ See above, p. 153f.

Ephesians 2:20, 3:5 and 4:11: These verses in Ephesians have been the subject of great debate between Wayne Grudem and a number of cessationist scholars.²⁷ (Grudem argues that τῶ θεμελίῳ τῶν ἀποστόλων καὶ προφητῶν should be translated as ‘on the foundation of the apostles who are also prophets’.²⁸) It is not a debate that needs to concern us, as there is no difficulty in our accepting that New Testament prophets were part of the foundation of the church,²⁹ so there is no need to restrict this to old covenant prophets only (which 3:5 seems to preclude anyway). The verses tell us that prophets were part of the foundation of the church (2:20), received insight into the mystery of Christ (3:4-5), and were Jesus Christ’s gifts to the church (4:11). Indeed if there is a restriction it is more likely to refer only to prophets in the new covenant.³⁰ These references fit what we have learned about prophets elsewhere in the New Testament, and point to a small group of ‘specialist’ prophets, without necessarily rejecting the general prophethood of all believers that some other New Testament books emphasise. Ephesians itself draws attention to all believers’ possession of the Spirit (e.g. 1:13, 17, 2:18, 3:16, 4:30, and 5:18). Of these 1:17 is the most interesting to this study, as it refers to a prayer that the recipients of the letter will receive the ‘Spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of [Jesus]’. This verse does not refer to prophecy, as the Spirit is not empowering speech, but the description of what the Spirit reveals is very similar to what we expect of prophetic revelation in 1 Corinthians.

Spirit-empowered speech in the epistles

We now turn our attention to speech that is not explicitly labelled as prophetic, but which bears at least some of the hallmarks of prophetic speech.

Romans 8:15 and Galatians 4:6: In both these verses, the believer is helped by the Spirit to cry out ‘Abba! Father!’. The lack of data prevents us from identifying this Spirit-empowered speech as prophecy (for example, it is not clear whether this speech is to an

²⁷ See, particularly, White, ‘Gaffin and Grudem on Eph 2:20: In Defense of Gaffin’s Cessationist Exegesis’. For criticisms of Grudem from outside the debate see Carson, *Showing the Spirit*, 91-100, and Peter T. O’Brien, *The Letters to the Ephesians* (PNTC; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), 215-216.

²⁸ Grudem, *The Gift of Prophecy in 1 Corinthians*, 84-105.

²⁹ That goes against Grudem’s thesis that New Testament prophets were not authoritative and therefore not foundational.

³⁰ O’Brien, *The Letters to the Ephesians*, 214-215. See also Markus Barth, *Ephesians 1-3* (AB 34; New York: Doubleday, 1974), 314-316.

audience, or silent speech in the heart). Nevertheless, there are interesting overlaps with prophecy.³¹ Romans 8:16 says that the speech is a result of the Spirit bearing witness to the believer's spirit, and both Galatians and Romans link the crying out with sonship, that is union with Christ (cf. Romans 8:17). The cry is one of intimacy with God (cf. Galatians 4:8), and it is a cry not of some believers, but of all (Romans 8:14). There is even mention of witness (Romans 8:16-17), a witness that points to the believer's new relationship and future glorification with Christ. Whether or not we can formally identify this cry as prophecy is unclear, but we can certainly say that the speech here would seem to be in fulfilment of the old covenant prophecies regarding the Spirit in the eschaton, and bears many resemblances with what we have learned about prophecy from Luke and Paul.

Ephesians 6:18: Praying in the Spirit in this verse suggests an empowering,³² although the context is likely to be private, rather than public prayer, and therefore may not be prophecy in the strict sense of that word. Some commentators suggest that prayer 'in the Spirit' is a separate category of praying, as if prayer is always either in the Spirit or not in the Spirit,³³ but 'in the Spirit' is not a binary on/off, and the command to pray in the Spirit 'at all times' rules out such a notion anyway.³⁴

1 Thessalonians 1:5: Paul's reference to his gospel coming 'not only in word but also in power and the Holy Spirit' seems to be a reference to Spirit-empowered speech that is similar to 1 Corinthians 2:4,³⁵ although some commentators understand ἐν δυνάμει to refer to acts of power (i.e. miracles).³⁶ If Paul is talking about prophecy, it is another link

³¹ But there is no need to assume the prayer was ecstatic as Käsemann does. See E. Käsemann, *Perspectives on Paul* (London: SCM Press, 1971), 228.

³² Frank Thielman, *Ephesians* (BECNT; Grand Rapids: Baker), 433. Best suggests 'Spirit-led or directed', which conveys the same thought, and Lincoln helpfully points to 2:18 where the Spirit is said to give access to the Father. See Ernest Best, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Ephesians* (ICC; Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1998), 605; Andrew T. Lincoln, *Ephesians* (WBC 42; Dallas: Word, 1990), 452.

³³ Note Witherington's discussion as to whether this is 'charismatic' or 'ordinary' prayer, Ben Witherington, *The Letters to Philemon, the Colossians, and the Ephesians* (SoRC; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007), 354.

³⁴ Oscar Cullman helpfully surveys the wide scope of the Spirit's help in prayer in Oscar Cullman, *Prayer in the New Testament*, trans. John Bowden (London: SCM, 1995), 72-77.

³⁵ Bruce, *1 and 2 Thessalonians*, 14; Turner, *The Holy Spirit and Spiritual Gifts*, 151; Malherbe, *The Letters to the Thessalonians*, 112; Green, *The Letters to the Thessalonians*, 95.

³⁶ Wanamaker, *The Epistles to the Thessalonians*, 79.

between prophecy and the gospel.

2 Thessalonians 2:2: Here, commentators are almost unanimous in viewing ‘spirit’ in 2:2 as a Spirit-inspired utterance,³⁷ although Gordon Fee expresses his normal preference for ‘the Spirit’.³⁸ If ‘spirit’ does mean a prophecy, these verses may shed a little light on the nature of prophecy. Prior to the writing of 2 Thessalonians, the church has been troubled ‘by a spirit or a spoken word, or a letter seeming to be from us, to the effect that the day of the Lord has come’ (2:2). This message has been passed on to the congregation, although Paul³⁹ does not know the source. Several commentators seize on the fact that the prophecy was to do with ‘future events’, and conclude that prophecy generally concerned the future.⁴⁰ This is a strange suggestion, as the prophecy deals not with *future* events, but with a *past* event (‘the day of the Lord *has* come’). Rather than being a prophecy about the future, it is another example of prophecy being focused on Jesus. Paul responds to this false prophecy by exhorting them to ‘stand firm and hold to the traditions that you were taught by us, either by our spoken word or by our letter’ (2:15), and this time πνεῦμα is left out. This may give a hint that πνεῦμα is not the medium by which traditions should be taught and held on to.⁴¹ This matches the earlier discussion in 1 Corinthians 14, where the spirits of prophets were subject to the prophets, and there was something of an ephemeral quality to the prophecies (they could be interrupted and presumably never finished, for example).

1 John 4:1: In this passage John warns his readers to test the ‘spirits’ because of the danger of false prophets. This presupposes the existence of true prophets, otherwise he would simply warn them to ignore all so-called prophets. Commentators differ as to what John many mean by ‘spirit’. Some suggest ‘prophecy’ or at least an empowered-speech,⁴²

³⁷ E.g. Bruce, *1 and 2 Thessalonians*, 163.

³⁸ Fee, *The First and Second Letters to the Thessalonians*, 273. See also Malherbe, *The Letters to the Thessalonians*, 416.

³⁹ Pauline authorship of 2 Thessalonians has not gone undisputed, but the early external evidence is very strong, and even most critics accept that their internal ‘evidence’ against Pauline authorship is far from conclusive. See, for example, Bruce, *1 and 2 Thessalonians*, xxxii-xxiv, and particularly D. Michael Martin, *1, 2 Thessalonians* (NAC 33; Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1995), 27-29.

⁴⁰ For example, Bruce, *1 and 2 Thessalonians*, 163-164.

⁴¹ Martin, *1, 2 Thessalonians*, 256-257; Bruce, *1 and 2 Thessalonians*, 193-194.

⁴² E.g. Colin G. Kruse, *The Letters of John* (PNTC; Leicester: Apollos, 2000), 144; Kremer, *EDNT*, 3:119.

some the prophet himself,⁴³ others spiritual beings such as angels,⁴⁴ or the Holy Spirit.⁴⁵ If John means ‘prophecy’, then he is unlikely to be referring to something akin to the judging of prophecies in 1 Corinthians 14,⁴⁶ because both the setting (true/false prophets) and the vocabulary is different (διακρίνω in 1 Corinthians 14, δοκιμάζω here). A better parallel would be 1 Corinthians 12:1-3.

Jude 20: Here Jude speaks of ‘praying in the Holy Spirit’ for the purpose of ‘building yourselves up’, which brings to mind Paul’s references to Spirit-empowered prayer that build up the speaker in 1 Corinthians 14. Some commentators suggest Jude is referring to speaking in tongues,⁴⁷ but this is unlikely, whatever one’s view of tongues-speech might be.⁴⁸ Nevertheless, Jude and Paul do seem to share a similar concept (cf. Ephesians 6:18).

Conclusion

We have now surveyed the entire New Testament, with the exception of the book of Revelation. The Gospels, Acts and 1 Corinthians had most to say about prophecy, but our survey of the other epistles has reinforced some of the points discovered earlier – in particular there seems to be an emphasis in the epistles on the link between prophecy and the gospel, and a frequent suggestion prophecy is a relatively common phenomena throughout the churches (Pauline and Johannine).

Prophecy in the book of Revelation

As Christian Hvidt points out, Revelation is unique in the New Testament in that it both speaks *about* prophecy and itself *is* a prophecy.⁴⁹ As a prophetic work, Revelation stands firmly in the tradition of old covenant prophecies, with countless allusions and direct

⁴³ E.g. I. Howard Marshall, *The Epistles of John* (NICNT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1978), 204.

⁴⁴ E.g. Robert W. Yarbrough, *1-3 John* (BECNT; Grand Rapids: Baker, 2008), 220-221; Ellis, *Prophecy and Hermeneutic in Early Christianity*, 31-36.

⁴⁵ E.g. Raymond E. Brown, *The Epistles of John* (AB 30; New York: Doubleday, 1982), 486.

⁴⁶ E.g. Kruse, *The Letters of John*, 144.

⁴⁷ E.g. Dunn, *Jesus and the Spirit*, 245-246; Richard Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter* (WBC 50; Waco: Word, 1983), 113; Peter H. Davids, *The Letters of 2 Peter and Jude* (PNTC; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006), 95.

⁴⁸ See Gene L. Green, *Jude and 2 Peter* (BECNT; Grand Rapids: Baker, 2008), 121-122, and the comments of Bruce on the similar expression in Ephesians, F. F. Bruce, *The Epistles to the Colossians, to Philemon and to the Ephesians* (NICNT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1984), 411.

⁴⁹ Hvidt, *Christian Prophecy*, 71.

references back to the old covenant scriptures,⁵⁰ so that ‘its continuity with Old Testament prophecy is deliberate and impressively comprehensive’,⁵¹ indeed far too comprehensive to deal with here.⁵² Yet at the same time, there is significant development beyond the old covenant scriptures, as the book reflects the fulfilment of old covenant prophetic expectation that is only possible from a new covenant vantage point.⁵³

John’s distinctive prophesying can therefore not be seen as typical of new covenant style prophesying,⁵⁴ and one is tempted to place Revelation in a third category of New Testament prophesying, to sit alongside the two we have already created for Acts. However, that is not necessary, because the second category (what we called ‘old covenant style’ prophecy) actually describes John’s prophecy rather well, given that its use of old covenant imagery is one of the book’s most striking features. It bears some resemblances both to Agabus’ prophecies in Acts (in that it contains guidance and warnings about the future), but it also has some similarities with Paul’s telling of a mystery in 1 Corinthians 15, both of which were also placed in the ‘old covenant style’ category.

Because Revelation does not fit into what we have called ‘new covenant style’ prophecy I do not intend to study it further as a prophetic work in its own right,⁵⁵ on the simple premise that this thesis is long enough already, and we have to confine our thoughts to what we are describing as ‘new covenant style’ prophecy. Having said that, there is still a lot of work to do, because the book of Revelation remains of great interest. There are three areas in particular that demand further examination:

⁵⁰ Richard Bauckham, *The Theology of the Book of Revelation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 4-5.

⁵¹ idem, 144. See also David Hill, ‘Christian Prophets as Teachers or Instructors in the Church,’ in *Prophetic Vocation in the New Testament and Today*, ed. Johannes Panagopoulos (Supplements to Novum Testamentum 45; Leiden: Brill, 1977), 130.

⁵² Although see Steve Moyise, *The Old Testament in the Book of Revelation* (JSNTSup 115; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995) and particularly Gregory K. Beale, *John’s Use of the Old Testament in Revelation* (JSNTSup 166; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998).

⁵³ See Beale, *Revelation*, 98.

⁵⁴ Contra Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, ‘Apokalypsis and Propheteia: The Book of Revelation in the Context of Early Christian Prophecy,’ in *L’Apocalypse Johannique et l’Apocalyptique dans le Nouveau Testament*, ed. J. Lambrecht (Bibliotheca Ephemeridum Theologicarum Lovaniensium 53; Gembloux: Leuven University Press, 1980), 107-114.

⁵⁵ On which see, for example Müller, *Prophetie und Predigt im Neuen Testament*, 47-107.

- John's use of the words προφήτης, προφήτις, προφητεία and προφητεύω.
- Other references to Spirit-empowered speech.
- The extensive use of the themes of witness and testimony.⁵⁶

The words προφήτης, προφήτις, προφητεία and προφητεύω occur 18 times in the book of Revelation, although five of the occurrences of προφητεία and one use of προφητεύω refer to the prophecy of Revelation itself (1:3, 10:11, 22:7, 22:10, 22:18, 22:19), and will therefore be excluded from this study along with the reference to the self-proclaimed (and false) prophetess Jezebel (2:20). That leaves three areas to study:

- Several references to 'prophets' (10:7, 11:18, 16:6, 18:20, 18:24, 22:6, 22:9).
- The two witnesses (11:3, 11:6, 11:10).
- The spirit of prophecy (19:10).

Prophets in Revelation

John refers to 'prophets' as a single group on several occasions. Twice he mentions the prophets as a group on their own: 'his servants the prophets' (10:7), and 'the God of the spirit of the prophets' (22:6). On three other occasions, he refers to them with the saints: 'prophets and saints' (11:18, 18:24) and 'saints and prophets' (16:6), and on two more he refers to them as one of three groups, 'saints and apostles and prophets' (18:20), and 'you and your brothers the prophets... [and] those who keep the words of this book' (22:9).

When the prophets are mentioned on their own it is in the context of what is revealed, 'the mystery of God... just as he announced to his servants the prophets' (10:7), and 'the God of the spirits of the prophets, has sent his angel to show his servants what must take place' (22:6). This is not the case for the occasions when prophets are mentioned alongside another group. This suggests that when John refers to 'prophets' he has in mind a distinct group who have some kind of particular revelation.⁵⁷ On both these occasions the prophets are also called 'servants', which is common in the old covenant

⁵⁶ These themes could be important given the significance of 'witness to Jesus' in the view of prophecy in the Gospels and Luke. For the importance of witness in Revelation, see B. Dehandschutter, 'The Meaning of Witness in the Apocalypse,' in *L'Apocalypse Johannique et l'Apocalyptique dans le Nouveau Testament*, ed. J. Lambrecht (Bibliotheca Ephemeridum Theologicarum Lovaniensium 53; Gembloux: Leuven University Press, 1980). Beale, *Revelation*, 33, says that the 'exhortation to the church community to witness to Christ' is 'the focus of the book'. See also Olutola K. Peters, *The Mandate of the Church in the Apocalypse of John* (StBL 77; New York: Peter Lang, 2005), 77-78.

⁵⁷ Beale, *Revelation*, 1125.

scriptures, where prophets were ‘a special class within Israel’.⁵⁸ It is likely, then that throughout the book ‘prophets’ refers to a distinct and relatively small group of people.⁵⁹

When we examine what the prophets are noted for we discover that together with the saints they are rewarded (11:18), martyred (16:6, 18:24), they rejoice (18:20), and are fellow-servants of God with the angels (22:9). This frequent linking of the saints with the prophets — even when parity with angels is being discussed — is not an indicator of a low status of the prophets, but the high status of the saints. Although the prophets had a distinct revelatory role, the saints are equally honoured throughout the book.

However, none of this greatly adds to our understanding of prophecy in the new covenant. The status of the saints may hint at the high status of believers under the new covenant, but it is no more than a hint. The distinct group of people called prophets matches what we have discovered elsewhere in Acts and Paul, but tells us little more than what we saw there (although it does give us a further link between prophecy and the revelation of mysteries, 10:7).

On the other hand, none of this contradicts or undermines our earlier findings and it seems there is also a good deal in common.

The two witnesses in Revelation 11

The prophets are only one interest we have in the book of Revelation, so we need to examine the two witnesses in chapter 11. We have already seen strong links between witness and prophecy, particularly in the gospel of John, so it is of great interest that the two witnesses in Revelation 11 are called prophets (11:10) and are shown to be prophesying (11:3, 6). There is a problem, however. Osborne says this passage is ‘one of the most debated passages in the book... The interpretation of the two witnesses is hotly contested’,⁶⁰ and Leon Morris describes it as ‘extraordinarily difficult to interpret’.⁶¹

The witnesses themselves are not supposed to be taken literally, or even allegorically, so we should not look for two people or situations in history that will fulfil this narrative.⁶²

⁵⁸ idem, 617.

⁵⁹ Osborne, *Revelation*, 446.

⁶⁰ idem, 417.

⁶¹ Leon Morris, *The Book of Revelation* (TNTC; Leicester: Inter-Varsity Press, 1987²), 140.

⁶² Interpretative approaches to Revelation are legion, and there is insufficient space here for even a brief

Instead, the story is ‘more likely to dramatize what will be happening all the time’ in this new covenant age.⁶³ The two witnesses therefore do not point to Moses and Elijah reincarnated, but instead represent the church as a whole.⁶⁴ As Beale puts it:

They represent the whole community of faith, whose primary function is to be a prophetic witness... The OT had prophesied that the entire eschatological community of God’s people would receive the Spirit’s gift of prophecy (Joel 2:28-32). The early Christian community understood that Joel’s prophecy had begun fulfillment in their midst (Acts 2:17-21). This prophetic gift would be the means by which the entire church would ‘witness’ to the whole world (Acts 1:8).⁶⁵

If Beale is right, then this might suggest that John’s understanding of witness is equivalent to the gift of prophecy described in the previous chapters. Indeed, M. Eugene Boring says explicitly, ‘In the vision of 11:1-13, John pictures the whole church in their role as the eschatological prophetic People of God; he affirms the “prophethood of all believers”’.⁶⁶

This possibility is heightened when we discover an allusion to the power of the Spirit behind the witnesses in 11:4, where the olive trees and lampstands form an allusion to Zechariah 4:⁶⁷

Revelation 11:4

These are the two olive trees and the two lampstands that stand before the Lord of the earth.

Zechariah 4:11, 14

Then I said to him, ‘What are these two olive trees on the right and the left of the lampstand?’... Then he said, ‘These are the two anointed ones who stand by the Lord of the whole earth.’

survey (for which see Beale, *Revelation*, 44-49). The approach taken here is similar to that of Beale, whereby ‘no specific prophesied historical events are discerned in the book’, idem, 48.

⁶³ Bauckham, *The Theology of the Book of Revelation*, 84-85.

⁶⁴ idem, 85; Wilfrid J. Harrington, *Revelation* (SP 16; Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1993), 123; Peters, *The Mandate of the Church in the Apocalypse of John*, 90-93; Akira Satake, *Die Offenbarung des Johannes* (KEK 16; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2008), 266; and Rob Dalrymple, *Revelation and the Two Witnesses: The Implications for Understanding John’s Depiction of the People of God and His Hortatory Intent* (Eugene: Resource Publications, 2011), 35-37.

⁶⁵ Beale, *Revelation*, 573-574.

⁶⁶ M. Eugene Boring, *Revelation* (Int; Louisville: John Knox Press, 1989), 142. See also Henry Barclay Swete, ‘The Prophets in the Christian Church’, *BW*, 26:3 (1905), 208-209.

⁶⁷ See Kenneth A. Strand, ‘The Two Witnesses of Rev 11:3-12’, *AUSS*, 19:2 (1981), 130; Richard Bauckham, *The Climax of Prophecy: Studies on the Book of Revelation* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1993), 169; Satake, *Die Offenbarung des Johannes*, 266 and particularly Beale, *Revelation*, 577-579 and Robby C. Waddell, *The Spirit of the Book of Revelation* (JPTSup 30; Blandford Forum: Deo Publishing, 2006), 172-175.

In Zechariah 4, three times the prophet queries the identity of the olive trees and the lampstand.⁶⁸ The final time he asks he is given the answer above, which is the imagery John picks up in Revelation 11. But the first time Zechariah asks his question he is given a more enigmatic response: 'Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, says the LORD of hosts.' In Zechariah the priest and king (the two anointed ones) would be used by the Spirit to ensure the temple was established. This suggests that John considered the two witnesses to also be empowered by the Spirit, and that they would ensure the eschatological temple was established.⁶⁹

This allusion to the Spirit's empowering is followed in 11:5-6 by many symbols of power: fire, power to shut the sky, power to turn waters into blood, and power to strike the earth with a plague. Each of these alludes to events in the lives of those proto-typical prophets, Moses and Elijah, and their inclusion here seems designed to show that the two witnesses will have the same empowering as Moses and Elijah,⁷⁰ indeed even more so because they can do these things 'as often as they desire' (11:6).

In addition to the allusion to the Spirit from Zechariah 4, there are two other possible allusions to the Spirit's work. Bruce also draws attention to 11:8 where the adverb πνευματικῶς is used of the interpretation of Jerusalem.⁷¹ The word is usually translated 'allegorically', or 'symbolically', but Schweizer suggests that here it means 'in prophetic rather than ordinary speech',⁷² which leads Bruce to conclude, 'the Spirit of prophecy is not explicitly mentioned, but is certainly to be inferred'.⁷³ The word πνεῦμα is also used in 11:11 where a πνεῦμα ζωῆς ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ (breath/spirit/Spirit of life from God) revives the two witnesses. Most commentators suggest a deliberate allusion to Ezekiel 37 (the valley of bones).⁷⁴ If so, in the light of Ezekiel 37:14 ('I will put my Spirit with you, and you

⁶⁸ Zechariah 4:4, 11, 12.

⁶⁹ Beale, *Revelation*, 577-578.

⁷⁰ Morris, *The Book of Revelation*, 145.

⁷¹ F. F. Bruce, 'The Spirit in the Apocalypse,' in *Christ and Spirit in the New Testament: Studies in Honour of Charles Francis Digby Moule*, ed. Barnabas Lindars and Stephen S. Smalley (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1973), 339 fn. 320.

⁷² Schweizer et al., *TDNT*, 6:449.

⁷³ Bruce, 'The Spirit in the Apocalypse,' 339.

⁷⁴ Beale, *Revelation*, 596-597; Louis A. Brighton, *Revelation* (CCom; Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1999), 300.

shall live'), πνεῦμα may well be a reference to the Spirit of God.⁷⁵

There are also other connections to our concept of prophecy in this narrative. The sense of the presence of God is clear both from the temple imagery that dominates the chapter, and by the explicit reference to the Lord's presence in 11:4. More importantly, throughout Revelation μάρτυς, μαρτυρία, and μαρτυρέω are used in relation to Jesus,⁷⁶ and most commentators assume that the prophetic witness of chapter 11 is a witness concerning Christ.⁷⁷ This is further emphasised because the witnesses themselves are identified with Christ in several significant ways, including the fact they were witnesses (*cf.* 1:5), but also in relation to Christ's rejection (*cf.* 11:7, 10), his death (*cf.* 11:7-9 where they remain dead for 3½ days in the place where 'their Lord was crucified'), his resurrection followed by an earthquake and the fear of onlookers (11:11-13, *cf.* Matthew 28:1-4), and his ascension in the cloud (*cf.* 11:12), and ultimate vindication. Many of these allusions are rich, alluding not just to Christ, but to his fulfilment of the old covenant.⁷⁸

There is far more to this chapter than we can comment on here, but this short summary should demonstrate that this part of Revelation seems to corroborate in many ways the view of prophecy that we have obtained from the gospels, from Acts and from 1 Corinthians.

The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy

The final piece of the Revelation puzzle that we need to examine is 19:10. Just as Revelation 11 links the two themes of prophecy and witness, so also Revelation 19:10 links the same two concepts: testimony and prophecy. Unfortunately, however, the ambiguity in the grammatical construction (ἡ γὰρ μαρτυρία Ἰησοῦ ἐστὶν τὸ πνεῦμα τῆς προφητείας) has caused a good deal of disagreement among commentators. There are three questions of particular importance.

- Is μαρτυρία Ἰησοῦ a subjective or objective genitive?
- Does πνεῦμα refer to the Holy Spirit, or simply to an essence?

⁷⁵ Mounce, *Revelation*, 222 fn. 114; Beale, *Revelation*, 599; Osborne, *Revelation*, 429-430.

⁷⁶ *cf.* 1:2, 1:9, 12:17, 19:10, 20:4, 22:20.

⁷⁷ Brighton, *Revelation*, 285.

⁷⁸ On all of this, see Beale, *Revelation*, 572-602.

- Is τὸ πνεῦμα τῆς προφητείας a subjective or objective genitive?⁷⁹

The various combinations of answers to these questions have left a wide range of interpretations for this short phrase,⁸⁰ but the themes of the book and the context of the verse should help us to sort these problems out.⁸¹

It is unlikely that the phrase ‘testimony of Jesus’ denotes martyrdom,⁸² and most interpreters view it as either ‘testimony about Jesus’ (objective genitive), or the ‘testimony Jesus gave’ (subjective genitive). The phrase is used frequently in Revelation, so we have several examples from which to form an opinion.⁸³ Most commentators come down firmly on one side or the other, for example Bauckham on the side of the subjective genitive,⁸⁴ and Aune on the side of the objective.⁸⁵ But need it be a choice of one over the other? Is there a contradiction between the witness that Jesus bore, and the prophetic witness to him? Beale — wisely in my view — suggests there is an ‘intentional ambiguity’, which ‘includes both subjective and objective aspects’.⁸⁶ The testimony is about Jesus *and* from Jesus.⁸⁷

If the ambiguity of ‘testimony of Jesus’ divided the commentators, then the ambiguity of ‘spirit of prophecy’ does so even more. The question here is whether πνεῦμα refers to the Holy Spirit, or something else. Those arguing for the Holy Spirit are in the minority, but

⁷⁹ Some would raise a fourth question: ‘Is 19:10 an interpolation?’. However, as there is no textual evidence that would raise doubts about the verse’s authenticity, arguments appear to be driven by the failure of some interpreters to understand the verse in its context. Bruce Longenecker is one of several authors who have provided a satisfactory response to such questions. Bruce W. Longenecker, ‘Revelation 19,10: One Verse in Search of an Author’, *ZNW*, 91:3-4 (2000).

⁸⁰ See Osborne, *Revelation*, 677-678 for a brief summary.

⁸¹ *idem*, 678.

⁸² Contra Petros Vassiliadis, ‘The Translation of Martyria Iēsou in Revelation’, *BT*, 36:1 (1985); G. W. H. Lampe, ‘The Testimony of Jesus is the Spirit of Prophecy (Rev 19:10),’ in *The New Testament Age: Essays in Honor of Bo Reicke*, vol. 1, ed. W. C. Weinrich (Macon: Mercer University, 1984). For a summary of the arguments, see Paul Ellingworth, ‘The Marturia Debate’, *BT*, 41:1 (1990).

⁸³ Apart from the two occurrences in 19:10 it is used another four times in Revelation: 1:2, 1:9, 12:17 and 20:4.

⁸⁴ Bauckham, *The Climax of Prophecy*, 161.

⁸⁵ David E. Aune, *Revelation 17-22* (WBC 52c; Dallas: Word Books, 1998), 1039.

⁸⁶ Beale, *Revelation*, 184. See also Boring, *Revelation*, 194.

⁸⁷ Cf. Acts 1:8. See above, fn. 59, p. 146.

include Fee, Mounce, Bruce, and Bauckham.⁸⁸ They do so on the basis of the use of the expression ‘Spirit of prophecy’ in post-biblical Judaism. This link has already been seen several times earlier in this work, and is also prominent in the writings of Turner.⁸⁹ The widespread use of this phrase in intertestamental Judaism suggests it is not unreasonable to think that this association would be in the minds of both John and his Jewish readers. Yet despite this link, most commentators believe that this is *not* what John had in mind here.

Their hesitation is easily explained. In what sense can ‘the testimony of Jesus’ be equivalent to ‘the Spirit of prophecy’? Bauckham translates the phrase as ‘the witness Jesus bore is the content of Spirit-inspired prophecy’,⁹⁰ but it is hard to see how τὸ πνεῦμα τῆς προφητείας can really be stretched to mean ‘the content of Spirit-inspired prophecy’. Bruce and Mounce both draw a parallel with 1 Peter 1:11, but neither suggest how the actual words mean what they appear to want them to mean. Gaffin confesses that the phrase is an ‘admittedly difficult addition’ and claims that it means ‘that the testimony... is inspired prophecy. The words of the exalted Jesus through the prophets are the words of the Spirit...’.⁹¹ But again, it is far from clear that the words of Revelation 19:10 actually communicate this meaning.

Mazzaferri is one of the few scholars to acknowledge the problem whilst also arguing that τὸ πνεῦμα does indeed refer to the Holy Spirit. He admits, ‘It is difficult to equate an impersonal *martyria* with a personal *pneuma*’.⁹² In Mazzaferri’s mind the problem is solved when it is understood that *martyria* means not testimony about Jesus, but ‘the personal testimony of Jesus’. Thus *martyria* is not impersonal at all. Robert Gundry appears to take a similar view, arguing that ‘we should probably consider “the Testimony of Jesus” another christological title’.⁹³ In Mazzaferri’s eyes then, 19:10 is saying that the

⁸⁸ Gordon D. Fee, *Revelation* (New Covenant Commentary; Eugene: Cascade Books, 2011); Mounce, *Revelation*, 350; Bruce, ‘The Spirit in the Apocalypse,’ 337f; Bauckham, *The Climax of Prophecy*, 160-161.

⁸⁹ See, for example, Turner, *The Holy Spirit and Spiritual Gifts*, 7-20. Turner seems uninterested in prophecy in the book of Revelation, however.

⁹⁰ Bauckham, *The Climax of Prophecy*, 161.

⁹¹ Gaffin, *Perspectives on Pentecost*, 69.

⁹² Fred Mazzaferri, ‘Martyria Iēsou Revisited’, *BT*, 39:1 (1988), 119.

⁹³ Robert H. Gundry, *The Old is Better: New Testament Essays in Support of Traditional Interpretations* (WUNT 178; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2005), 329 fn. 328. See also Robert H. Gundry, *Jesus the Word According to*

personal testimony of Jesus is also ‘the personal testimony of the Spirit’. Thus the verse may be paraphrased, ‘prophecy is inspired by Jesus and the Spirit alike, and is their personal testimony when proclaimed’.⁹⁴ This is a neat solution, but once again it seems to be going far beyond what the verse is actually saying.

An alternative translation is offered by Mark Wilson. He argues that it is problematic to capitalise Spirit, for much the same reasons as given above. He therefore concludes that τὸ πνεῦμα refers to ‘the essence’, that is ‘the witness to Jesus is what this prophecy is all about’.⁹⁵ What makes Wilson’s translation distinctive from others is his literal translation of τὸ πνεῦμα as ‘this prophecy’, rather than the more abstract ‘prophecy’. Wilson admits that ‘the omission of the article in translation is certainly warranted and would be acceptable here’. However, against this, he argues that ‘a similar construction appears five other times in the book’.⁹⁶ Wilson is correct in that five of the other references to προφητεία in Revelation are usually translated as ‘this prophecy’ or ‘the prophecy’, and are taken as referring to the prophecy of Revelation itself, rather than prophecy more generally. Wilson argues that such an interpretation is also required in 19:10. It is doubtful that this is correct, however. First, in the five examples Wilson gives, only one (1:3) truly parallels 19:10 in construction, as each of the four other references have τοὺς λόγους τῆς προφητείας τοῦ βιβλίου τούτου or similar.⁹⁷ Only in 1:3 does τῆς προφητείας mean *this* prophecy without τούτου. Second, in 11:6 τῆς προφητείας does not mean ‘this prophecy’, but prophecy in general. Third, even in 1:3 (where τῆς προφητείας does mean *this* prophecy without τούτου), it is in the context of the two previous verses speaking clearly of the prophecy of John. In other words, contrary to Wilson’s suggestion, it seems that when John wants to refer to *this* prophecy, he uses τῆς προφητείας τοῦ βιβλίου τούτου, not merely τῆς προφητείας, and it therefore seems extremely unlikely that 19:10 is referring to the book of Revelation alone, rather than prophecy more generally.

It therefore seems wisest to translate τὸ πνεῦμα τῆς προφητείας as ‘the spirit of

John the Sectarian (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002), 9 fn. 28.

⁹⁴ Mazzaferri, ‘Martyria Iēsou Revisited’, 119-120.

⁹⁵ Mark W. Wilson, ‘Revelation 19.10 and Contemporary Interpretation,’ in *Spirit and Renewal: Essays in Honor of J. Rodman Williams*, ed. Mark W. Wilson (Journal of Pentecostal Theology Supplement 5; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1994), 198.

⁹⁶ idem, 199, emphasis original.

⁹⁷ 22:7, 10, 18, 19.

prophecy' with a lower-case 's', that is, as 'the essence of prophecy'. It may well be that in using the phrase John is wanting to also draw attention to the Holy Spirit, but that does not appear to be his primary meaning. However, whether one understands the phrase to mean 'the essence of prophecy', or 'Spirit-inspired prophecy', the result is broadly the same. Witness to Jesus (which means testifying to who Jesus is and what he has done) is at the heart of 'new covenant' prophesying. This has long been the view of many commentators, as these citations from the sixth century show:

Whoever witnesses to the lordship and deity of Christ is filled with the prophetic grace...

The whole point of prophecy... lies in the testimony of Jesus Christ...

The confession of Christ, that is, the testimony is the gift of the prophetic Spirit.⁹⁸

More recent commentators are very often in agreement:

Those giving the testimony to [and from] Jesus are prophetic people.⁹⁹

It is the prophetic Spirit which inspires every confession of Jesus, and... the form which inspired prophecy takes in this struggle is testimony to Jesus... It is the Holy Spirit of prophecy that inspires every loyal witness to, or confession of, Jesus. That witness to Jesus is, as it were, the very essence of prophetic inspiration...¹⁰⁰

The characterization of the Christian community as 'those who bear the witness of Jesus' seems therefore to attribute a prophetic role to the whole church... When the Spirit inspires prophecy, its content is the witness of Jesus.¹⁰¹

All true prophets are witnesses of Jesus, and all who have the witness of Jesus in the highest sense are prophets.¹⁰²

Rev 19:10d is a succinct reference to the return of prophecy as a sign of the new covenant with Jesus as Lord.¹⁰³

⁹⁸ The comments are from Oecumenius, Primasius and Andrew of Caesarea, respectively, and translated in W. C. Weinrich, ed., *Revelation* (ACCS XII; Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2005), 304-305.

⁹⁹ Beale, *Revelation*, 947, square brackets original.

¹⁰⁰ Lampe, 'The Testimony of Jesus is the Spirit of Prophecy (Rev 19:10),' 257-258 and G. W. H. Lampe, 'Martyrdom and Inspiration,' in *Suffering and Martyrdom in the New Testament: Studies Presented to G. M. Styler by the Cambridge New Testament Seminar*, ed. William Horbury and Brian McNeil (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 135.

¹⁰¹ Bauckham, *The Climax of Prophecy*, 161-162 and Bauckham, *The Theology of the Book of Revelation*, 119.

¹⁰² Henry Barclay Swete, *The Apocalypse of St. John* (New York: Macmillan, 1907²), 246.

¹⁰³ J. Massingberd Ford, "'For the Testimony of Jesus is the Spirit of Prophecy" (Rev 19:10)', *ITQ*, 42:4 (1975),

...their own testimony is that which they bear to Jesus and his redeeming power. It is this testimony, John is assured, that is the very substance of the Spirit of prophecy... the test of genuine Spirit of prophecy (in the church) is the testimony which it bears to Jesus.¹⁰⁴

Faithful members of the church are prophetic not because they deliver a charismatic word for the community but rather because they bear a prophetic witness of Jesus to the world.¹⁰⁵

Together these citations illustrate that commentators very often argue that the writer of Revelation holds a view on prophecy very similar to the one this thesis has argued is held by Luke and Paul,¹⁰⁶ yet strangely Revelation 19:10 is rarely taken into consideration by those writing about prophecy in the new covenant.¹⁰⁷

Conclusion: Prophecy elsewhere in the New Testament

Given the scattered nature of references to prophecy in the bulk of the New Testament epistles, it would be unwise for us to attempt to construct a definition for prophecy from the data examined from the epistles in this chapter. However, what we have examined seems to be consistent with both definitions of prophecy that we have already established (from the gospels and Acts, and from 1 Corinthians).

Of more interest therefore are what appear to be references to contemporary prophecy in Revelation, particularly in the narrative of the two witnesses (Revelation 11), and in the text 'the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy' (19:10). Here, there is sufficient data for us to offer a definition of contemporary prophecy according to Revelation, and

291.

¹⁰⁴ Bruce, 'The Spirit in the Apocalypse,' 338.

¹⁰⁵ Waddell, *The Spirit of the Book of Revelation*, 175 fn. 144.

¹⁰⁶ Indeed, J. Massynberde Ford argues at length that Rev 19:10d is 'a succinct reference to the Day of Pentecost... [and] that the spirit of prophecy functions for the Christian reader of Revelation in the same way as the gifts of the Spirit function in Luke-Acts and 1 Corinthians, namely, they witness to the New Age'. Ford, 'For the Testimony of Jesus is the Spirit of Prophecy', 289.

¹⁰⁷ See, for example, Grudem, *The Gift of Prophecy in the New Testament and Today*, 45, and the accompanying endnote on p. 364. Crone is an exception. He acknowledges, 'the author of the Apocalypse understands it [prophecy] as a "bearing witness to Jesus"', and 'prophecy then can be defined as a form of bearing witness to Jesus'. Crone, *Early Christian Prophecy*, 290, 259. After Crone, Fung probably handles the passage best, even if exceptionally briefly. Ronald Y. K. Fung, 'Function or Office? A Survey of the New Testament Evidence', *ERT*, 8:1 (1984), 35.

the definition we offer is similar to that determined from the Gospels and Acts — that is prophecy is testimony of and about Jesus.¹⁰⁸

Given that the book of Revelation is so distinctive, we might not have expected to find commonality between Revelation's view of prophecy and the views of Luke and Paul that we have already examined. This commonality, despite the differences in genre, and the emphases and distinctives of different writers, means that it should be possible to speak of a New Testament theology of prophecy in our concluding chapter.

¹⁰⁸ I omit the Spirit from the definition only because references to the Spirit are implicit in Revelation, whereas they were explicit in the Gospels and Acts. The earlier definition (see above, p. 177) is more substantial but not different.

8) Conclusion: A New Testament theology of prophecy?

The hope of this thesis was always that it might be possible to describe a New Testament theology of prophecy, and that does appear to be within our grasp. In the gospels, Acts and Revelation, most prophecy can be described as Spirit-empowered speech that testifies to Jesus, and can be given to any believer. In Paul it is an intelligible Spirit-empowered revelation of the knowledge of God's salvation and the mystery of Christ, which could be given to any member of the congregation. These two definitions are essentially the same – 'witness to Jesus' can be thought of as shorthand for 'the revelation of the knowledge of God's salvation and the mystery of Christ'. The emphasis on witness in some New Testament books reflects the importance those books place on evangelism, whilst the theme of the knowledge of salvation in Christ reflects Paul's deep interest in theology and his concern in building up the church.

Those definitions explain what prophecy is, but before we can describe a New Testament theology of prophecy, we also need to consider who prophecy is for. The consistent answer throughout these chapters is that every believer can reasonably expect that God will give them the gift of prophecy. That therefore gives us a definition which describes all 'new covenant style' prophecy:

Prophecy in the new covenant is Spirit-empowered speech, promised to every believer, that witnesses to Jesus by revealing the knowledge of God's salvation and the mystery of Christ.

It is tempting to call this definition a New Testament theology of prophecy, but that would not be entirely accurate as it does not cover every type of prophecy in the New Testament. So for this reason, and because a simplified version of this definition can be obtained from the old covenant scriptures, it is more accurate to think of this statement as summarising a biblical theology of new covenant prophecy.

In some ways the aim of this thesis has been relatively modest (it is broad, not deep), and

that means there is still plenty of work to be done.¹ Nevertheless the thesis attempts to make several distinctive contributions to scholarship.

With regard to methodology, I have attempted to develop a New Testament theology of prophecy and tongues that is firmly rooted in the background of Judaism and the old covenant scriptures, and takes seriously the eschatological hope that began to be poured out on the church at Pentecost. Few, if any, other studies have attempted to better understand the theology of New Testament prophecy by surveying both the New Testament, and the eschatological passages of the old covenant scriptures. Several recent studies on the Spirit have emphasised the importance of Judaism as a background to New Testament pneumatology, and one or two have emphasised the importance of the early Christians' experience of the Spirit, but the combination of all four of these factors is a small but distinct contribution to New Testament studies on prophecy, and it is this combination that has led to the other contributions noted below.

The conclusions of the thesis with regard to prophecy are not radically new or different. Like several scholars I see two types of prophecy in the New Testament. However, I have defined those two types differently from others ('new covenant style' and 'old covenant style'), and consequently I would assign prophets and prophecies into those two groups slightly differently. More significantly, the studies into the background of prophecy permitted not just an observation of differences between the two types of prophecy, but also a theological explanation.

All this led to a distinctive definition for prophecy that I suggested applies to all new covenant style prophecy: it is Spirit-empowered speech, promised to every believer, that witnesses to Jesus by revealing the knowledge of God's salvation and the mystery of Christ. The definition comes from a study of the text and its background, and although it does not match any other definition, it includes elements from several of them. One thing that is unusual about this definition is that it refers to the *content* of prophetic speech. That content is 'witness to Jesus', which I have attempted to show is central to Christian prophecy. I consider this to be my most important and significant contribution to the debate.

¹ In particular future research could include: (1) an investigation into what happened to old covenant style prophecy, new covenant style prophecy, and the gift of tongues in the first few centuries of the church; (2) the application of the methods used here to other gifts of the Spirit.

There is also the small matter of tongues-speech in Corinth, which is perhaps the most controversial part of the thesis. As far as I am aware, this is the first work that examines how recent insights into languages in the Corinthian culture might help our understanding of Pauline tongues-speech, and those findings help to substantiate a new proposal, that tongues-speech was Spirit-empowered speech uttered in the preferred language of the speaker, which is unknown to the majority of the congregation and therefore requires interpretation. A view very similar to this goes back at least to Martin Luther, but to my knowledge, this chapter is the only extensive scholarly assessment of the idea, and the only proposal that argues for it from theological and cultural background.

If these proposals for prophecy and tongues are both accepted, then it could significantly change our view of Spirit-empowerment in the earliest church, leading to an understanding where Spirit-empowerment was less outwardly spectacular, but both more theologically significant, and more distinctively Christian.

With regard to the church, the thesis could make a contribution in two quite different ways. First, churches in multilingual settings may find the chapter on prophecy and tongues in Corinth helpful in guiding their thinking about church, language and culture. Second, it is my great hope that this thesis, along with other similar studies, would widen the common ground between charismatic and non-charismatic groups within the church.

My prayer is that this work will help the church and academia to ask whether we have forgotten or neglected something about prophecy that once we knew — that prophecy is all about Jesus, and that Spirit-empowered witness to Jesus is not a gift given occasionally to a few, but part of a gracious eschatological outpouring that all believers should earnestly and optimistically seek.

Abbreviations

AB	Anchor Bible	BTB	Biblical Theology Bulletin
ABD	David Noel Freedman, ed., <i>Anchor Bible Dictionary</i> , 6 vols. (New York: Doubleday, 1992).	BTNap	Biblioteca Teologica Napoletana
ABenR	American Benedictine Review	BW	The Biblical World
ABRL	Anchor Bible Reference Library	BWANT	Beiträge Zur Wissenschaft Vom Alten Und Neuen Testament
ABRL	Anchor Yale Bible Reference Library	BZ	Biblische Zeitschrift
ACCS	Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture	CBC	Cambridge Bible Commentary
ACQ	American Church Quarterly	CBQ	Catholic Biblical Quarterly
AJA	American Journal of Archaeology	CC	Continental Commentary
AJPS	Asian Journal of Pentecostal Studies	CCom	Concordia Commentary
AJT	The American Journal of Theology	Chm	Churchman
ALUOS	Annual of Leeds University Oriental Society	ChrTo	Christianity Today
AncSoc	Ancient Society	CJ	The Classical Journal
ANRW	Aufstieg und Niedergang der romischen Welt	CJT	Canadian Journal of Theology
ANTC	Abingdon New Testament Commentaries	CLR	The Classical Review
APOT	R. H. Charles, ed., <i>The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament</i> , 2 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1913).	CNT2	Commentaire du Nouveau Testament: Deuxième Série
ASBFE	Austin Seminary Bulletin: Faculty Edition	CNTUOT	Gregory K. Beale and Don A. Carson, eds., <i>Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament</i> (Leicester: Apollos, 2007).
ATD	Das Alte Testament Deutsch	ConJ	Concordia Journal
AThR	Anglican Theological Review	CP	Classical Philology
ATJ	Ashland Theological Journal	CPCR	Cyberjournal for Pentecostal-Charismatic Research
AUSS	Andrews University Seminary Studies	CQ	Classical Quarterly
BA	Biblical Archaeologist	CTM	Concordia Theological Monthly
BAR	Biblical Archaeology Review	CTR	Criswell Theological Review
BAT	Die Botschaft Des Alten Testaments	CTSJ	Chafer Theological Seminary Journal
BDAG	Walter Bauer et al., <i>A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature</i> (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000 ³).	CurTM	Currents in Theology and Mission
BECNT	Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament	CV	Communio Viatorum
BETS	Bulletin of the Evangelical Theological Society	DBSup	L. Pirot et al., eds., <i>Supplément au Dictionnaire de la Bible</i> , 13 vols. (Paris: Letouzey et Ané, 1928-).
Bib	Biblica	Di	Dialog
BibInt	Biblical Interpretation	DJG	Joel B. Green and Scot McKnight, eds., <i>Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels</i> (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1992).
BibS	Biblische Studien	DNTB	Craig A. Evans and Stanley E. Porter, eds., <i>Dictionary of New Testament Background</i> (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2000).
BiSp	Bible and Spade	DPL	Gerald F. Hawthorne and Ralph P. Martin, eds., <i>Dictionary of Paul and His Letters</i> (Leicester: InterVarsity Press, 1993).
BJRL	Bulletin of the John Rylands Library	EAV	Exegetische Aufsätze und Vorträge
BLT	Brethren Life and Thought	EBC	Frank E. Gaebelein, ed., <i>Expositors' Bible Commentary</i> , 12 vols. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1976-1992).
BNTC	Black's New Testament Commentary		
BQ	Baptist Quarterly		
BRev	Bible Review		
BSac	Bibliotheca Sacra		
BT	The Bible Translator		

EDNT	Horst Balz and Gerhard Schneider, eds., <i>The Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament</i> , 3 vols. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990-1993).	JSNTSup	Journal for the Study of the New Testament Supplement
EHPHr	Etudes d'histoire et de philosophic religieuses	JSOT	Journal for the Study of the Old Testament
EHS	European University Studies	JSOTSup	Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement
EJm	Jacob Neusner, Alan J. Avery-Peck, and William Scott Green, eds., <i>Encyclopaedia of Judaism</i> , 5 vols. (Leiden: Brill, 2000-2004).	JSP	Journal for the Study of the Pseudepigrapha
EKKNT	Evangelisch-Katholischer Kommentar Zum Neuen Testament	JSSR	Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion
Enc	Encounter	JTS	Journal of Theological Studies
ERT	Evangelical Review of Theology	KAT	Kommentar zum Alten Testament
ETL	Ephemerides Theologicae Lovanienses	KEK	Kritisch-Exegetischer Kommentar über Das Neue Testament
ETR	Etudes Theologiques et Religieuses	LHB/OTS	Library of Hebrew Bible/Old Testament Studies
EvQ	Evangelical Quarterly	LNTS	Library of New Testament Studies
Exp.	The Expositor	LQ	Lutheran Quarterly
ExpTim	Expository Times	LTJ	Lutheran Theological Journal
FBBS	Facet Books: Biblical Series	MennQR	Mennonite Quarterly Review
GTJ	Grace Theological Journal	MRTS	Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies
Hesp.	Hesperia	MSJ	Master's Seminary Journal
HNT	Handbuch zum Neuen Testament	NAC	New American Commentary
HTANT	Historich Theologische Auslegung: Neues Testament	NACSBT	NAC Studies in Bible & Theology
HTR	Harvard Theological Review	NBD ³	D. R. W. Wood and I. Howard Marshall, eds., <i>New Bible Dictionary</i> (Leicester: Inter-Varsity Press, 19963).
ICC	International Critical Commentary	NCBC	New Cambridge Bible Commentary
Int	Interpretation	NEchtB	Die Neue Echter Bibel: Kommentar zum Alten Testament mit der Einheitsübersetzung
ITQ	Irish Theological Quarterly	Neot	Neotestamentica
JAAR	Journal of the American Academy of Religion	NIB	The New Interpreter's Bible
JBL	Journal of Biblical Literature	NICNT	New International Commentary on the New Testament
JBLMS	Journal of Biblical Literature Monograph	NICOT	New International Commentary on the Old Testament
JBR	Journal of Bible and Religion	NIDNTT	Colin Brown, ed., <i>New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology</i> , 4 vols. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1975-1985).
JBTh	Jahrbuch für Biblische Theologie	NIGTC	New International Greek Testament Commentary
J ECS	Journal of Early Christian Studies	NovT	Novum Testamentum
JEH	Journal of Ecclesiastical History	NovTSup	Supplements to Novum Testamentum
JEPTA	Journal of the European Pentecostal Theological Association	NSBT	New Studies in Biblical Theology
JET	Journal of Empirical Theology	NTAbh	Neutestamentliche Abhandlungen
JETH	Jahrbuch für Evangelikale Theologie	NTC	New Testament Commentary
JETS	Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society	NTD	Das Neue Testament Deutsch
JJS	Journal of Jewish Studies	NTM	New Testament Monographs
JPPr	Journal of Pastoral Practice	NTS	New Testament Studies
JPT	Journal of Pentecostal Theology	OTL	Old Testament Library
JPTSup	Journal of Pentecostal Theology Supplement	PBM	Paternoster Biblical Monographs
JQR	Jewish Quarterly Review	PK	Papyrologische Kommentare
JRS	The Journal of Roman Studies	PNTC	Pillar New Testament Commentary
JSNT	Journal for the Study of the New Testament		

PRSt	Perspectives in Religious Studies	TGST	Tesi Gregoriana Serie Teologia
PSB	Princeton Seminary Bulletin	Them	Themelios
PŽ	Orthodox Life	Theol.	Theology
RBL	Review of Biblical Literature	ThEv	Theologica Evangelica
RefR	Reformed Review	THKNT	Theologischer Handkommentar zum Neuen Testament
RefRev	Reformation and Revival	TJ	Trinity Journal
RefT	Reformation Today	TKNT	Theologischer Kommentar zum Neuen Testament
RevExp	Review and Expositor	TNTC	Tyndale New Testament Commentary
RevQ	Revue de Qumran	TRE	Theologische Realenzyklopädie
RivBib	Rivista Biblica	TS	Theological Studies
RNT	Regensburger Neues Testament	TSAJ	Texts and Studies in Ancient Judaism
RRelRes	Review of Religious Research	TVM	Die Theologische Verlagsgemeinschaft
RSLR	Rivista di storia e letteratura religiosa	TynBul	Tyndale Bulletin
RTJ	Reformed Theological Journal	TZ	Theologische Zeitschrift
RTR	Reformed Theological Review	UBSH	UBS Handbook
SacS	Sacra Scripta	VE	Vox Evangelica
SBET	Scottish Bulletin of Evangelical Theology	VetChr	Vetera Christianorum
SBLDS	SBL Dissertation Series	VR	Vox Reformata
SBL SBS	SBL Sources for Biblical Study	VT	Vetus Testamentum
SBTh	Studia Biblica et Theologica	VWGT	Veröffentlichungen der Wissenschaftlichen Gesellschaft Für Theologie
SESJ	Suomen Eksegeettisen Seuran Julkaisuja	WBC	Word Biblical Commentary
SJT	Scottish Journal of Theology	WLQ	Wisconsin Lutheran Quarterly
SKKNT	Stuttgarter Kleiner Kommentar: Neues Testament	WMANT	Wissenschaftliche Monographien zum Alten und Neuen Testament
SocAn	Sociological Analysis	WThJ	Wesleyan Theological Journal
SoRC	Socio-Rhetorical Commentary	WTJ	Westminster Theological Journal
SP	Sacra Pagina	WUNT	Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen Zum Neuen Testament
SR	Studies in Religion	WUNT2	Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen Zum Neuen Testament 2.Reihe
StBL	Studies in Biblical Literature	ZBK	Zürcher Bibelkommentare
STDJ	Studies on the Texts of the Desert of Judah	ZECNT	Zondervan Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament
SwJT	Southwestern Journal of Theology	ZNW	Zeitschrift für die Neutestamentliche Wissenschaft
TAPA	Transactions and Proceedings of the American Philological Association	ZTK	Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche
TBei	Theologische Beiträge		
TCNT	Theological Commentary on the New Testament		
TD	Theology Digest		
TDNT	Gerhard Kittel and Gerhard Friedrich, eds., <i>Theological Dictionary of the New Testament</i> , trans. Geoffrey W. Bromiley, 10 vols. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964-1976).		

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