

The typical preaching in Acts offers both forgiveness and the Spirit.... Such a pattern indicates that our evangelistic presentations should emphasise not only the pardon that is available in Christ, but also the power....

A true and complete conversion must involve both the sweeping clean that takes place in forgiveness and the occupying of the cleansed spirit when the Holy Spirit takes up residence. Certainly for the first Christians it was clear that a complete conversion included accepting the Word of God, being baptised in the name of Jesus, and receiving the Holy Spirit.

In contrast to Pentecostals, however, Ford cautioned against trying to establish a normative sign of the coming of the Spirit upon an individual. Other evangelical theologians who have identified water baptism and Spirit baptism as integral to Christian initiation (while not accepting tongues as the initial sign of Spirit baptism) include Frederick Bruner and James Dunn.⁹⁷

In some ways, Oneness Pentecostals have a mediating position. Their message could help Christian groups to identify the biblical strengths of various theological traditions and to develop a greater consensus on Christian initiation. For example, like Lutherans, Catholics, and Orthodox, they believe that God performs an inward work of remission of sins at water baptism, while like most Trinitarian Pentecostals they underscore the need for faith and repentance to accompany baptism. Like Evangelicals, they affirm that the baptism of the Holy Spirit is part of Christian initiation, but like Trinitarian Pentecostals they expect speaking in tongues to accompany this dynamic experience.

From our survey, it appears that there is the possibility of widespread agreement among Pentecostals, Charismatics, and Evangelicals on the following points:

1. In the New Testament, Christian initiation consisted of faith in God, repentance from sin, water baptism, and the baptism of the Holy Spirit.
2. When baptism was administered in the New Testament church, the name of Jesus Christ was invoked in order to emphasize the centrality of His saving work. (Oneness Pentecostals urge that everyone should still follow this practice today.)
3. When New Testament believers received the Holy Spirit, they expected a powerful, miraculous, supernatural event with inward and outward manifestations. (Oneness Pentecostals further assert that the expected sign was speaking in tongues and that everyone can still receive this initial sign today if they will pray with expectancy.)
4. In subsequent church history, much of the New Testament practice and expectation has become the exception rather than the norm, so that Christian experiences today are often subnormal or incomplete by New Testament standards.
5. While it is not our place to judge those whose experience does not conform fully to the New Testament pattern, we should not be content to fall short of that pattern. Instead, we should recognize that, to promote spiritual restoration and renewal, to facilitate worldwide revival, and to prepare for the coming of the Lord, it is important for all believers to seek the apostolic message, expectation, and experience.

⁹⁷ Leighton Ford, "The 'Finger of God' in Evangelism," in J. I. Packer and Paul Fromer, eds., *The Best in Theology*, Vol. 1 (Carol Stream, IL: Christianity Today, 1987), 292-93.

⁹⁸ Frederick Bruner, *A Theology of the Holy Spirit* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1970), 166; James D. G. Dunn, *Baptism in the Holy Spirit* (London: SCM, 1970), 91.

initiation.... The reappropriation of initiation with the charisms, which is the baptism in the Holy Spirit, offers a significant opportunity for life in Christ.

While not insisting that tongues always accompany the baptism in the Holy Spirit, McDonnell agrees that “charisms” (supernatural gifts or signs) should be the norm and that in this regard speaking in tongues has “pride of place.”⁹⁴

Even more remarkably, David Pawson, a leading Protestant Charismatic in Great Britain, has independently developed a view of initiation that is very close to that of Oneness Pentecostals.⁹⁵

In a nutshell, I believe that the “normal Christian birth” consists of true repentance and genuine faith, expressed and effected in water-baptism, with a conscious reception of the person of the Spirit with power....

Complete initiation consists of four elements—repenting towards God, believing in Jesus, being baptised in water and receiving the Holy Spirit....

Receiving the Holy Spirit is a definite experience with demonstrable evidence....

When any of the four elements is lacking, steps need to be taken to supply the deficiency.

Pawson proclaims Acts 2:38 as normative for Christian experience. Like Oneness Pentecostals, he insists that the complete experience is necessary for full salvation, regeneration, justification, and initial sanctification. Pawson also presents the name of Jesus as central to the baptismal formula, while not insisting on its essentiality and while retaining trinitarian theology. For him, speaking in tongues is typically the initial sign of the Holy Spirit, but he allows for the possibility of other signs such as prophecy or ecstatic praise.

Gordon Fee, an Assemblies of God theologian, has similarly argued that Spirit baptism is not a distinct experience subsequent to the new birth but is part of Christian initiation (although speaking in tongues may not always accompany it).⁹⁶

The gift of the Spirit was not some sort of adjunct to Christian experience, nor was it some kind of second and more significant part of Christian experience. It was rather the chief element of Christian life.... A charismatic dimension was a normal phenomenon in the reception of the Spirit.... Speaking in tongues, if not normative, was a repeated expression of the charismatic dimension of the coming of the Spirit.... Pentecostals have much in their favor to argue that this was the *normal* (in the sense of *expected*) experience of believers in the early church....

To early believers, getting saved, which included repentance and forgiveness obviously, meant especially to be filled with the Spirit.

In principle, several non-Pentecostal Evangelicals have recognized that Acts 2:38 is the paradigm for New Testament salvation. For instance, noted evangelist Leighton Ford quoted Acts 2:38-39 and then commented:⁹⁷

⁹⁴ Kilian McDonnell, personal conversation, 18 March 2000, Kirkland, WA.

⁹⁵ J. David Pawson, *The Normal Christian Birth* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1989), 5, 187-88.

⁹⁶ Gordon D. Fee, *Gospel and Spirit* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1991), 98-99, 115, emphasis in original.

yet been “born of the Spirit.” In language reminiscent of the *Apostolic Faith* (Azusa Street Mission), he discussed the question of whether all such people were lost:⁹⁰

The one question that is so often asked is, “Are all those people who thought they were born of the Spirit, and were not, lost?” No, not by any means. They shall be given eternal life in the resurrection if they walked in all the light that was given them while they lived.

Andrew Urshan likewise made a distinction between being begotten and born. He described his status at repentance as “a happy, blood-washed, newly conceived child of the King!” He spoke of people being “saved” before they were born again and wrote of some who died in the faith before baptism in Jesus’ name. Nevertheless, he taught that baptism in Jesus’ name is for the remission of sins. It is necessary to go in the Rapture and escape the Tribulation. He also believed strongly that the baptism of the Holy Spirit is necessary.⁹¹ People who believed in God and lived righteous lives “without ever coming to the light of being born again according to Acts 2:38” will rise in the second resurrection, presumably to live on the new earth.⁹²

Contemporary Oneness Pentecostals do not necessarily proclaim as doctrine the various beliefs and conjectures that we have just cited. Like the Oneness pioneers, however, they recognize that God is at work in various Christian groups and that many people have genuine faith in God and a spiritual relationship with Him while not completely fulfilling the New Testament pattern of initiation. In such cases, they typically say that we must defer judgment to God, for only He knows the heart and only He has the prerogative of evaluating the individual fulfillment of His plan.

Finding Common Ground

Early Trinitarian Pentecostals typically said that believers were born again at repentance but needed to receive the Holy Spirit in order to have full salvation, to enter the church, and to go in the Rapture. Early Oneness Pentecostals typically said that believers needed to receive the Holy Spirit to be born again, to enter the church, and to go in the Rapture, but those who did not could still receive a type of salvation if they walked in all the light they knew. While the doctrines were different, the effect upon preaching, witnessing, and praying was much the same, and both stand in contrast to the common Trinitarian Pentecostal approach today, which is similar to a Baptist “sinner’s prayer.”

Nevertheless, some Trinitarian Pentecostals and Charismatics today have begun to emphasize the message of Acts 2:38, much as Oneness Pentecostals do. For example, Catholic Charismatic scholars Kilian McDonnell and George Montague state:⁹³

Peter describes the essential elements of Christian initiation in these words: [Quote of Acts 2:38].... How did the early post-biblical church appropriate the biblical teaching? Baptism in the Holy Spirit was a synonym for Christian

⁹⁰ G. T. Haywood, *Birth of the Spirit*, in *Life and Writings*, 10, 12, 21.

⁹¹ Urshan, *Life*, 9, 88, 116, 151-52, 175-77.

⁹² Reed, *Origins*, 354.

⁹³ Kilian McDonnell and George Montague, eds., *Fanning the Flame* (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1991), 14-15, 27.

stated that the majority believed Acts 2:38 to be the new birth.⁸³ Indeed, an analysis reveals that about eighty-five to ninety percent of the merged body in 1945 held that the full Acts 2:38 experience was essential to salvation.⁸⁴

The two major histories of the UPCI, by Arthur Clanton and Fred Foster, state that the most significant difference of opinion was on the essentiality of water baptism.⁸⁵ Clanton explained that the PCI allowed greater latitude on the new-birth message than the PAJC. David Gray of the PCI, who became the first youth president of the UPC, confirmed this statement.⁸⁶ In short, not everyone agreed that Acts 2:38 was “the new birth,” and in particular, a significant minority did not believe that “remission of sins” necessarily occurred at water baptism. What Chambers, McClintock, Urshan, and Gray all pointed out, however, is that despite the different interpretations, there was agreement that the Acts 2:38 experience is God’s plan for New Testament salvation, whatever the precise theological terminology that one should attach to each step or to the experience as a whole.

The Fundamental Doctrine of the UPCI states:⁸⁷

The basic and fundamental doctrine of this organization shall be the Bible standard of full salvation, which is repentance, baptism in water by immersion in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and the baptism of the Holy Ghost with the initial sign of speaking with other tongues as the Spirit gives utterance.

We shall endeavor to keep the unity of the Spirit until we all come into the unity of the faith, at the same time admonishing all brethren that they shall not contend for their different views to the disunity of the body.

At this point, it is important to note that the Oneness pioneers we have cited did not proclaim dogmatically that all who had not experienced Acts 2:38 would go to the lake of fire. Like Parham, Seymour, and Durham, most believed that there still could be a type of salvation outside the New Testament church, similar to that of Old Testament saints, particularly for people who walked in all the “light” they had received. We have already seen examples of this thinking in the quotation from Farrow and in the song “Baptized in the Body” by Haywood.

Thus Ewart could say, “Pastor Durham passed on to glory at a comparatively early age,” even though he died without being baptized in Jesus’ name. Ewart even called A. G. Garr “a great man of God” while also remarking that he “flatly rejected” the Oneness message.⁸⁸

G. T. Haywood made a distinction between being begotten and being born, similar to one Parham had made earlier between conversion (being begotten) and sanctification (being born again).⁸⁹ Christians who had faith but who were not born again according to Acts 2:38 could still be considered as “‘begotten’ by the Word” even though they had not

⁸³ Nathaniel Urshan, personal interview, Austin, TX, 24 April 1999.

⁸⁴ David K. Bernard, *Understanding the Articles of Faith* (Hazelwood, MO: Word Aflame Press, 1998), 45.

⁸⁵ See Clanton, 143-44; Foster, 143-44.

⁸⁶ David F. Gray, telephone interview, 29 March 1993.

⁸⁷ *Manual* (UPCI), 26.

⁸⁸ Ewart, *Phenomenon*, 200-2.

⁸⁹ See Charles Parham, *Everlasting Gospel*, 10-11, 102.

the true church, the body of Christ, namely, “a baptism of water and Spirit.” Moreover, “God’s standard of salvation” includes “a holy, Spirit-filled life with signs following.”⁷⁵

By early 1918, the GAAA merged with the Pentecostal Assemblies of the World (PAW) to form a united Oneness group under the latter name. The first doctrinal statement of the PAW as a Oneness body repeated the foregoing phrases from the GAAA and also said, probably still quoting from the GAAA, “In order to escape the judgment of God and to have the hope of enjoying the glory of life eternal, one must be thoroughly saved from their sins, wholly sanctified unto God and filled with the Holy Ghost.” The PAW’s 1919 conference affirmed by majority vote, “The new birth (being ‘born again’) includes a genuine repentance, water baptism in Jesus’ name, and the baptism of the Holy Ghost, evidenced by speaking in other tongues as the Spirit gives utterance.”⁷⁶

Let us turn to the two organizations that merged to form the UPCI: the Pentecostal Church Incorporated (PCI) and the Pentecostal Assemblies of Jesus Christ (PAJC). The first doctrinal statement of the Pentecostal Ministerial Alliance (PMA), which was later renamed the PCI, said, “The Bible way of salvation is repentance toward God, faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ, obedience to the Word of God by baptism in water (in Jesus’ name), and receiving the gift of the Holy Ghost, as in Acts 2:4, 38.”⁷⁷ In the September 1929 issue of the *Apostolic Herald*, the voice of the PMA, Howard Goss stated that to be in the Christian church “one must be baptized in the Holy Spirit,” but he believed sins were remitted before water baptism.⁷⁸ In the August 1930 issue of the *Apostolic Herald*, Farrow wrote that Acts 2:38 was the new birth.⁷⁹

In 1936, when discussing a possible merger with the PCI, the PAJC convention insisted that the basis of union be the following: “that baptism in water in Jesus’ name, and the baptism of the Holy Ghost, with the initial evidence of speaking in other tongues, be recognized as constituting the new birth, and be accepted as one of our fundamental doctrines.” A committee of PCI leaders responded, however, that “the matter of the new birth be left open to personal conviction.”⁸⁰

At the merger of these two groups in 1945, there were still some differences of opinion on the new birth, but a strong majority believed that the complete Acts 2:38 experience was necessary for salvation. S. W. Chambers, who was elected general secretary at the merger, said most ministers believed in the necessity of both water baptism and the baptism of the Holy Spirit. He regarded the differences as primarily of terminology, not so much of basic belief.⁸¹ E. J. McClintock, PCI pastor in Idaho at the time of the merger and later director of the UPCI General Sunday School Division, gave the same explanation, independently using almost the same words. He said the ministers agreed on the necessity of the three steps of Acts 2:38 but did not all agree on terminology.⁸² Nathaniel Urshan, son of Andrew Urshan and general superintendent of the UPCI for many years, agreed with the assessment of Chambers and McClintock and

⁷⁵ Arthur and Charles Clanton, *United We Stand* (Hazelwood, MO: Word Aflame Press, 1995), 28.

⁷⁶ *Minute Book and Ministerial Record* (PAW, 1919), 2, 5, 9-10, reprinted in Tyson, 295, 299-300.

⁷⁷ Clanton, 52.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 52, 114.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 52-53.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 135-36.

⁸¹ Stanley W. Chambers, telephone interview, 27 February 1993.

⁸² E. J. McClintock, personal interview, Hazelwood, MO, 8 April 1993.

Chorus: Are you in the Church triumphant? Are you in the Savior's Bride? Come and be baptized into the Body, And forevermore abide.

Verse 2: There is but one Church, Bride or Body, And into it we're all baptized; By the one, true, promised Holy Spirit; Tho' by the world we're all despised.

Verse 3: Every creed has claimed to be the Body, But the "plumb-line" proved untrue, All their dreams; for God has so determined, To bring His Son's true Bride to view.

Verse 4: Many thought that they were in the Body, 'Til the Holy Ghost had come; When the Word of God was opened to them, They entered in, and yet there's room.

Verse 5: Those who died before the Holy Spirit/ Came upon us from on high/ May, by faith with Saints of old departed, Arise to meet Him in the sky.

Verse 6: When the Bridegroom comes, will you be ready; And your vessel all filled and bright? You will be among the foolish virgins, If you do not walk in the light.

Oliver Fauss, later assistant general superintendent of the UPCI, took the following notes at a Bible conference in Elton, Louisiana, in 1915:⁷⁰

God is bringing us back to Acts 2:38, His plan.... God's pattern is Acts 2:38, this is plain.... We have no record of God being in these people until the Day of Pentecost (Colossians 1:27; John 3:3). Cornelius was a just man, but not saved (Acts 10:22; 11:14-18; Matthew 28:19; Mark 16:15; Luke 24:47; Acts 2:38).

Howard Goss (1883-1964), later the first general superintendent of the UPCI, contrasted "the Spirit-filled Christian and the nominal church attendant." He said, "These last are all alike without a Saviour, and thus have no scriptural promise of ever seeing heaven, because they have not actually been adopted into God's family, nor have they legally become His child, and thereby have no rightful claim on Him."⁷¹

During the struggles over Jesus Name baptism, the Assemblies of God, in its 1915 and 1916 general councils, censured the view that the baptism of the Holy Spirit is the new birth.⁷² In 1917, Assemblies of God leader E. N. Bell denounced the view that water baptism is part of salvation.⁷³ Clearly, they dealt with ministers who taught that the birth of water and Spirit was baptism of water and Spirit.

Andrew Urshan, a well-known pioneer Pentecostal evangelist, taught that obeying Acts 2:38 constitutes being "born of water and of the Spirit." He proclaimed, "You must be born again or be lost!"⁷⁴

The earliest Oneness organization was the General Assembly of the Apostolic Assemblies (GAAA). Its Articles of Faith (1917) stated that there was one entrance into

⁷⁰ Oliver F. Fauss, *What God Hath Wrought* (Hazelwood, MO: Word Aflame Press, 1985), 182.

⁷¹ Ethel E. Goss, *The Winds of God*, rev. ed. (Hazelwood, MO: Word Aflame Press, 1977), 111-12.

⁷² *Combined Minutes* (Assemblies of God, 1915), 9; *Combined Minutes* (Assemblies of God, 1916), 11.

⁷³ David Reed, *Origins and Development of the Theology of Oneness Pentecostalism in the United States* (Ann Arbor, MI: University Microfilms International, 1978), 170.

⁷⁴ A. D. Urshan, *Apostolic Faith Doctrine of the New Birth* (Portland, OR: Apostolic Book Publishers), 13.

Views of Early Oneness Pentecostals

Although the baptism of new converts in the name of Jesus Christ was common from the onset of the Pentecostal movement, the Oneness movement began in 1914 with two simultaneous developments: (1) Some Pentecostal leaders began baptizing people in Jesus' name who had previously been baptized with the trinitarian formula. (2) They began to associate the Jesus Name formula with the Oneness doctrine of God.

Given the previous teachings of Parham, Seymour, and Durham, it was only a small advance for the Oneness pioneers to say that all three elements of Acts 2:38 were necessary for entrance into the New Testament church. Indeed, for the earliest and most significant Oneness leaders, belief in Acts 2:38 as the "new birth" and "full salvation" came almost simultaneously with belief in the Oneness doctrine of God.

For example, from the start of the Oneness movement in 1914, Frank Ewart (1876-1947) equated being "born again" with baptism in Jesus' name and the baptism of the Holy Ghost.⁶⁴ He reported the following testimony, apparently from 1914 or 1915: "Brother E. D. Yeoman . . . declared that he never was saved until he surrendered to Christ, was baptized in Jesus' name, and received the gift of the Holy Ghost."⁶⁵

George Farrow, who attended Ewart's church in Los Angeles and composed the famous Oneness hymn "All in Him," wrote in January 1915:⁶⁶

Many of the saints here are seeing it and walking in the light. This truth is water baptism in the name of Jesus Christ.... It may seem to be very nonessential at first thought.... But God has surely been blessing this truth and talking very definitely to many about its importance.... I also am coming to see that under the present light that we have, nothing short of the baptism in the Holy Ghost is really salvation in the highest sense of the word.

G. T. Haywood (1880-1931), later presiding bishop of the Pentecostal Assemblies of the World, taught that the new birth is water baptism in the name of Jesus and the baptism of the Holy Spirit with tongues.⁶⁷ In 1913, even before his baptism in Jesus' name, he drew up a tract showing that water baptism and the baptism of the Holy Ghost were necessary to enter into the kingdom of God.⁶⁸ In 1914 he penned the hymn "Baptized into the Body":⁶⁹

Verse 1: Have you been baptized into the Body? Baptized with the Holy Ghost;
There is but one way to enter in it, Just as they did on Pentecost.

⁶⁴ Frank J. Ewart, *The Name and the Book* (1936; repr. Hazelwood, MO: Word Aflame Press, 1987), 65.

⁶⁵ Ewart, *Phenomenon*, 114. David Gray, a prominent UPCI minister trained under Ewart, confirmed that Ewart taught Acts 2:38 as the new birth. David F. Gray, telephone interview, 29 March 1993.

⁶⁶ George Farrow, "Letter to Miss Lulu Brumwell," 11 January 1915, in UPCI Historical Center, Hazelwood, MO.

⁶⁷ G. T. Haywood, *The Birth of the Spirit in the Days of the Apostles*, 15, 24, 28-29, in *The Life and Writings of Elder G. T. Haywood*, Paul Dugas, comp., (Portland, OR: Apostolic Book Publishers, 1968).

⁶⁸ See James L. Tyson, *The Early Pentecostal Revival* (Hazelwood, MO: Word Aflame Press, 1992), 180.

⁶⁹ *Sing unto the Lord* (Hazelwood, MO: Word Aflame Press, 1978), 208. For the date, see Morris Golder, *The Life and Works of Bishop Garfield Thomas Haywood (1880-1931)* (Indianapolis, 1977), 24.

Durham saw Acts 2:38 as the paradigm for New Testament salvation. He quoted this verse on the masthead of his *Pentecostal Testimony*. In a widely distributed tract entitled *Salvation in Christ for All*, he wrote:

The question then is: How may a man receive this great blessing of full deliverance through Christ? Acts 2:38-39 tells us: [quotation].... This is a wonderful truth! Men do not have to join any particular church, nor subscribe to any creed of man, but can be saved eternally by simply repenting and believing on the Lord Jesus Christ; and then they can receive the gift of the Holy Ghost with signs following, as in the days of the Apostles.

He said the three steps of Acts 2:38—repentance, water baptism, and the baptism of the Holy Ghost—were God’s standard of salvation. By these steps a person identified with the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ.⁶⁰

When we appeal the case to the Scriptures, we see that They teach to repent and be baptized and receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. Acts 2:38-39. All through the Acts and the Epistles of Paul, we see this order of teaching. Not one single Scripture ever mentions any second work of grace. But the rule laid down by Peter on the day of Pentecost is continually followed, both in teaching and practice....

The Epistles were written for the instruction of those who had received the Holy Spirit according to the standard of God lifted up in Acts 2:4....

Peter’s answer [in Acts 2:38] forever settles the question as to what the standard of God is....

We are identified with Him by faith in His death on the Cross, and in His burial, by our immersion in water; and in His glorious resurrection life by the blessed Holy Spirit, Who is supposed to come upon us when we come up out of the water. And, thank God, we have lived to see the blessed day that He has restored the Scriptural order of things, and the Spirit is falling on thousands and they are speaking in tongues as at the beginning.

A prominent Fundamentalist preacher, A. C. Dixon, once met with Durham and asked what his distinctive doctrine was. Durham told him it was speaking in tongues as the initial evidence of the Holy Ghost. Dixon exclaimed that by this doctrine he indicted all Christendom, whereupon Durham solemnly replied, “Sir, they deserve to be indicted.”⁶¹

Durham died before the Oneness movement began. However, Frank Ewart, his associate and successor and one of the earliest Oneness Pentecostal leaders, believed that Durham would have received the Jesus Name message had he lived. He was a trinitarian, but according to one report he performed at least one baptism in Jesus’ name.⁶² He placed great emphasis on the name, person, and work of Jesus Christ.⁶³

⁶⁰ Ibid., 3, 5.

⁶¹ Frank J. Ewart, *The Phenomenon of Pentecost*, rev. ed. (Hazelwood, MO: Word Aflame Press, 1975), 98.

⁶² Gordon Mallory (a United Pentecostal minister), personal interview, Austin, Texas, 14 February 1999. His mother told him that her father, R. E. Sternall, one of the founders of the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada, was baptized in Jesus’ name by William Durham in Chicago.

⁶³ Durham, *PT* 2, no. 1 (January 1912): 13; *PT* 2, no. 3 (August 1912): 6.

had received previously, which he had already identified as conversion, so he did not equate the two.

Nevertheless, Durham did begin to speak of the baptism of the Holy Ghost as an integral part of God's plan of salvation that should immediately follow repentance and faith. Since all that believers needed to do was to appropriate the finished work of Calvary, they could receive the Spirit without delay.

Durham's personal testimony revealed that he considered people to be saved from hell at the initial moment of faith, yet God's plan was for them to complete their salvation experience with water baptism and the baptism of the Holy Spirit:⁵⁷

Faith instantly sprang up in my heart to accept Him as my full Savior, and the moment I did so, I felt the quickening power of the Spirit, was made a new creature in Christ, and unutterable joy filled my soul....

I had no one to tell me that the next step was to be buried with Him, in Whom I had died and had been made alive. Had I been taught the truth, as the Apostles taught it, had I been baptized and had hands laid on me, I would have at once received the Holy Ghost....

For Durham, "God's glorious message of full salvation," the "Full Gospel," and God's "plan of salvation" included the baptism of the Holy Ghost.⁵⁸ Indeed, Durham insisted quite strongly that to belong to the New Testament church, a person had to be baptized with the Holy Spirit with the evidence of speaking in tongues:⁵⁹

The baptism in the Holy Spirit is the seal of a finished salvation in Jesus Christ....

God's standard of the baptism in the Holy Spirit is found in Acts 2:4, and He has only one standard.

The Church of Jesus Christ is composed of Pentecostal people....

We have an abnormal Christianity in the world today (that is, those we must recognize as Christians, but who are not filled with the Holy Spirit) for which it is impossible to find any Scriptural provision. In other words, only Spirit-filled people are recognized as being in a place that they are pleasing to God. Wherever we find converts in the New Testament who are not filled with the Holy Spirit, we find the Apostles dealing with them to lead them into the experience.

We conclude, therefore, that a Church, from a Scriptural standpoint, is a company of people who are called out of the world, made new creatures in Christ Jesus, buried with Him by baptism into death, and filled with the Holy Spirit....

The denominational churches of today are of purely human origin. Not one of them has any Scriptural authority for its existence.... As said above, people become members of Christ's true, holy, spiritual Church when they are born of the Spirit and filled with the Spirit, as this is the only normal Scriptural experience.

⁵⁷ William Durham, *Pentecostal Testimony* [hereafter *PT*] 2, no. 3 (August 1912): 3.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, no. 1 (January 1912): 14; no. 3 (August 1912): 10.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, no. 1 (January 1912): 1, 13-14.

When Mason attended Azusa Street, he went to the altar in response to a call for sinners to be justified, even though he was a leader in his Holiness denomination. He explained his thought at the time: “It may be that I am not converted, and if not, God knows and can convert me.”⁵³ He then received the Holy Spirit baptism.

The Azusa Street Mission did not believe in baptismal regeneration, but it emphasized the necessity of practicing water baptism as a commandment of the Lord, and it considered water baptism to be part of the “full Gospel”:⁵⁴

Baptism is not a saving ordinance, but it is essential because it is a command of our Lord. Mark 16:16, and Acts 2:38.... It is obedience to the command of Jesus, following saving faith. We believe every true believer will practice it....

It should be administered by a disciple who is baptized with the Holy Ghost and fire, in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Matt. 28:19-20....

We believe that we should teach God’s people to observe all things whatsoever He has commanded us [Matthew 28:20], practicing every command and living by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God. This is a full Gospel.

The foregoing statement reflects the use of the trinitarian baptismal formula. However, at least some converts from Azusa Street were baptized in the name of Jesus. By March 1907 a minister named Joshua Sykes founded a Pentecostal church in Los Angeles that required baptism in the name of Christ rather than the trinitarian formula.⁵⁵ The official history of the Apostolic Assembly of the Faith in Christ Jesus, a Mexican-American Oneness Pentecostal organization, states that a man named Luis Lopez received the Holy Spirit at Azusa Street and was baptized in the name of Jesus in 1909.⁵⁶ When controversy later arose over the baptismal formula, however, Seymour affirmed trinitarianism and the trinitarian baptismal formula, but he continued to have some fellowship with Jesus Name believers.

Views of William Durham

William Durham (1873-1912) was the first Pentecostal leader to preach the “Finished Work of Calvary,” the doctrine that sanctification is not an instantaneous second work of grace but is a progressive work that begins at repentance as the believer appropriates the benefits of the Cross. This doctrine raises questions about the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Is it a second work of grace, or is it too associated with conversion?

Durham continued to regard the baptism of the Holy Spirit as a second crisis experience following conversion. Since sanctification had no initial objective sign, it was easy for him to collapse it back into his previous encounter with God at repentance. But the baptism of the Spirit was an overwhelming emotional and spiritual experience, and it came with the initial sign of speaking in tongues. Durham knew it was more than what he

⁵³ “Church of God in Christ History,” www.cogic.org/history.htm (Memphis: COGIC, 1999).

⁵⁴ AF 1, no. 10 (September 1907): 2, in *Papers*, 51. The text actually says “Acts 2:28” but quotes Acts 2:38.

⁵⁵ Cecil M. Robeck, Jr., “Making Sense of Pentecostalism in a Global Context” (paper presented at the annual meeting of the Society for Pentecostal Studies, Springfield, MO, 1999), 10-11.

⁵⁶ See Manuel Gaxiola, *La Serpiente y la Paloma: Historia, Teología Análisis de la Iglesia Apostólica de la Fe en Cristo Jesús (1914-1994)*, 2nd ed. (Mexico: Libros Pyros, 1994), 117.

Dearly beloved, the only people that will meet our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ and go with Him into the marriage supper of the Lamb, are the wise virgins—not only saved and sanctified, with pure and clean hearts, but having the baptism with the Holy Ghost.

Articles in *The Apostolic Faith* affirmed that people who continued to walk with God would receive the message and experience of the Holy Ghost and warned that those who rejected this message and experience could be lost:⁵¹

- Friends, if you profess to know the Spirit of God and do not recognize Him when He comes, there is cause for you to be anxious about your own spiritual condition.
- Men and women that are walking in the light can quickly see that this is of God.
- Many church members are paying their way to hell. They are paying preachers to preach against the baptism with the Holy Ghost. They are getting poisoned against the truth and it is damning their souls. People need the baptism with the Holy Ghost that they may know God.
- After the white throne judgment, we are going to see men and women who have scorned this holiness and baptism, and they will be cast down into the burning hell.... O, accept this salvation.
- How will you miss hell if you stumble over this precious Gospel, if you ignore this Gospel which God has granted signs and wonders to follow?

Azusa Street participants spoke of the baptism of the Holy Ghost as the decisive turning point in their lives. Although they identified previous experiences of conversion and sanctification, their testimonies typically described the baptism of the Holy Ghost as the time they experienced the full saving power of Jesus Christ:⁵²

- Adolph Rosa (Portugese Methodist minister from Cape Verde Islands): “All pride, and self, and conceit disappeared, and I was really dead to the world, for I had Christ within in His fullness.”
- William Durham (prominent pastor in Chicago): “Then I had such power on me and in me as I never had before. And last but not least, I had a depth of love and sweetness in my soul that I had never even dreamed of before, and a holy calm possessed me, and a holy joy and peace, that is deep and sweet beyond anything I ever experienced before, even in the sanctified life. And O! such victory as He gives me all the time.”
- Maggie Geddis: “O the love, joy, and peace that flooded my being as I arose from the floor. I was indeed a new creature.”
- C. H. Mason (founder of the Church of God in Christ): “This was wedlock to Christ.... He had complete charge of me.... It was a complete death to me.... The glory of God filled the temple.”

⁵¹ *Papers*, 15, 19, 21, 26.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 14, 33, 36.

Views of William Seymour and the Azusa Street Mission

William Seymour (1870-1922), the leader who spread Pentecostalism worldwide, was a student of Parham and adopted much of his theology. Like Parham, he spoke of the baptism of the Spirit as necessary to be part of the church and to escape Tribulation wrath. His *Apostolic Faith* paper emphasized the need of “walking in the light” and accepting this “Bible salvation.” Those who rejected it were in danger of going to hell.

The original statement of faith published by Seymour’s Azusa Street Mission in Los Angeles listed six topics: repentance, faith, justification, sanctification, the baptism with the Holy Ghost, and healing. It described three—justification, sanctification, and Spirit baptism—as distinct experiences that were part of full salvation.⁴⁶

While the Azusa Street participants considered that a person was “saved” by the “first work” of grace, they spoke of all three experiences as part of “Bible salvation.” The headline and subheading at the top of the first issue of *The Apostolic Faith* reads: “Pentecost Has Come: Los Angeles Being Visited by a Revival of Bible Salvation and Pentecost as Recorded in the Book of Acts.”⁴⁷ The November 1906 edition of *The Apostolic Faith* describes the baptism of the Holy Ghost as “the real Bible salvation,” “the mark of the prize of the high calling in Christ Jesus,” and “heaven in our souls.”⁴⁸ In 1908, William Seymour wrote, “If you are sanctified and baptized with the Holy Ghost and fire, you are married to Him already. God has a people to measure up to the Bible standard in this great salvation. Bless His holy name. Amen!”⁴⁹

Following Parham, Seymour frequently cited the parable of the ten virgins to emphasize the importance of the baptism of the Holy Ghost. In his application, the oil of the five wise virgins is the Holy Ghost. Thus, only people who have been baptized with the Holy Ghost will go up in the Rapture and enjoy the marriage supper of the Lamb. Christians who have not received the Holy Ghost will have to endure the Tribulation and be martyred. He explained:⁵⁰

Those that will be permitted to enter in [the marriage supper of the Lamb] are those who are justified, sanctified, and baptized with the Holy Ghost—sealed unto the day of redemption.... Above all, we want to get the oil, the Holy Ghost. Every Christian must be baptized with the Holy Ghost for himself.... Now is the time to buy the oil; that is, by tarrying at the feet of the Lord Jesus and receiving the baptism with the Holy Spirit....

Those that get left in the rapture and still prove faithful to God and do not receive the mark of the beast, though they will have to suffer martyrdom, will be raised to reign with Christ.... By proving faithful to death, they will be raised during the millennium and reign with Christ. But we that are caught up to the marriage supper of the Lamb will escape the plagues that are coming on the earth....

⁴⁶ William Seymour, ed., *The Apostolic Faith* (Los Angeles) [hereafter *AF*] 1, no. 1 (September 1906): 2, reprinted in *The Azusa Street Papers* [hereafter *Papers*] (Foley, AL: Together in the Harvest Publications, 1997), 11.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 1, in *Papers*, 10.

⁴⁸ *AF* 1, no. 3 (November 1906): 4, in *Papers*, 21.

⁴⁹ *AF* 2, no. 13 (May 1908): 4, in *Papers*, 65.

⁵⁰ *AF* 1, no. 5 (January 1907): 2, in *Papers*, 27. See Charles Parham, *Voice*, 123-24, for the same teaching.

by single immersion in the name of Jesus Christ, and he associated this practice with confessing the deity of Christ, in contrast to liberal theology. Here is Parham's account:⁴⁴

One day, meditating alone in the woods, the Spirit said:—Have you obeyed every command you believe to be in the Word of God?

We answered, yes; the question repeated, the same answer given. The third time the question was asked, we answered, no,—for like a flood the convincing evidence of the necessity of obedience rushed in upon us, how Peter said, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ [Acts 2:38]. Was not this one baptism?...

These and other Scriptures were so convincing that the next day we were baptized by single immersion.

Years afterward, through reading many arguments and discussions on triune immersion, [we] were intellectually persuaded that it was right, and persuaded many of God's children to be baptized by this mode, although we were never baptized by triune immersion.

About two years ago [1900], however, we found that for which we had searched ... the cleansing of all unscriptural teachings.... We can well remember when we sought God in this cleansing, how some of the teachings we had believed to be so Scriptural and some we had loved so dearly and been the most preserving in propagating, were wiped from our minds.

Among them was triune immersion; though we had been able to discuss this question for an hour, we could not afterward find a single argument in its favor. Indeed, for months nothing, pro or con came upon the subject; until one day at the Bible School, we were waiting upon God that we might know the Scriptural teaching of water baptism. Finally the Spirit of God said: "We are buried by baptism into His death." We had known that for years; again the Spirit said: "God the Father, and God the Holy Ghost never died."

Then how quickly we recognized the fact that we could not be buried by baptism in the name of the Father, and in the name of the Holy Ghost, because it stood for nothing as they never died or were resurrected....

So if you desire to witness a public confession of a clean conscience toward God and man, faith in the divinity of Jesus Christ, you will be baptized by single immersion, signifying the death, burial and resurrection; being baptized in the name of Jesus, into the name of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost; they are one when in Christ you become one with all.

Howard Goss testified that Parham baptized him in the name of Jesus Christ in 1903.⁴⁵ Parham published the foregoing account again in 1910, indicating that perhaps he was still baptizing in Jesus' name at that time. As many ministers entered the growing movement, however, for the sake of unity Parham reverted to the traditional trinitarian formula. When the Jesus Name controversy erupted, Parham affirmed trinitarian theology and denounced the Oneness movement.

⁴⁴ Charles Parham, *Voice*, 21-24.

⁴⁵ Fred Foster, *Their Story: 20th Century Pentecostals* (Hazelwood, MO: Word Aflame Press, 1975), 98, 121.

Parham attached tremendous significance to the baptism of the Holy Spirit. He held it to be the fulfillment of Joel's prophecy of the latter rain, a sign of the soon coming of the Lord, the baptism that gives people full entrance into the church, a vital endowment of power that will enable the church to evangelize the world before the Lord's return, and the seal of protection during the Tribulation. It is the "full gospel" and "full salvation."³⁹

Twenty-one days after the Holy Ghost outpouring in Topeka, Kansas, on January 1, 1901, Parham preached a message in Kansas City, Missouri, that explained his views:⁴⁰

If you desire a personal Baptism of the Holy Ghost, the sealing power, escaping plagues, and putting you in the position to become a part of the Body, the Bride or the Man-Child, seek the Holy Ghost.

It is the Baptism of the Holy Spirit of promise, that seals the Bride and the same Baptism that puts us in one Body, (the Church).

Parham equated "the sealing of the Holy Spirit of promise (which is evidenced by the speaking tongues)" with being "baptized by the Holy Ghost into one Body, the gloriously redeemed Church."⁴¹ People who believe on Jesus can be saved in a lesser sense without this experience, but they will endure the rigors of the Tribulation. If they receive "the seal of the Holy Ghost," they will "escape the power of the Anti-Christ as well as the plagues and wraths." But "should you fail in the reception of a personal Pentecost you will be compelled to either accept the mark of the Beast or suffer martyrdom."⁴²

Moreover, in eternity believers who do not receive the Spirit will inhabit the new earth rather than the new heavens. "Jesus [will] take out a people for His name, through sanctification, being born of the water and the Spirit, they see the Kingdom of God; Christ having given Himself for the Church." The church will receive "eternal spiritual life and immortality" in the "new heavens." By contrast, Christians who are "unsanctified" as well as "many heathens" will merely receive "everlasting human life" on "the new earth."⁴³

In 1902, Parham published the foregoing message and teachings in *A Voice Crying in the Wilderness*. In the same book, Parham also wrote that years earlier God had impressed upon him the importance of water baptism. Under the influence of Quaker teaching he had not practiced baptism, but one day God spoke to him about obeying all His commands. Parham specifically thought of the command to be baptized in Acts 2:38, and he was baptized the next day. Sometime later, however, he was persuaded that "triune immersion"—triple immersion with the trinitarian formula—was correct.

After opening his Bible school but apparently before the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, Parham realized that triune immersion was not scriptural. Thus, he began baptizing

³⁹ Sarah E. Parham, *The Life of Charles F. Parham* (Baxter Springs, KS: Apostolic Faith Bible College, 1930), 107.

⁴⁰ Charles F. Parham, *A Voice Crying in the Wilderness*, rev. ed. (Baxter Springs, KS: Apostolic Faith Bible College, 1910), 25-38.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 64, 75.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 123.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 137-38. There is some ambiguity as to whether those who are sanctified but not baptized with the Holy Ghost will be part of the church and inherit the new heavens. See Charles F. Parham, *The Everlasting Gospel* (Baxter Springs, KS: Apostolic Faith Bible College, 1913), 50, 54-55, 62, 82, 98-99, 102, 104.

is expressed consistently in preaching and teaching, it indeed becomes the practical, as well as the theological, norm.

We can summarize the Oneness Pentecostal doctrine of Christian initiation as follows: (1) the Bible is the sole authority for salvation; (2) the basis of salvation is Christ's death, burial, and resurrection; (3) salvation comes only by grace through faith in Jesus Christ; and (4) the application of grace and the expression of faith occur as a person obeys Acts 2:38, thereby experiencing the new birth of John 3:3-5.

This understanding of Christian initiation did not suddenly spring into being with Oneness Pentecostals. Rather, the groundwork was laid in the teaching and terminology of John Wesley and other early Methodists and then by the earliest Pentecostals, including Charles Parham, William Seymour, and especially William Durham.

Wesleyan-Holiness Background

The concept of "full salvation" appears in the writings of John Wesley and other Wesleyan and Holiness authors.³⁵ Wesley, of course, believed in two distinct works of grace: justification and entire sanctification (Christian perfection). Both John Wesley and his designated successor, John Fletcher, spoke of sanctification as being "baptized with the Holy Spirit."³⁶

In an unpublished manuscript, Fletcher invoked Wesley's authority for equating the phrases "to be born again of water and of the Spirit" and "being baptized with water and with the Holy Ghost." He specifically linked John 3:3, 5 with Acts 2:38, citing them in the same paragraph. Fletcher further said of Wesley, "He explicitly rests the doctrine of full Christian regeneration on the full or Pentecostal dispensation of the Spirit." Fletcher allowed for the existence of "two sorts of children of God": "imperfect believers in Christ" and "those who are perfected by the full baptism of the Holy Ghost." He argued, however, that the Christian church began on the Day of Pentecost, that "the peculiar glory of the Christian Church consists in the Pentecostal fullness of the Spirit," and that "we must be baptized with [the Holy Ghost] baptism and refining fire, before we can be styled true (I would say complete or truly spiritual) 'members of Christ's mystical body.'"³⁷

Views of Charles Parham

The earliest Pentecostal leaders applied the terms "full salvation" and "full gospel" to the baptism of the Holy Spirit with the initial evidence of tongues.³⁸ Charles Parham (1873-1929), the first twentieth-century Pentecostal leader, taught that one must be baptized with the Holy Spirit to be truly part of the church, to escape the wrath of the Tribulation, and to inherit the new heavens. In one place he even used the phrase "being born of the water and the Spirit" to refer to the complete experience of entering the church, as opposed to an initial confession of faith.

³⁵ David Reed, "The 'New Issue' of 1914: New Revelation or Historical Development?" (paper presented at the annual meeting of the Society for Pentecostal Studies, Wheaton, IL, November 1994), 19-20.

³⁶ Laurence W. Wood, "The Rediscovery of Pentecost in Early Methodism" (paper presented at the annual meeting of the Society for Pentecostal Studies, Cleveland, TN, March 1998), 2.

³⁷ John Fletcher, "An Essay on the Doctrine of the New Birth," *Asbury Theological Journal*, Spring 1998, 35-56.

³⁸ See David K. Bernard, *A History of Christian Doctrine, Vol. 3: The Twentieth Century* (Hazelwood, MO: Word Aflame Press, 1999).

Greek prepositions in the Acts baptismal passages indicate that the name of Jesus was orally invoked.²⁴ F. F. Bruce concurred that baptism “‘in the name of Jesus Christ’ (Acts 2:38; 10:48) probably refers to the pronouncing of his name by the baptiser (cf. Jas. 2:7; Acts 15:17) or the invoking of his name by the baptised person (Acts 22:16).”²⁵

In regard to Matthew 28:19, many scholars recognize that the context demands a Christological formula; consequently, they propose that either the words of Matthew 28:19 were not the actual words of Jesus or else they were not originally understood as a formula.²⁶ Karl Barth concluded that, as a matter of theology, a simple baptismal formula that invokes the name of Jesus would be the most appropriate and that the wording of Matthew 28:19 actually points to Jesus Christ and His saving work.²⁷

Moreover, church historians commonly acknowledge that the original baptismal formula of the Christian church simply invoked the name of Jesus Christ; the trinitarian formula was a mid-second-century development.²⁸

The baptism of the Holy Spirit is part of New Testament salvation.²⁹ The phrase describes how the believer is immersed in and filled with God’s Spirit. In Acts the terms “baptized, filled, received, fell on, came upon, and poured out the gift on” all describe this experience.³⁰ It is promised to all who believe on Jesus and obey Him.³¹ The Bible records five historical accounts of receiving the Holy Spirit in the New Testament church: the Jews, the Samaritans, the Gentiles, the apostle Paul, and the disciples of John at Ephesus.³² This record establishes that the baptism of the Spirit is indeed for everyone and is accompanied by the initial sign of tongues.³³ Speaking in tongues means speaking supernaturally, as the Spirit gives utterance, in a language the speaker has never learned.³⁴

As the accounts in Acts show, the baptism of the Holy Spirit can occur prior to water baptism as well as subsequent to it. Theologically, repentance, water baptism, and the baptism of the Holy Spirit form an integrated whole. We should expect converts to receive each divine work almost simultaneously or in quick succession. The examples in the New Testament as well as experiences today demonstrate that when this expectation

Zwingli and Bullinger, trans. G. W. Bromiley, vol. 24 of *The Library of Christian Classics* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1953), 144-45, 168, 171. However, both said the trinitarian formula was acceptable.

²⁴ Walter Bauer, W. F. Arndt, F. W. Gingrich, and Frederick Danker, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*, 2nd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979), 572-73.

²⁵ F. F. Bruce, *The Books and the Parchments*, rev. ed. (Old Tappan, NJ: Revell, 1984), 57 n.20.

²⁶ G. R. Beasley-Murray, *Baptism in the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1962), 81-84. See also R. V. G. Tasker, *The Gospel according to St. Matthew*, vol. 1 of *The Tyndale New Testament Commentaries* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1961), 275.

²⁷ Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, trans. G. W. Bromiley (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1969) 4:4:75, 91-99. However, he advocated the trinitarian formula for ecumenical reasons.

²⁸ Kirsopp Lake, “Baptism (Early Christian),” *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*, James Hastings, ed. (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1951) 2:384; W. F. Flemington, “Baptism,” *The Interpreter’s Dictionary of the Bible*, George Buttrick et. al, eds. (Nashville: Abingdon, 1962) 1:351.

²⁹ See John 3:5; Romans 8:1-16; I Corinthians 12:13; Ephesians 1:13-14; Titus 3:5.

³⁰ Acts 1:4-5; 2:4; 10:44-47; 11:15-17; 19:1-6.

³¹ John 7:38-39; Acts 5:32; 11:15-17; 19:2; Galatians 3:14; Ephesians 1:13.

³² Acts 2:1-4, 33, 38-39; 8:5-22; 9:17; 10:44-48; 19:1-6.

³³ Luke 11:13; Mark 16:17. In three of the five accounts, speaking in tongues is the initial sign that identifies the individual reception of the Pentecostal experience (Acts 2:4; 10:45-47; 11:15-17; 19:6). It is implicit in the other two accounts—an unnamed miraculous sign was evident in Samaria (Acts 8:15-19), and Paul later stated that he spoke in tongues by the Spirit (I Corinthians 14:14-18).

³⁴ Acts 2:1-11.

repentance, baptism is not effective; and without repentance, a person cannot receive the Holy Spirit.¹²

Water baptism expresses faith in God by obedience to His Word, and it specifically confesses faith in Jesus Christ as Savior. The scriptural mode of baptism is immersion in water, and only this method retains the biblical symbolism of baptism as a burial. Faith in Christ and repentance from sin are necessary to its validity; thus infant baptism is not appropriate. Water baptism is part of entrance into the body of Christ.¹³

The complete work of forgiveness and remission of sins comes through repentance and water baptism together. Repentance deals with a person's sinful lifestyle, opening the door to a personal relationship with God, while baptism deals with the record and consequences of sin.¹⁴

The baptismal formula. The Bible teaches that baptism should be administered by invoking the name of the Lord Jesus Christ in faith.¹⁵ Using the name of Jesus in the baptismal formula expresses faith in His identity, atoning work, and saving power and authority. The name of Jesus is the only saving name, the name by which to receive remission of sins, the highest name, and the name in which Christians are to say and do all things.¹⁶ Thus using Jesus' name is the proper way to fulfill the purposes for baptism.

The Bible records five historical accounts of baptism in the New Testament church that describe a name or formula, and in each case the name is Jesus.¹⁷ The Epistles also allude repeatedly to the Jesus Name formula.¹⁸

It is true that Matthew 28:19 speaks of baptism "in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." However, this phrase does not identify three names of three different persons, but it describes a singular name that encompasses the redemptive manifestations of the Godhead, and that name is Jesus.¹⁹ Moreover, the parallel accounts of the great commission in the other Synoptic Gospels clearly describe the name of Jesus.²⁰ Thus the apostles correctly understood and obeyed the words of Jesus in Matthew 28:19 by baptizing all converts with the invocation of the name of Jesus.

As the Greek text and modern translations make clear, several passages reveal that the name is to be invoked orally.²¹ The disciples of John the Baptist, who were already baptized unto repentance, were baptized a second time, the only difference being their new understanding of Jesus and the invocation of His name.²²

It is interesting that noted biblical scholars agree with the exegetical conclusions of Oneness Pentecostals on many of these points. Martin Luther and Ulrich Zwingli affirmed that the apostles baptized by invoking the name of Jesus Christ rather than the trinitarian titles.²³ According to the lexicon of Bauer, Arndt, Gingrich, and Danker, the

¹² See Proverbs 28:13; Luke 3:7-8; 13:3-5; Acts 17:30; 26:20; II Corinthians 7:10; II Peter 3:9.

¹³ See Acts 2:38-41; 8:36-39; Romans 6:3-4; Galatians 3:27; Colossians 2:11-12; I Peter 3:21.

¹⁴ See Acts 2:38; 22:16.

¹⁵ See David K. Bernard, *In the Name of Jesus* (Hazelwood, MO: Word Aflame Press, 1992).

¹⁶ Acts 2:21; 4:12; 10:43; Philippians 2:9-11; Colossians 3:17.

¹⁷ Acts 2:38; 8:16; 10:48; 19:5; 22:16.

¹⁸ Romans 6:3-4; I Corinthians 1:13; 6:11; Galatians 3:27; Colossians 2:12.

¹⁹ See Zechariah 14:9; Matthew 1:21; John 5:43; 14:9-11, 16-18, 26; Revelation 22:3-4.

²⁰ Mark 16:17; Luke 24:47.

²¹ Acts 15:17; 22:16; James 2:7.

²² Acts 19:1-6.

²³ Martin Luther, "The Babylonian Captivity of the Church," in *Word and Sacrament II*, vol. 36 of *Luther's Works*, ed. Abdel Wentz (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1959), 63; Ulrich Zwingli, *Of Baptism*, in

then, is (1) acceptance of the gospel of Jesus Christ as the means of salvation and (2) obedience to that gospel (application or appropriation of that gospel).

The gospel of Jesus Christ is His death, burial, and resurrection for our salvation.⁵ On the Day of Pentecost, the birthday of the New Testament church, the apostle Peter preached the first gospel sermon to the crowds who had gathered to observe the Spirit-filled believers as they spoke in tongues and worshiped God. He proclaimed the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Convicted of their sins by his simple yet powerful message, the audience cried out, “Men and brethren, what shall we do?” (Acts 2:37). Peter, with the support of the other apostles, gave a precise, complete, and unequivocal answer: “Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost” (Acts 2:38). As this verse shows, a person responds to the gospel, obeys the gospel, or applies the gospel to his life, by repentance from sin (death to sin), water baptism by immersion in the name of Jesus Christ (burial with Christ), and receiving the Holy Spirit (new life in Christ).⁶

This response is the biblical expression of saving faith in Jesus Christ.⁷ In theological terms, this threefold experience brings regeneration, justification, and initial sanctification.⁸ Baptism of water and Spirit is the birth of water and Spirit, the born-again experience of which Jesus spoke in John 3:3-5. The three steps are not human works that earn salvation but divine works of salvation in human lives. God calls people by His grace and leads them to Himself. As they respond to His call by obedient faith, God changes their mind and direction at repentance, washes away their sins at water baptism, and fills them with His regenerating, sanctifying, and empowering Holy Spirit.

People in the Old Testament were saved by grace through faith based on the future sacrifice of Christ. They expressed their faith by an obedient response to God’s plan for their day, which included repentance. However, baptism in water and the baptism of the Holy Spirit are new covenant experiences that were unavailable to them. While their faith was qualitatively the same as that of New Testament saints, only the latter have the privilege of entering the fullness of relationship with Christ.⁹

Those saved in the Gospels were saved under the old covenant while they awaited the new, for the new covenant did not come into effect until after Christ’s ascension.¹⁰ Thus Acts 2:38 is the comprehensive answer to an inquiry about New Testament conversion, expressing in a nutshell the proper response to the gospel. Not only did Jews from many nations on the Day of Pentecost receive the Acts 2:38 experience, but so did all other converts in the New Testament, including the Samaritans, the apostle Paul, the Gentiles at Caesarea, and the disciples of John at Ephesus.¹¹

Repentance is a turn from sin to God, and it is essential to salvation. It consists of an intellectual, emotional, and volitional change. It includes recognition of sin, confession of sin to God, contrition or godly sorrow for sin, and a decision to forsake sin. Without

⁵ I Corinthians 15:1-4.

⁶ See Romans 6:1-7; 7:6; 8:2, 10.

⁷ See Mark 1:15; 16:16; John 7:37-39; Acts 11:15-17.

⁸ See I Corinthians 6:11; Titus 3:5.

⁹ See Hebrews 11:7-8, 28, 39-40; Galatians 3:13-14, 26-29.

¹⁰ See Luke 7:28; 24:47-49; John 7:39; 16:7; Acts 1:4-8; Hebrews 8:6-13; 9:14-17.

¹¹ See Acts 2:38-41; 8:5-17; 9:1-18; 10:44-48; 11:11-18; 19:1-6; 22:16.

“THE WHOLE GOSPEL”

Oneness Pentecostal Perspectives on Christian Initiation

In the view of most Oneness Pentecostals, Christian initiation consists of repentance, water baptism in the name of Jesus Christ, and the baptism of the Holy Spirit with the initial sign of speaking in tongues. The Fundamental Doctrine of the United Pentecostal Church International (UPCI), the largest Oneness group, identifies this threefold experience as “the Bible standard of full salvation.”¹ The UPCI calls this message “the whole gospel,” which it purposes to carry to “the whole world.”²

In this paper, we will describe this doctrinal position, discuss the biblical evidence for it, trace its historical roots in the early Pentecostal movement, and explore the possibility of common ground with other Pentecostals and Evangelicals.

Biblical Discussion

Oneness Pentecostals base their doctrine of salvation on the Bible, which they regard as their sole authority in this matter. The major Oneness groups hold that repentance, water baptism in Jesus’ name, and the baptism of the Holy Spirit constitute “the plan of salvation” for New Testament believers. While there are differences between groups and even within groups on the proper theological characterization of these three steps of faith, there is agreement that God commands everyone to obey them. There is also agreement that these steps do not represent salvation by works. Rather, they are applications of the grace of God, purchased by the blood of Jesus Christ, and they are expressions of faith in God. The following discussion describes the doctrine of New Testament salvation shared by most Oneness Pentecostals, particularly United Pentecostals.³

Salvation is by grace through faith and not of human works. It is a free gift from God, which humans cannot merit, earn, or deserve. The atoning work of Jesus Christ has made this free gift of salvation available, and the way to receive it is to believe in Jesus and the sufficiency of His sacrifice.

To believe on Jesus includes believing His Word, and truly believing His Word includes obedience to His call. Faith is more than mental assent, intellectual acceptance, or verbal profession; it includes trust, reliance, appropriation, application. Faith is alive only through response and action. Thus, we cannot separate saving faith from obedience. It is possible to have an initial degree of faith in Christ and still not be saved if there is not full acceptance, commitment, and obedience to the gospel.⁴

Faith is the means of appropriating God’s grace. It is the means by which people yield to God, obey His Word, and allow Him to perform His saving work in them. Saving faith,

¹ Articles of Faith, *Manual* (Hazelwood, MO: United Pentecostal Church International, 2000), 26.

² Constitution, *Manual* (UPCI), 31.

³ See David K. Bernard, *The New Birth* (Hazelwood, MO: Word Aflame Press, 1984).

⁴ See Matthew 7:21-27; John 2:23-25; 12:42-43; 14:15, 23; Acts 6:7; Romans 1:5; 2:6-10; 6:17; 10:16; 16:26; II Thessalonians 1:7-10; Hebrews 5:9; 11:6-8; I Peter 1:21-23; 4:17.

“THE WHOLE GOSPEL”

Oneness Pentecostal Perspectives on Christian Initiation

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