**BIBLE STUDY NOTES | Paul van Coller**

**THE HOLY SPIRIT (Part 1 & Part 2)**

The Study of the Holy Spirit is called Pneumatology. Pneuma (πνεῦμα), is a Greek word which means "breath" or "spirit".

When studying the Holy Spirit, like any other doctrine, it is essential to approach the Bible correctly.

We want to have a systematic theology. We want to be able to know what we believe and why. How we get there, is essential.

**We cannot build our theology on our experience; it needs to be based on the Bible.**

Whenever we want to understand a major theme in the Bible, we need to take the following basic approach:

1. Start in the beginning. All major doctrines find their source in Genesis. We need to approach the Bible with the understanding that truth was progressively revealed from one generation to the next. In a similar way to the way a house is build, first the foundation, then brick by brick, then the roof.

   This is especially true with regards to the Holy Spirit. When reading a particular passage or book, we need to ask ourselves the question - what did the initial intended readers understand this to mean based on what had been revealed to them up until this point in God’s progressive revelation?

2. Understand the *Sitz im Leben*. This means "setting in life". Its context in which a passage has been written, and its purpose at that time. This includes the social, ethnic, and cultural setting at that time. We need to ask ourselves the following questions:
   - When was it written?
   - Who wrote this?
   - Why did they write it?
   - To whom did they write it?
   - What did the first initial readers understand this to mean?

3. We need to take the meta-narrative, Gods overall plan for creation into account. It is like reading a long-detailed letter from someone, it’s very dangerous to draw conclusions from statements or phrases, without taking the overall intent of the letter into account.

4. We need to know who God is. We have to take His character and attributes into account. God is all powerful, God is love, God is just (He will not let the guilty go unpunished), He is gracious, merciful, our healer, provider, redeemer, guide, friend, Lord, ruler and ultimate authority. He does not change and is the same person in the Old and New covenants.
With this in mind, let us look at the Holy Spirit.

*Genesis 1:1-2 (NIV)*

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. 2 Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the *Spirit of God* was hovering over the waters.

What is interesting in verse one, the original Hebrew say Gods, not singular God, however the next word “Created” is used in the singular (in other words the “Gods” mentioned here are acting in perfect unity as if they are one). This indicated the Trinity, acting in perfect unity, three in one.

Verse 2 says the “Spirit of God” was hovering over the waters. The original Hebrew word for Spirit used here is the word *Ruach*, which directly translated would be “breath or wind”, describing the invisible force of God.

This is important to note as throughout the old Testament this is the main way and action fulfilled by the Spirit of God.

This Spirit, this breath of God, this invisible force gave life to Adam and Eve *(Genesis 2:7)* and other living things *(Psalm 104:30)*.

God was with people, convicting them and guiding them. *(Genesis 6:3; 2 Samuel 23:2; Psalm 143:10)*

However, through the Old Testament, the major role that the Holy Spirit is described as playing, is super naturally empowering certain individuals to do things that could not be done on their own.

Examples of this are Joshua *(Numbers 27:18)*; Othniel *(Judges 3:9-10)*; Gideon *(Judges 6:34)*; Samson *(Judges 14:5-6)* and Saul *(1 Samuel 10:9-10)*.

It is important to note that most initial followers of Jesus and people during the first part of the early church had this as their foundation. They believed that the Holy Spirit was the invisible force of God that supernaturally empowered people to do great exploits for God. In the Old Testament, this was only available for a few select people and this supernatural empowering was definitely not available for everyone.

One of my lecturers used to tell us all the time: “Remember, the one thing that was not in the New Testament was the New Testament, they only had the Old Testament, make sure you read the New Testament through the eyes of the Old Testament”.

With this as our foundation, let us take a look at what the New Testament says.

In order to do this correctly we need to first look at the order in which the books were written and distributed.

Mark’s Gospel was written first and was written by John Mark. Matthew was written by Matthew the tax collector and disciple of Jesus.
Both of these earlier books are not major contributors to our understanding of the person and work of the Holy Spirit, as they both confirm what the Old Testament says, that the Holy Spirit is a source of supernatural power for the performance of miracles.

The Book of James, probably one of the earliest of the New Testament books also is not a major contributor and neither is the book of Jude or 1 Peter and 2 Peter.

Although Jude 1:20 does tell us to “But you, dear friends, by building yourselves up in your most holy faith and praying in the Holy Spirit.” (NIV).

The three biggest contributors to our understanding of the Person and Work of the Holy Spirit are Luke (Lukan Pneumatology), Paul (Pauline Pneumatology) and John (Johannine Pneumatology).

We will take a closer look at what each of these writers teach us. Although Paul’s letters were written before Luke’s account (Luke wrote the Book of Luke and Acts), Paul’s letters were not widely distributed until later. John, who wrote the Gospel of John, 1 John, 2 John, 3 John and the Book of Revelations was the last to write. It is therefore important that we start with Luke, reading Luke through the eyes of the Old Testament with regards to the Holy Spirit. Paul would be the second as His letters were distributed and more widely read before John’s writings.

To summarize a correct approach to studying the Person and Work of the Holy Spirit, we do the following:


**Lukan Pneumatology**

**Background**

Who was Luke and what was the “Sitz im Leben” and larger narrative of his two books? Luke was a gentile (someone that was not a Jew). He is the only writer that was not Jewish in the entire Bible. He was also a medical doctor and a missionary with Paul. His two books highlight his driving passion for the gospel to reach every person on earth. He was convinced that it was for the rich and poor, educated and uneducated, healthy and sick, for Jews and Romans and Samaritans, men and women.

When one reads Luke and Acts, he consistently highlights Women, Beggars, Romans, and Samaritans faith. He wants his readers to know salvation is for everyone, leadership is for everyone and the Holy Spirits supernatural empowering is for everyone.

Luke uses the Greek word “ethne” repetitively throughout both books. This word is often translated as “nations” in our English translations. The original meaning of this word has nothing to do with what is commonly thought today as political nation-states; rather, to be precise, the translation “all ethnicities” or “all people groups” better captures the meaning of the word. Luke is passionate about the Gospel reaching everyone
everywhere. He was writing towards the end of Paul’s ministry and he wanted to make sure the expansion of the church did not slow down but accelerated until every ethne has been reached. He was convinced that the only way to do this is through the supernatural empowering of the Holy Spirit. Ordinary people, men and women, young and old, Jew and Gentile, empowered through the Holy Spirit is essential to see Jesus continue His work until He returns.

Let us have as look at the baptism of Jesus as recorded in Mark, Matthew and Luke.

What one notice are the little additions in Luke that are not found in Mark and Matthew. Luke places extra emphasis on this, adds in more detail.

If I tell you about an experience I had, consciously and subconsciously I will emphasise certain parts and choose to leave out certain details that I would not consider that important. We all do this. I might tell you the time of day, how many clouds there were in the sky, what I had for breakfast... if I add details, they will be for a reason, because I want to emphasise something. The Gospels are the same as we see this with Luke’s account of the baptism of Jesus in great detail.

Mark 1:7-13

7 He proclaimed, “The one who is more powerful than I is coming after me; I am not worthy to stoop down and untie the thong of his sandals. 8 I have baptised you with water; but he will baptise you with the Holy Spirit.”

9 In those days Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptised by John in the Jordan. 10 And just as he was coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens torn apart and the Spirit descending like a dove on him. 11 And a voice came from heaven, “You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased.”

12 And the Spirit immediately drove him out into the wilderness. 13 He was in the wilderness forty days, tempted by Satan; and he was with the wild beasts; and the angels waited on him.

Matthew 3:11-17

11 I baptise you with water for repentance, but one who is more powerful than I is coming after me; I am not worthy to carry his sandals. He will baptise you with the Holy Spirit and fire. 12 His winnowing fork is in his hand, and he will clear his threshing floor and will gather his wheat into the granary; but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire.”

13 Then Jesus came from Galilee to John at the Jordan, to be baptised by him.

14 John would have prevented him, saying, “I need to be baptised by you, and do you come to me?” 15 But Jesus answered him, “Let it be so now; for it is proper for us in this way to fulfill all righteousness.” Then he consented. 16 And when Jesus had been baptised, just as he came up from the water, suddenly the heavens were opened to him and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting on him. 17 And a voice from heaven said, “This is my Son, the Beloved, with whom I am well pleased.”

Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil.
Luke 3:16-22
16 John answered all of them by saying, I baptise you with water; but one who is more powerful than I is coming; I am not worthy to untie the thong of his sandals. He will baptise you with the Holy Spirit and fire. 17 His winnowing fork is in his hand, to clear his threshing floor and to gather the wheat into his granary; but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire.”
18 So, with many other exhortations, he proclaimed the good news to the people. 19 But Herod the ruler, who had been rebuked by him because of Herodias, his brother’s wife, and because of all the evil things that Herod had done, 20 added to them all by shutting up John in prison.
21 Now when all the people were baptised, and when Jesus also had been baptised and was praying, the heaven was opened, 22 and the Holy Spirit descended upon him in bodily form like a dove. And a voice came from heaven, “You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased.”

Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit in the wilderness,

Here we see Luke add in three important details.
1. Jesus was praying when the Holy Spirit came upon him.
2. The Holy Spirit came upon Him in bodily form.
3. He was full of the Spirit after this. This is actually a phrase Luke uses often.

Let’s read another very important passage in Luke’s account that is not in any of the other Gospels.

Luke 4:14-19
14 Then Jesus, filled with the power of the Spirit, returned to Galilee, and a report about him spread through all the surrounding country. 15 He began to teach in their synagogues and was praised by everyone. 16 When he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, he went to the synagogue on the sabbath day, as was his custom. He stood up to read, 17 and the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written:

18 The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed, go free, 19 to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.”

Here Luke once again uses the word “upon”, the original Greek word is epi. This is used in the same way throughout the Old Testament to describe the way the Holy Spirit would come upon individuals like Samson, Gideon, Joshua. We will come back to this word later in our study.

Luke also gives the reason why the Holy Spirit comes upon people, because of broken hurting people. God supernaturally empowered Jesus to reach a broken world.
Let's compare this to what happened in Acts 1 and 2.

Acts 1:4-8
4 While staying with them, he ordered them not to leave Jerusalem, but to wait there for the promise of the Father. “This,” he said, “is what you have heard from me; 5 for John baptised with water, but you will be baptised with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.”
6 So when they had come together, they asked him, “Lord, is this the time when you will restore the kingdom to Israel?” 7 He replied, “It is not for you to know the times or periods that the Father has set by his own authority. 8 But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”

Here is that word “upon” (ἐπί) again.

14 They all joined together constantly in prayer, along with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brothers.

In this verse Luke adds in that they were praying, and women were with them praying.

Acts 2:1-4
1 When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. 2 And suddenly from heaven came a sound like the rush of a violent wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. 3 Divided tongues, as of fire, appeared among them, and a tongue rested on each of them. 4 All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave them ability.

Here in verse 3, the word on is also the word “ἐπί”, it's the same word.

Luke makes the point, just like Jesus, they were praying, and the Holy Spirit came upon them with a visible manifestation. The Holy Spirit did not just come on some but all of those in the prayer meeting. This manifestation included Spirit empowered speech, which in this case was speaking in Tongues.

Acts 2:14-21
14 But Peter, standing with the eleven, raised his voice and addressed them, “Men of Judea and all who live in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and listen to what I say. 15 Indeed, these are not drunk, as you suppose, for it is only nine o’clock in the morning. 16 No, this is what was spoken through the prophet Joel:

17 In the last days it will be, God declares, that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams.
18 Even upon my slaves, both men and women, in those days I will pour out my Spirit; and they shall prophesy.
And I will show portents in the heaven above
and signs on the earth below,
  blood, and fire, and smoky mist.
The sun shall be turned to darkness
and the moon to blood,
  before the coming of the Lord’s great and glorious day.
Then everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.’

A little while later this same group of leaders was praying and the they were filled with Holy Spirit.

Luke is quoting Joel and the same word “epi” is used in verse 17.

Luke also emphasises that the Holy Spirit, this empowering for ministry, is for all people, men, women, slaves, free, young and old.

Acts 4:31 (NIV)
31 After they prayed, the place where they were meeting was shaken. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God boldly.

What is interesting here is that Luke does not use the word “epi” but rather “pletho” which means “to fill”.

Acts 5: 3 ;9

3 Then Peter said, “Ananias, how is it that Satan has so filled your heart that you have lied to the Holy Spirit and have kept for yourself some of the money you received for the land?

9 Peter said to her, “How could you conspire to test the Spirit of the Lord? Listen! The feet of the men who buried your husband are at the door, and they will carry you out also.”

Here Luke makes an interesting observation, that Ananias and Sapphira lied too and conspired against the Holy Spirit when they lied to the church. It’s not a major theme for Luke with regards to His teaching on the Holy Spirit, but it is an important point.

Acts 6:3-5
3 Brothers and sisters, choose seven men from among you who are known to be full of the Spirit and wisdom. We will turn this responsibility over to them 4 and will give our attention to prayer and the ministry of the word.”
5 This proposal pleased the whole group. They chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit; also Philip, Procorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolas from Antioch, a convert to Judaism.

This is such an important passage. Here Luke makes an important statement. He makes a dissection between being baptised with the Holy Spirit and being full of the Spirit. What he points out is that once a person is baptised in the Holy Spirit they need to remain full of the Spirit. This is similar to his description of Jesus in Luke 4:14.
The Greek word used here to describe someone being “full” of the Spirit is not the word “epi” but the word “pleres” which basically means “filled up completely”.

Acts 8:14 (NIV)
14 When the apostles in Jerusalem heard that Samaria had accepted the word of God, they sent Peter and John to Samaria. 15 When they arrived, they prayed for the new believers there that they might receive the Holy Spirit, because the Holy Spirit had not yet come on any of them; they had simply been baptised in the name of the Lord Jesus. 17 Then Peter and John placed their hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit.

Here it is important to remember, Luke is writing exclusively with the understanding that believers needed a second experience after salvation where the Holy Spirit would come “upon” believers. Here he is emphasising that Peter and John went to Samaria and prayed for the Samaritans to be baptised in the Holy Spirit.

Acts 10:44-46 (NIV)
44 While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit came on all who heard the message. 45 The circumcised believers who had come with Peter were astonished that the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out even on Gentiles. 46 For they heard them speaking in tongues and praising God.

The word “on” here is the same word “epi” that Luke constantly uses to describe the initial baptism of the Holy Spirit of a believer. This passage describes a major turning point in early church. Peter is preaching to a group of gentiles. They believed in Jesus and while Peter was still preaching, they were baptised with the Holy Spirit and started to speak in Tongues. This was a major surprise to Peter and the Jews with him. Not only could salvation come to the gentiles, but God would also empower them for ministry. In the old testament this supernatural empowerment was only available to a select few. Current Jewish thought was that one could only attain selection for supernatural empowerment through strict following of the Mosaic Law (the law given through Moses). Here Gentiles that did not follow the law were baptised in the Holy Spirit and speaking in tongues. It was a game changer for the early churches understanding of both God’s grace and His will for all people.

Acts 19:2-7 (NRSV)
1 While Apollos was in Corinth, Paul passed through the interior regions and came to Ephesus, where he found some disciples. 2 He said to them, ‘Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you became believers?’ They replied, ‘No, we have not even heard that there is a Holy Spirit.’ 3 Then he said, ‘Into what then were you baptised?’ They answered, ‘Into John’s baptism.’ 4 Paul said, ‘John baptised with the baptism of repentance, telling the people to believe in the one who was to come after him, that is, in Jesus.’ 5 On hearing this, they were baptised in the name of the Lord Jesus. 6 When Paul had laid his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came upon them, and they spoke in tongues and prophesied—altogether there were about twelve of them.
This event is happening about 25 years after Pentecost. It is important to remember that we are reading Luke. That we cannot interpret this story through John or Paul’s teachings on the Holy Spirit. If we did then we would think incorrectly that these disciples were not saved yet. However, they were, they believed and had repented and are described as disciples (followers). Here Luke is once again emphasising a second experience, the baptism in the Holy Spirit, when the Holy Spirit comes “upon” a believer.

**Acts 20:22-23 (NRSV)**

22 And now, as a captive to the Spirit, I am on my way to Jerusalem, not knowing what will happen to me there, 23 except that the Holy Spirit testifies to me in every city that imprisonment and persecutions are waiting for me.

**Acts 20:22-23 NIV**

22 “And now, compelled by the Spirit, I am going to Jerusalem, not knowing what will happen to me there. 23 I only know that in every city the Holy Spirit warns me that prison and hardships are facing me.

**Acts 21:4 (NRSV)**

4 We looked up the disciples and stayed there for seven days. Through the Spirit they told Paul not to go on to Jerusalem.

This is a very fascinating account; the Holy Spirit tells Paul he needs to go to Jerusalem and there he will be taken captive to Rome. A little later well recognised prophets come and warn Paul not to go to Jerusalem.

What Luke teaches us here is that even well recognised Prophets can misunderstand the leading of the Holy Spirit.

This is an interesting and an important note. When we look at 1 Corinthians 13:9-12, where it says that we hear in part and prophesy in part, this is what Paul was alluding to.

We have the Holy Spirit available to us, however we need to make sure that we use caution when prophesying. We hear in part; we see in part.

In Hope Church we like to rather say, “I think God is showing me this”, “I feel God wants me to say this”, instead of “God says”.

**From studying what Luke teaches us in both the Gospel of Luke and the Book of Acts we can make the following doctrinal statements with regards to the Holy Spirit.**

- God (Father, Son and Holy Spirit) is on a mission to seek and save the lost, every person, rich, poor, male, female, young and old from every tribe. This is why Jesus came.

- The Holy Spirit is a missionary Spirit and comes upon believers to supernaturally empower them to carry out this mission on earth.
• There is a second experience after Salvation, called the Baptism in the Holy Spirit, for **every** believer.

• There is a visible manifestation for those that are Baptised in the Holy Spirit, and this is speaking in Tongues.

• Every person that is baptised in the Holy Spirit can speak in tongues, even if they don’t believe they can.

• This Baptism of the Holy Spirit could happen spontaneously during prayer, worship, preaching, water baptism or when someone lays hands on the person to pray for them.

• The Holy Spirit guides us; however, our interpretation of His guiding could be incorrect.