

The Pauline Metaphors of the Holy Spirit

The Intangible Spirit's
Tangible Presence in the
Life of the Christian

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Rationale

The hundreds of metaphors extant in the Pauline literature require thoughtful examination for how to draw out their intended meaning. Yet, it has been Paul's use of grammar that has been perceived to be the foundation from which to understand his writings. His figures of speech often are minimized or ignored by Pauline interpreters, which is evident by the lack of space granted to them in hermeneutical texts. The presence of these metaphors in the Pauline corpus does not suggest that scholars have somehow missed their presence, but these scholars have treated the metaphors as peripheral or secondary in the work of exegeting Paul. But without an understanding of Paul's metaphors, it is impossible to arrive at *complete* conclusions about his theology, in this case, his pneumatology.

The numerous times Paul uses the term πνεῦμα also require his interpreters to scrutinize carefully the centrality of his pneumatology to his overall theological thinking. Pauline perspectives on the Spirit have not been ignored, although scholars debate whether this should be considered a central or a peripheral aspect of his theology and mission.

The primary difficulty of this study is integrating the elements of Pauline pneumatology and his use of metaphor. This study will survey the understanding of metaphor by rhetoricians contemporary with Paul. Then, an examination of modern theories of metaphor interpretation will open the door to another perspective from which to interpret this significant component of Pauline literature.

The Background to Paul's Understanding of πνεῦμα

The primary contributing factors that might have molded Paul's conception of πνεῦμα include the Hellenistic mysteries, Greek philosophy, the Old Testament, Second Temple Jewish literature, and the personal revelation of Jesus the Messiah. It is not necessary, nor is it practical here, to offer an exhaustive study of the term and its concepts, but a survey of primary areas of influence will suffice. The term πνεῦμα is an inherently difficult term to define

in a cogent manner. Levison summarizes this point: “The range of meanings suggested by the single word, *pneuma*, is itself bewildering, encompassing entities as diverse as subterranean vapors, heavenly winds, human attitudes, unpredictable ghosts, and a holy spirit.”¹ The complexity is staggering, although arriving at a measure of clarity is not impossible.

Greco-Roman Background: The Hellenistic Mysteries

The “history of religions” school during the 20th century suggested the faith of the Hellenistic mystery religions was integrated with the prophetic faith of ancient Israel to form the brand new religion of Christianity.² According to this approach, the faith of ancient Israel should be considered less important than the more direct points of contact between Paul and the mystery religions, the Hermetic literature and Mandaism.³ A few principles stand out, first, history of religions proponents see the dualistic nature of Pauline theology, in particular, the contrast between *ψυχή* and *πνεῦμα*, as a non-Jewish characteristic.⁴ The Pauline contrast between the “spiritual man” and the “psychic man” lies at the center of Paul’s religion, and can only be explained from the Hellenistic mysteries.⁵ Paul’s description of the *πνευματικὸς*, “spiritual man,” in 1 Cor. 2:15-16, is philological evidence of his usage of Hellenistic vocabulary.⁶ Reitzenstein specifically holds that Paul’s usage of the adjectives “psychic” and

¹ John Levison, *The Spirit in First-Century Judaism* (Boston: Brill, 2002), 1.

² Otto Pfeiderer (1836-1900) earned the title of “the father of religio-historical theology in Germany.” He was convinced that Paul’s theology was an integration of Jewish and Hellenistic ideas. Stephen Neill and Wright *Interpretation of the NT: 1861-1986*. 2nd ed. (Oxford: Oxford University, 1988), 169.

³ Hans Joachim Schoeps. *Paul: The Theology of the Apostle in the Light of Jewish Religious History*. Trans. Harold Knight (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1961), 16.

Davies adds that the Hermetic literature was not necessarily part of the mysteries and may have come later than Paul. Thus, it is possible that early Pauline Christianity influenced the Hermetic literature, rather than the other way around. W. D. Davies. *Paul and Rabbinic Judaism* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1980), 200.

Some scholars claim that Paul discusses his theology as “a full-fledged Gnostic.” Ridderbos cites Paul’s statements concerning “God’s hidden wisdom” (1 Cor. 2:7), and a mystery that God reveals “through the Spirit” (1 Cor. 2:10) to “he who is spiritual” (1 Cor. 2:15) as evidence. It is true that in 2nd century Christian Gnosticism one finds the term “Spirit” elevated above “psychic” in a manner similar to Paul. The issue boils down to whether Pauline pneumatology or Gnosticism came first. Hermann Ridderbos. *Paul and Jesus: Origin and General Character of Paul’s Preaching of Christ* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1958), 57.

⁴ Ibid., 15.

⁵ Gresham J. Machen. *The Origin of Paul’s Religion* (New York: MacMillan, 1921), 265.

⁶ Richard Reitzenstein. *Hellenistic Mystery-Religions*. Trans. John E. Steely (Pittsburgh: Pickwick, 1978), 439.

“spiritual” (1 Cor. 2:14-15) are a contrast based upon the Hermes Trismegistus and other related sources.⁷ He notes that the Hermetic literature identifies the πνεῦμα as a “garment” put on by the spiritual person.⁸ For him, Paul adopts a similar notion in his comparison between the “spiritual” and “psychic” man. The spiritual man is the one who wears the πνεῦμα, and the psychic man does not.

Another parallel that has been cited is that Paul’s entire redemptive system parallels the many mystery cults of Paul’s day and that this similarity indicates that he borrowed their ideas.⁹ Randall offers a statement representative of the history of religions approach: Christianity, at the hands of Paul, became a mystical system of redemption, much like the cult of Isis, and the other sacramental or mystery religions of the day. Salvation is not forgiveness of sins, as it is for Jesus himself, but a transformation of human nature from the Flesh to Spirit, from human to divine: it is literally a process of deification.¹⁰

According to this assertion, for Paul, Jesus Christ was a Divine Spirit, who temporarily put on the Flesh, died, and was freed from the Flesh. As a result, this is the system Paul set up for Christians. For example, Paul informed the Corinthians, “So will it be with the resurrection of the dead. The body that is sown is perishable, it is raised imperishable; it is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power; it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body” (1 Cor. 15:42-44). This approach claims that Paul promised followers of Christ a similar process of deification previously modeled by Jesus. And of course, this must have been based upon ideas he discovered in the mystery religions.

Machen rejects the assertions of Reitzenstein on several grounds. First, Paul only uses the terms “psychic” and “spiritual” one time in the sources Reitzenstein examined; and, they are never found in contrast with one another. He suggests that even in 1 Cor. 2:14-15 the two ideas are not directly contrasted with one another. Second, in the Hermetic literature, the “spirit” is portrayed as something lower than the soul of a person. This correlates with the

⁷ Machen, *Paul’s Religion*, 266.

⁸ Reitzenstein, *Mystery-Religions*, 454.

⁹ John Hermann Randall. *Hellenistic Ways of Deliverance and the Making of the Christian Synthesis* (New York/London: Columbia University, 1970), 153.

¹⁰ Ibid.

The Greco-Roman version of the Isis mystery represented this “mistress of life” as “dispenser of life, protector (especially of the family), healer, deliverer, and so mistress of the universe. Richard L. Gordon. “Isis,” in *The Oxford Classical Dictionary*. 3rd ed. Edit. Simon Hornblower and Antony Spawforth (Oxford/New York: Oxford University, 1996), 768.

general Greek usage of πνεῦμα as “wind,” or “breath,” but it stands far away from Paul’s concept of the Spirit of God.¹¹

Several points of evidence display the dissimilarity between Pauline pneumatology and the perspective of the spirit within the mystery religions. Paul comes closer to a concept of the Spirit similar to the Hellenistic mysteries in his notion of a divine sanctuary. In the Greek temples of Aphrodite, Poseidon, etc. the innermost area of the temple was occupied by the image of the deity, which symbolized the presence of that deity. For Paul, the presence of God dwells in each believer who is the “temple of God” in whom “the Spirit of God dwells” (1 Cor. 3:16). However, the concept of a temple where the deity dwells is central to the OT understanding of the Spirit. An explanation for this idea in Paul does not need to be found in the mysteries.

Another point of refutation against the mysteries as background is the fact that, for the most part, the general features of the mysteries conflict with Pauline pneumatology. First, the ancients believed that the divine spirit would come down upon a few extraordinary people. For them, an experience of the spirit was an unusual experience, reserved only for those with a close attachment to the deity.¹² But for Paul, all Christians have the Spirit. This is why he could say, “For all who are being led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God” (Rom. 8:14).

Next, many of the Hellenistic mysteries believed that when the divine spirit came upon a special person, manifestations of physical phenomena would occur. For example, the priests of Cybele whirled knives during ecstatic frenzies. Plato writes of holy women, such as those at Delphi, who conferred great blessings upon Greece while possessed by a divine spirit.¹³ The adherents of the mysteries held these external manifestations in high regard, even as evidence of a higher level of spirituality than that found in those who could not exhibit them.

Paul’s congregation at Corinth, many of whom had been converted from the mysteries, raised the external manifestations of the Spirit above the other gifts. For them, the physical phenomena reflected a higher level of spirituality than the internal gifts. These understandings likely developed from their previous life as adherents of the mysteries. However, Paul made it clear that exhibiting spiritual gifts, such as tongues or prophesy was worthless unless one possessed the gift of love (1 Cor. 13:1-2).

Hellenistic religious thought perceived the spirit/Spirit as a force that responded to incantations or actions by the believer. For example, ancient magic was deemed to be available to those few with divine knowledge of the

¹¹ Machen, *Paul’s Religion*, 266.

¹² Leon Morris. *New Testament Theology* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1986), 76.

¹³ Ibid.

supernatural. But, similar to his opposition to Gnosticism, Paul does not see the Spirit limited to those with special knowledge, but given to all based upon the condition of their faith in Jesus Christ.¹⁴ Further, the Apostle emphasizes that the gifts of the Spirit are distributed “to each one individually just as He wills” (1 Cor. 12:11). The believer does not recite incantations or engage in some ritual in order to receive the Spirit.

Next, most mysteries did not place much emphasis upon the morality of the believer. What remained important was the observance of certain religious rites in order to please and to appease the divine. However, Paul clearly taught that true Christians would bear particular “fruit” in direct contrast to the “works of the flesh.”

Davies, who primarily refutes Reitzenstein, highlights some of the differences between the Pauline and Hellenistic perspectives of πνεῦμα.¹⁵ First, the three-part anthropological division of בשר, רוח, and נפש was already evident in the OT. Thus, Paul does not need to rely upon Greco-Roman thought for such a division. In addition, Reitzenstein offers no evidence that the mystery religions made such a distinction. Second, the physical Jesus and the Spirit are connected by the resurrected Christ. The mysteries make no such connection between the physical and spiritual worlds. Instead, the emphasis is upon leaving the physical world in order to become a divine member of the spiritual world.

The ideas of πνεῦμα in the Hellenistic mysteries vastly differ from those found in Paul. In fact, they are so dissimilar that the only legitimate connection one can make is with the term πνεῦμα itself. The identity, the nature, and the activity of the spirit/Spirit are not alike.

Greco-Roman Background: Philosophy

It has been suggested that parallels exist between Paul’s conception of the divine πνεῦμα and the ideas found in Stoic philosophy. The πνεῦμα plays a significant role within this ancient philosophy. Stoicism conceived of the spirit as the “world soul,” or *anima mundi*.¹⁶ The Roman statesman Seneca agreed with his Stoic forefathers that the soul of a person was part of the rational and divine πνεῦμα.¹⁷ Alexander of Aphrodisias cites Chrysippus’ Stoic theory of “blending,” which alleges that “the whole of substance [of the universe] is unified because it

¹⁴ T. Paige. “Holy Spirit,” in *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters*. Eds. Gerald F. Hawthorne, Ralph P. Martin, and Daniel G. Reid (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1993), 405.

¹⁵ Davies, *Rabbinic Judaism*, 193-200.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 178.

¹⁷ John R. Levison. “Holy Spirit,” in *Dictionary of New Testament Background*. Eds. Craig A. Evans and Stanley E. Porter (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2000), 509.

is totally pervaded by a πνεῦμα through which the whole is held together” (*De Mix.* 216.14-17). Fraser calls this Stoic notion “a microcosm of the macrocosm.”¹⁸

Those who see Greco-Roman philosophical influence believe that Paul picked up this Stoic idea of humanity’s unity with one another through the “Spirit” and applied it to his concept of unity in the Spirit of Christ. Thus, Christians should show “forbearance to one another in love” in order to “preserve the unity of the Spirit” (Eph. 4:1-16).

For Stoics, the spirit that pervades everything in the cosmos also dwells within individuals. Regarding this concept, Seneca wrote, “a holy spirit dwells within us, one who marks our good and bad deeds, and is our guardian. As we treat this spirit, so are we treated” (*Ep.* 41.2). Seneca continues the discussion by asserting that this spirit “is soul, and reason brought to perfection in the soul” (*Ep.* 41.8).¹⁹ Stoicism conceives of the spatial relationship between the πνεῦμα and human flesh as “the motion of a body through a body.”²⁰

Greek philosophy distinguished between the ideal world of the spirit and the evil material world of the flesh.²¹ For example, Platonism taught that the prison of the body, releases the individual soul, which, at death, ascends into the ideal spiritual world. Stoicism taught that the physical self becomes absorbed into the divine after the physical body dies.²²

Paul also addresses the “flesh” as evil and weak in a manner, which at first glance seems to have similarities with mainstream philosophy of his day. For Paul, believers should “put no confidence in the flesh” (Phil. 3:3). However, Paul’s conception of σάρξ, “flesh,” is based on the OT concept of “flesh,” which holds that frail humankind is totally dependent upon God and distinct from him. Paul asserts that humankind is bound to this world by the flesh, thus leaving the self open to temptation and sin that results from disobedience toward God.²³

It is difficult to maintain the position that Paul borrowed his ideas of the divine πνεῦμα from Greco-Roman philosophy. Kim notes that it is unlikely Paul had a formal education in Greek philosophy and rhetoric. Thus his knowledge likely did not extend beyond the popular elements that he mentions

¹⁸ John W. Fraser. *Jesus and Paul: Paul as Interpreter of Jesus from Harnack to Kümmel* (Abingdon: Marcham Books, 1974), 37.

¹⁹ Levison, “Holy Spirit,” 509.

²⁰ Robert Todd. *Alexander of Aphrodisias on Stoic Physics* (Leiden: Brill, 1976).

²¹ Fraser, *Jesus and Paul*, 38.

²² *Ibid.*

²³ *Ibid.*

on occasion.²⁴ The fact that Paul only cites Greek philosophical and popular sayings a handful of times in his letters and speeches in Acts (1 Cor. 15:33-Menander; Titus 1:12-Epimenides; cf. Acts 17:28) supports Kim's assertion.

Jewish Background: Old Testament

Paul makes many allusions to the OT in his epistles, which implies the OT's importance as foundational for his ideas. For instance, he asserts that the Scriptures (the OT) are both holy (Rom. 1:2) and prophetic (Rom. 4:3).²⁵ This is true of Paul's broader theological ideas, and in particular, his pneumatology. Paul is indebted to the OT concept of רִיחַ יְהוָה for the background of his thinking regarding the πνεῦμα of God.

Numerous pneumatological concepts found in the OT correspond with those found in Paul. First, Paul recognizes the relationship between the Spirit and prophecy. The OT depicts prophecy as one of the chief activities of the Spirit of God among his people. It can even be asserted that "all early religions based themselves upon the fundamental principle of direct communication between God and man."²⁶ The same was true for the Israelites, who understood their prophets to be men of the Spirit and mediators of direct revelation between God and his people. Wood even suggests that prophecy is the focal point around which Israelite conceptions of the Spirit arose and developed.²⁷

An important theme in the OT is the close relationship between the Spirit and the Word, for the activity of the Spirit is realized in the community through the word of the prophets.²⁸ Dyrness shows that it is first God's Spirit and then his Word that enters prophets and motivates them to speak and to act.²⁹ The importance of the Word always supersedes the importance of the prophet, for the prophet merely functions as a messenger who transmits the received Word.³⁰ For Moltmann, the Spirit and the Word are in mutual

²⁴ Other contemporaries of Paul exhibited deep influence from Greek philosophy, such as Philo of Alexandria. Seyoon Kim. *The Origin of Paul's Gospel* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1984), 32.

²⁵ George Eldon Ladd. *A Theology of the New Testament*. Revised ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994), 432.

²⁶ Irving F. Wood. *The Spirit of God in Biblical Literature* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1904), 28f.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 27.

²⁸ Wilf Hildebrandt. *An Old Testament Theology of the Spirit of God* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1995), 168.

²⁹ William A. Dyrness. *Themes in Old Testament Theology* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1979), 216.

³⁰ Edmond Jacob. *Theology of the Old Testament* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1958), 130.

relationship with one another because the Spirit is the subject about whom the Word speaks, and not merely the objective vehicle for the Word.³¹

Finally, with regard to the Spirit and prophecy in the OT, one can assume that the prophets were continuously endowed with the Spirit of God. For example, Elisha requested a double-portion of Elijah's gift (2 Ki. 2:9). No evidence shows that the anointing of the Spirit was given and then taken away on a repeated basis.

Paul notes that in the OT the $\pi\acute{\nu}\epsilon\upsilon\mu\alpha$ empowered the anointed prophet to relay the words of God to the people, while in the NT the $\pi\acute{\nu}\epsilon\upsilon\mu\alpha$ directly reveals truth to all believers.³² For the apostle, speaking by the Spirit is normative for the followers of Christ (1 Cor. 12:3). In this way, members of the body of Christ each behave in a prophetic manner. He specifically mentions prophecy, speaking in tongues and the interpretation of tongues as part of the cornucopia of gifts that the Spirit may grant various believers (1 Cor. 12:10).

Next, the OT foretold of a future time when the Spirit of God/Spirit of the LORD would be poured out differently in Israel's past (Joel 2:28-32; cf. Jer. 31:31-34). The OT speaks of a future endowment of the Spirit more magnificent than earlier manifestations in several ways (Ezek. 36-37). First, the giving of the Spirit in the eschatological future of the OT is primarily connected with the coming Davidic king, who would be the Spirit-endowed servant (Isa. 61:1-3).³³ Broomall highlights three areas that relate to the Spirit's participation in the eschatological period of the Messiah: the Spirit is closely related to the Messiah; the Spirit will be poured out in the time of the Messiah; and, the Spirit will regenerate people.³⁴

Paul experienced and understood the Spirit in an "eschatological framework" similar to that found in the OT.³⁵ It was "the Holy Spirit of promise," who set the eschatological age in motion.³⁶ In other words, the coming of the Spirit truly fulfilled the OT prophecies, however, at a future time a full manifestation of the Spirit would be truly completed. For this reason, Paul could speak of the Spirit as a "guarantee," a "down-payment" and the "firstfruits," of what was yet to come.

³¹ Jürgen Moltmann. *The Spirit of Life*. Trans. Margaret Kohl (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1992), 3.

³² Walter C. Wright, Jr. "The Source of Paul's Concept of Pneuma," *Covenant Quarterly*, Vol. 41, no. 1 (F 1983), 21.

³³ Norman H. Snaith. *The Distinctive Ideas of the Old Testament* (London: Epworth Press, 1944), 332.

³⁴ Wick Broomall. *The Holy Spirit* (New York: American Tract Society, 1940), 44ff.

³⁵ Gordon D. Fee, *God's Empowering Presence: The Holy Spirit in the Letters of Paul* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1994), 897.

³⁶ Gordon D. Fee. *Paul, the Spirit, and the People of God* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1996), 4.

Paul picks up the OT idea of the relationship between the Spirit and the future Messianic kingdom, which in the sphere of Pauline terminology means the Spirit and the Christ. Ezekiel 37:14 in the LXX reads, “καὶ δώσω τὸ πνεῦμά μου εἰς ὑμᾶς,” which translates God’s words as “and I will put my Spirit in you.” Paul reflects this similar concept of God in 1 Thess. 4:8, when he states, “God who gives His Holy Spirit to you.”³⁷

In the OT, the Messianic kingdom connects directly to the universality of the Spirit. Paul links these two elements as well. For example, he tells the Romans, “There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death” (Rom. 8:1).

The Messiah had been promised to be the source of life-giving water, a symbol of the Holy Spirit (cf. John 7:37-39). Paul expresses the unity of the Spirit to the Corinthians with water imagery. 1 Cor. 12:13 states, “For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and we were all made to drink of one Spirit.” Such water imagery is a common OT symbol that illustrates the future Messiah’s life-giving kingdom. For example, God declares in Ezek. 36:25, “Then I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and from all your idols.” Later in Ezekiel, God states, “I will pour out My Spirit on the house of Israel” (Ezek. 39:29; NIV).

The second characteristic of the marvelous future outpouring is its universal nature. Joel prophesied that “afterward”³⁸ the Spirit would be poured out upon all flesh regardless of gender, age, or social status (Joel 2:28-32). The event at Pentecost, the fulfillment of Joel’s predicted outpouring, inaugurated the last days and was a part of the final consummation of the Spirit yet to come.³⁹ The final downpour of the Spirit of God will take place in connection with the future restoration of Israel in relation to the second coming of Jesus.⁴⁰

Paul recognized that the ministry of Jesus inaugurated this eschatological age of a universal Spirit of God. Paul wrote in Gal. 3:14, “He redeemed us in order that the blessing given to Abraham might come to the Gentiles through Christ Jesus, so that by faith we might receive the promise of the Spirit.” Now the Spirit has been experienced by Jew and Gentile alike. Identification as a person of God is not to be based upon lineage, but whether or not the person bears the mark of the Spirit (2 Cor. 1:22; Eph. 1:13).

³⁷ Fee, *Empowering Presence*, 904.

³⁸ When Peter, under the anointing of the Holy Spirit, cited this OT text in his sermon on the day of Pentecost, he interpreted “afterward” to mean “in the last days” (Acts 2:17).

³⁹ Walter C. Kaiser. *The Uses of the Old Testament in the New* (Chicago: Moody, 1985), 94.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 96.

Third, the OT prophets convey the idea that a time would come when the condition of one's heart would determine salvation, not obedience to the codified laws of Moses. During the Babylonian Exile (cf. Ezek. 11:24), Yahweh promised, "I will give them an undivided heart and put a new spirit in them; I will remove from them their heart of stone and give them a heart of flesh. Then they will follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws. They will be my people, and I will be their God" (Ezek. 11:19-20).

Once again, Paul recognizes that this situation foretold in the OT has now begun in NT. Paul considers circumcision of the heart by the Spirit, rather than physical circumcision as expressed by the Law to be the fulfillment of the original intention of circumcision of the physical body (Deut. 30:1-6). It is no coincidence that so many parallels can be drawn between the OT and Pauline perspective of the Spirit in the future age.

The next OT concept of the Spirit found in Paul regards the covenant. Paul makes the point that the new covenant is superior to the old covenant. The OT connects the new covenant with the outpouring of the Spirit (Jer. 31:31; Ezek. 36:27). In fact, the Spirit is not merely evidence of this covenant, but the Spirit *is* the covenant. Paul cites numerous OT historical contexts in order to compare the old covenant of the Law of Moses to the new covenant of the Spirit. For example, Paul asserts that the ministry of the Spirit under the "new covenant" (2 Cor. 3:6) is superior to the ministry of Moses under the old covenant (2 Cor. 3:7-11). Elsewhere, the old covenant made with Israel at Sinai resulted in slavery, while the new covenant brings freedom to the children of promise (Gal. 4:23-29). Paul could not even begin the discussion of the new covenant without the background of the old covenant found in the OT.

The direct connection between Yahweh and the Spirit in the OT leads to Paul's direct connection between Christ and the Spirit in his epistles.⁴¹ At the Exodus from Egypt, the Spirit is thought of as the personal presence of Yahweh within the community of his people Israel. For, while Yahweh sat on his throne in heaven, He remained immanent in Israel by means of his Spirit.⁴² In Numbers 11, Moses pled with God to kill him or to give him help in ruling the nation. God obliged and put his Spirit upon seventy elders of Israel in order to help Moses judge the people (Num. 11:17, 25). Yahweh guided Israel down the path of history through anointed priests, prophets and kings. Paul sees God guiding the Church's path in much the same manner.

From Paul's perspective, although Christ is enthroned in heaven at the right hand of the Father (Eph. 1:20; Col. 3:1), those who follow Christ live in the Spirit. He tells the Philippians that "we are the *true* circumcision, who worship

⁴¹ R. B. Hoyle. *The Holy Spirit in St. Paul* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1928), 42.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 192.

in the Spirit of God and glory in Christ Jesus and put no confidence in the flesh" (Phil. 3:3). In sum, both the "I AM" of the OT and the "I AM" of the NT are directly connected with the people of faith.

Paul uses OT temple imagery in order to illustrate how God dwells in the midst of his people.⁴³ The LORD commanded Moses in the wilderness, "And have them make me a sanctuary, so that I may dwell among them" (Exod. 25:8). The tent was the sanctuary in which God's presence dwelt within Israel. When it was completed "the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle" (Exod. 40:34). The portable tabernacle was used even after the Israelites entered the Promised Land of Canaan up until the time of Solomon, who constructed a permanent Temple in Jerusalem (1 Ki. 6:37-38). When the Temple was completed and dedicated "the glory of the LORD filled the temple" (2 Chr. 7:1-2).

The concept of a new temple is a focal point of Jewish eschatology. The OT foresees a day when this temple will be the center of worship, not only for Israel, but also for all nations of the earth. For example, Isa. 2:2-3 says, "In days to come the mountain of the LORD's house shall be established as the highest of the mountains, and shall be raised above the hills; all the nations shall stream to it. Many peoples shall come and say, 'Come, let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; that he may teach us his ways and that we may walk in his paths'" (cf. Mic. 4:1-3; Jer. 3:17-18).

Paul's Jewish heritage contributed to his use of temple imagery with regard to the presence of God in the Christian life by means of the Spirit. According to Paul, the believing community as the temple of God has now replaced the temple in Jerusalem.⁴⁴ Paul exhorts the Corinthian congregation to unity by reminding them corporately "Do you not know that you are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in you?" (1 Cor. 3:16). And then later, he asks, "Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own?" (1 Cor. 6:19). In 2 Cor. 6:16-17, Paul indicates that what was true for the physical temple is now also true for the spiritual temple of believers: idols and God cannot dwell together. Just as the temple in Jerusalem became defiled by the inclusion of an idol, the inhabitation of sin renders the believer an unclean vessel, which is unfit for God's presence through the Spirit. Paul writes this because "we are the

⁴³ Fee, *Empowering Presence*, 114-15.

⁴⁴ Ralph P. Martin, *2 Corinthians*. Vol. 40. Word Bible Commentary (Waco: Word, 1986), 201.

In Paul, the term *ναός*, which refers to the temple building is mostly used (1 Cor. 3:16-17; 6:19; 2 Cor. 6:16; Eph. 2:21; 2 Thess. 2:4), rather than *ἱερός*, which refers to the entire temple area including the outer courts (1 Cor. 9:13). P. W. Comfort. "Temple," in *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters*. Eds. Gerald F. Hawthorne, Ralph P. Martin, and Daniel G. Reid (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1993), 924.

temple of the living God.” In sum, a thread of historical continuity in Paul’s pneumatology is found in his temple imagery, which he adopts from the tabernacle/temple of Israel and applies to the Christian life in the Spirit.

Paul applies OT concepts about the Spirit directly to the Church, which in their original historical context referred to Israel. In every stage of her history, Israel received charismatic leaders empowered by the Spirit to complete various tasks from Yahweh, and in this way, God through the Spirit theocratically ruled over his people.⁴⁵ As a result, the entire nation of Israel was corporately endowed with the Spirit through her anointed judges, kings, and prophets.⁴⁶ Thomas goes so far as to assert that throughout the OT, not only the charismatic leaders, but the entire nation of Israel is understood to be “an inspired supernatural people” to whom are given Spirit-inspired leaders to accomplish divinely appointed tasks.⁴⁷

For Paul, the Church is the true Israel, the chosen people of God.⁴⁸ The Holy Spirit revealed to Paul the fact that salvation had always been for all, despite Israel’s election (Rom. 9:1). True Israelites are not the physical descendants of Abraham, but the “children of the promise” (Rom. 9:8); the promise of the Holy Spirit. Even when Paul wrote to Gentile believers he called Abraham “our forefather” (Rom. 4:1) and Isaac “our father” (Rom. 9:10).⁴⁹

Paul takes over the concept of the Spirit as the power of God from the OT.⁵⁰ The OT prophets censured the Israelites time and time again for their moral failures (cf. Amos 2:4-8). But they saw that eventually God would provide the power of his רִיחַ in order to help the people to obey his commands (Ezek. 36:26-27) and to keep his covenant (Jer. 31:31-34).⁵¹ In the OT, the רִיחַ-יְהוָה is a charismatic power that inspired persons to feats of strength and wisdom for the building up of the Kingdom of God in Israel (e.g. Samson, Othniel, Joseph, Bezaleel, David, Gideon, etc.). The רִיחַ-יְהוָה is also the power that would gather a remnant of believers (Isa. 11:11) and form a Spirit-inspired community (Ezek. 36:24-28; Joel 2:28-32).

The OT shows that the Spirit brought about spiritual life as well as physical life. For example, the LORD promised to give his Spirit to the nation of Israel so that she could be a light to the Gentiles (cf. Isa. 42:1-7). Isaiah and other prophets foretold of Israel’s spiritual regeneration brought about by the Spirit

⁴⁵ Hildebrandt, *Spirit of God*, 104.

⁴⁶ Moltmann, *Spirit*, 45.

⁴⁷ W. H. Griffith Thomas. *The Holy Spirit of God* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1955), 13.

⁴⁸ Ladd, *New Testament*, 432.

⁴⁹ Morris, *NT Theology*, 20.

⁵⁰ Paige, “Holy Spirit,” 406.

⁵¹ Walter C. Wright, Jr., “The Source of Paul’s Concept of Pneuma,” *Covenant Quarterly* 41:1 (1983), 22.

(Isa. 32:15). The Spirit's work in Israel's spiritual reformation would, in turn, bring to fruition God's purpose for all humankind.

Once again, a thread of historical continuity can be found from the creation account of the OT to the creation account of the NT in Paul's doctrine of the Spirit. Paul indicates that anyone dwelling within the sphere of Christ's salvation is a new creation (2 Cor. 5:17), which alludes to the creative work of the Spirit in Gen. 1:2 and elsewhere in the OT. The Spirit that once upon a time gave physical life to the world also grants spiritual life to those "in Christ."

Paul adopts the three part anthropological organization of body, soul and spirit that is rooted in the OT. The OT dualistically perceives the whole person to be part spirit (רוח) and part flesh (בשר). In Hebrew thought, the person's non-physical being is comprised of רוח and נפש (soul), although the meanings of spirit and soul tend to overlap.⁵² Jacob succinctly sets forth the relationship among flesh, spirit, and soul by asserting that the soul (נפש) results when the flesh (בשר) is animated by the spirit (רוח).⁵³ Moltmann calls the spirit in the OT "the human being's comprehensive organizational principle," which means one needs to talk about a "spirit-soul" and a "spirit-body" and understand the unity of body and soul in the spirit. He further submits that this unity binds people together socially and culturally and binds people to the natural environment.⁵⁴

Jewish Background: Second Temple Judaism

Jewish thought regarding the Spirit during the Second Temple period is quite diverse. The Apostle Paul could have drawn pneumatological ideas from several possible sources, which are dated from this period. These bodies of literature, which reflect Jewish religious thought from the Second Temple period (ca. 500 B.C.—A.D. 70), provide possible background sources for Paul's concepts of πνεῦμα, and include rabbinical writings and Jewish apocalyptic literature.

Attempts to offer rabbinic literature as background to NT thought is problematic because this body of Jewish literature was not codified until the period beginning after the destruction of the temple (A. D. 70) through the end of the 2nd century.⁵⁵ Even so, scholars have identified various aspects of the Spirit

⁵² J. Barton Payne. "רוח," in *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*. 2 Vols. Edit. R. Laird Harris (Chicago: Moody Press, 1980), 2:836.

⁵³ Jacob, *Old Testament*, 161.

⁵⁴ Jürgen Moltmann. *God in Creation*. Trans. Margaret Kohl (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1993), 18.

⁵⁵ Sanders lists the important primary works of this "Tannaitic" period (the period between A. D. 70 and 200) as the Mishnah, the Tosefta, and the Tannaitic or halakic midrashim (the Mekilta on Exodus, Sifra on Leviticus and Sifre on Numbers and Deuteronomy). E. P. Sanders. *Paul and Palestinian Judaism* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1977), 59.

found in Rabbinic Judaism that are not directly found in the OT, and possibly contributed to Paul's conception of the Spirit.

First, the term "holy spirit" occurs more frequently in the Talmud, Midrash, and Apocryphal literature than in the OT.⁵⁶ In the Talmud, the holy spirit is the source of divine insight. For example, Abraham's wife Sarah is listed as a prophetess in Israel because "she saw the divine will through the holy spirit," thus, God told Abraham to "listen to whatever Sarah tells you" (*b. Meg.* 14a; Gen. 21:12).

The Midrash on Leviticus explains that the "Holy Spirit"⁵⁷ stirred Moses to murder the Egyptian taskmaster for two reasons: one is not mentioned in the OT. Moses had seen the taskmaster physically abuse the Hebrew (Exod. 2:11), but the Holy Spirit also gave Moses divine insight to the fact that the taskmaster and the wife of the Hebrew slave were engaged in an adulterous relationship (*Lev. Rab.* 32.4). This explanation offers a convenient excuse for Moses' homicide, and once again, provides an example of how Jewish thought conceives of the Holy Spirit as the source of divine discernment.

In the Apocrypha, the holy spirit inspires authors. For example, Ezra seeks to restore the Scriptures and asks the Lord, "If then I have found favor with you, send the holy spirit into me, and I will write everything that has happened in the world from the beginning, the things that were written in your law" (4 Ezra 14:22; cf. Wis. Sol. 9:17; Sus. 1:45).

Because the term "holy spirit" occurs only three times in the OT (Ps. 51:11; Isa. 63:10f), one can assert that Paul's more frequent use of "Holy Spirit" (16 times in 7 separate letters) in his epistles displays rabbinical rather than OT influence. There are reasons for this pattern. Second Temple Judaism (in the Diaspora) had adopted an extensive angelology. Jews and pagans alike held a strong belief in angels and demons. Therefore, it was necessary for rabbis to distinguish the divine Spirit from the pantheon of other spirits in the supernatural world. As a result, Second Temple literature identifies the divine Spirit as both the "holy spirit" and the "spirit of truth." For example, the *Testament of Judah* specifies "that two spirits await an opportunity with humanity: the spirit of truth and the spirit of error" (*T. Jud.* 20:1). Elsewhere, *Jubilees* reports Rebecca's blessing for Jacob when "a spirit of truth descended upon her mouth" (*Jub.* 25:14).

Paul faced a similar theological situation. For example, congregation members at Ephesus were converts from pagan religions that believed in supernatural mediators between humanity and the gods/God. This fact led him

⁵⁶ Hoyle, *Holy Spirit*, 199.

⁵⁷ Note that sometimes "Holy Spirit" is capitalized, and sometimes it is not. This paper will use capital letters or lower case in correspondence with the passage being discussed.

to write instructions such as, “For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places” (Eph. 6:12).

Second, rabbinic Judaism often comprehends of the Spirit in “material” terms.⁵⁸ The Spirit can be conceived of as “Light.” For instance, Miriam, the sister of Aaron, prophesied that her mother would bear a son (Exo. 15:20). Regarding this passage, Rav Nahman concludes, “When he was born the entire house filled up with light” (*b. Meg.* 14a). The light represents the presence of God’s spirit through the prophetic figure. Further, the Midrash Rabbah implies that “the lights in the firmament of the heavens” result from the creative Spirit (*Lev. Rab.* 9.9). Also, the spirit is described as having fire-like qualities. For example, “a holy spirit was enkindled within Tamar” (*Gen. Rab.* 85.9), which caused her to suggest the signet, cord, and staff of Judah as a pledge-payment for sex. The spirit is granted sound-like qualities as well. For example, the rabbis claim that Samson’s great physical strength rose up when “the spirit of the Lord began to ring within him” (*Lev. Rab.* 8.2). Next, the hovering of the spirit over the face of the waters at Creation is compared with “a dove that hovers over her young without actually touching them” (*b. Hag.* 15a).

While Davies describes these illustrations of the spirit/Spirit as “material” terms, it would be better to depict them as “metaphorical” descriptions. In his epistles, Paul employs Spirit-metaphors in a manner that reflects such rabbinic teaching methodology. Some Pauline scholars have already established that Paul freely uses rabbinic exegetical methods to teach his congregations about Christ. Regarding Paul’s use of rabbinic exegesis, Hengel notes, “One might say generally that in fact the apostle sought to refute the teaching which was once on obligation on him with the methods that he had learned in the Pharisaic school.”⁵⁹ Hengel supports his assertion with the examples of Paul’s Abraham midrash in Romans 4 and Galatians 3, his teachings in Romans 9-11 and 1 Corinthians 7, and judicial language found in Galatians 1-3 and Philippians 3.⁶⁰ Paul’s rabbinic teaching methodology carries over to his teaching on the Spirit as well.

Third, rabbinic Judaism appears to restrict the activity of the Spirit to the sphere of humanity. Davies shows that Paul also limits the activity of the Spirit to humanity. Paul offers no cosmological context for the activity of the Spirit in Paul, nor does any other NT writer, which is in agreement with the rabbinic

⁵⁸ Davies, *Rabbinic Judaism*, 183f.

⁵⁹ Martin Hengel. *The Pre-Christian Paul* (London/Philadelphia: SCM/Trinity, 1990), 47.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

thought of his day.⁶¹ For example, in Gen. 1:2, where the rabbis could have found the Spirit as the creating power of God, they instead interpret the ריח as the wind or Spirit of Adam or of the Messiah (depending on the rabbi). The literature found in the Pseudepigrapha and Apocrypha exclude any cosmological significance to the Spirit as well.⁶²

Rather than emphasizing cosmological attributes of the Spirit, Rabbinic Judaism “ethicized” the Spirit. The rabbis believed that the Spirit had enabled the prophets to discern right from wrong. Further, the Spirit “inspired” the Scriptures, the ultimate written authority distinguishing right from wrong. When the rabbis considered the future Age to Come in which the Messiah would rule, the ethical implications are self-evident.⁶³ It would be a time of righteousness and justice.

The ethical aspects of the Spirit are vivid in Paul’s discussion of the fruit of the Spirit in contrast with the works of the flesh (Gal. 5:16-25). However, there is a stark contrast between the rabbinic and the Pauline perspectives of the effect of the Spirit upon moral living. In sum, the rabbinic literature sees the Spirit as the reward for good works, while Paul sees the Spirit as the enabler of good works.⁶⁴

Fourth, rabbinic Judaism emphasized the communal, rather than the individual, aspect of the Spirit.⁶⁵ This differs from the OT, because for the most part, only indirect references to the communal aspect occur in the OT as the Spirit is conferred upon individuals. But as Wood notes, although the Spirit in the OT is conferred upon individuals, the ultimate purpose was to benefit the entire nation.⁶⁶ For example, in Ezekiel 37 the Spirit brings about national unity in the Valley of Dry Bones. Further, in the Second Temple period, Jewish literature takes note of the communal aspect of the Spirit in a more explicit way than in the OT. Wood dates the last part of Isaiah during the rabbinic period and cites “Deutero-Isaiah” 44:3, “For I will pour out water on the thirsty land and streams on the dry ground; I will pour out My Spirit on your offspring, And My blessing on your descendants.”

Davies insists that Paul, in line with rabbinic thought, recognizes the social nature of the Spirit. He doubts that Paul would have claimed reception of the Spirit unless the Apostle was convinced that the believing community as a whole also had received the Spirit.⁶⁷ Yet, this communal intention of the Spirit

⁶¹ Davies, *Rabbinic Judaism*, 188.

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ Ibid., 218-19.

⁶⁴ Ibid., 220.

⁶⁵ Ibid., 202-203.

⁶⁶ Davies citing Wood, *Rabbinic Judaism*, 202-203.

⁶⁷ Ibid., 207.

was already evident in the OT (Joel 2:28-32), so Paul did not need to rely upon rabbinic thought for this concept.

Further, most of Second Temple Judaism believed that Spirit-inspired prophecy had been removed from Israel. Paul inherited a brand of Judaism which viewed the Spirit as a part of Israel's glorious past and expected the Spirit to be a primary focus of a restored future.⁶⁸ For example, when Judas Maccabeus re-consecrated the Temple, he took the pieces of the altar and "stored the stones in a convenient place on the temple hill until a prophet should come to tell what to do with them" (1 Macc. 4:46).⁶⁹ The prevailing belief was that the "holy spirit" who inspired the prophets had been replaced by an inferior *Bath Qol*.⁷⁰

Mainstream Jewish rabbis taught that the Spirit had been removed from Israel because of Israel's own sin. For example, Deuteronomy 18:12 states, "For whoever does these things is detestable to the LORD; and because of these detestable things the LORD your God will drive them out before you." The Sifre on this verse reflects by stating, "Why is the Holy Spirit so little evident in Israel?" The answer: "Because your iniquities have separated you and your God" (Isa. 59:2).⁷¹ But a future age would be inaugurated in which the atmosphere in Israel would change. For the time being, the Spirit was one of several elements that differed from the Second Temple but were present in the first. The others were "the ark, the ark cover, the cherubim, the fire, the Presence of God, the Holy Spirit [prophecy], and the Oracle Plate" (*b. Yoma* 21b). Some of these elements were still present, but "they did not do so much good as they had" (*b. Yoma* 21b; cf. *Num. Rab.* 15.10).⁷²

Many rabbis could predict the future and were considered "pneumatic."⁷³ The rabbis believed that the prophetic office had been granted to them, at least in part. In the OT, typically individual prophets foretold future events, although groups of prophets are occasionally mentioned. The rabbis adopted the idea that many of their group enjoyed the supernatural ability of prediction. In a similar vein, Paul discusses the πνευματικός, "spiritual man," on a couple of occasions in his epistles. But Paul correlates the πνευματικός with discernment, not prediction. He writes that "he who is spiritual appraises all things" (1 Cor.

⁶⁸ Ibid., 215.

Davies summarizes Rabbinic belief concerning the Spirit in the Second Temple period: 1) anointing was transferred from the prophets to the sages; 2) many Rabbis were pneumatic in that they could predict the future; 3) the Shekinah presence of God through the Holy Spirit further developed; and, 4) *bath qol* still revealed to Israel the will of God. Ibid., 211-212.

⁶⁹ James Dunn. *The Theology of Paul the Apostle* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 416f.

⁷⁰ Levison, "Holy Spirit," 508.

⁷¹ Davies cites this rabbinical reference. Davies, *Rabbinic Judaism*, 206.

⁷² Ibid., 208.

⁷³ Ibid., 211f.

2:15). Later, he states, "If anyone thinks he is a prophet or spiritual, let him recognize that the things which I write to you are the Lord's commandment" (1 Cor. 14:37).

The Shekinah presence of God through the Holy Spirit developed.⁷⁴ After the Old Testament period, the Jews association of God's presence among His people with the Tabernacle and Temple was called "Shekinah," which is from the same verbal root as מִשְׁכָּן, "tabernacle." Jewish philosophy maintained that, following the Temple's destruction and termination of prophecy, the visible "Shekinah" ceased to appear, but would return with the coming of the Messiah. However, the invisible "Shekinah" did not disappear from the hearts and minds of pure, upright Jews. Davies cites Marmorstein, who asserts a close association between the Holy Spirit and the Shekinah. Sin drives both away, and the same virtues qualify one for both.⁷⁵

Select rabbinic sources reveal that some quarters of Judaism believed the Spirit was still active in Israel. For example, a midrash on Leviticus 26:3 teaches that, for the one who learns the Torah without the intention of putting it into practice, it would be "better for him had the afterbirth in which he lay been turned over his face and he had not come out into the open air of this world." But on the other hand, "He who learns with the intention of practicing will be privileged to receive the Holy Spirit" (*Lev. Rab.* 35.7; cf. *S. S. Rab.* 1.8; *Mek Besh.* 7; *m. Sot.* 9.15; *b. Abod. Zar.* 20b).⁷⁶

The *Bath Qol* still revealed the will of God to Israel.⁷⁷ During the Second Temple period, Jews believed that prophetic speech under the direct influence of the Holy Spirit had been replaced with occasional short messages from heaven called the *Bath Qol* (lit. "the daughter of the voice").⁷⁸ The rabbinical schools of Hillel and Shammai used the *Bath Qol* as fodder in their battle against one another for ultimate religious authority within Judaism. The Babylonian Talmud reports, "The one said The Halakah is according to our meaning: the other said The Halakah is according to our meaning. Then there came forth the *Bath Qol* which said 'These words like those are the words of the Living God but the true Halakah is after the school of Hillel'" (*b. Erub.* 13b).⁷⁹

The apparent contradiction within Judaism regarding the cessation of the Spirit stands against the teaching of the Shekinah and *Bath Qol*. This muddles the pneumatological picture of Second Temple Judaism, thus making it difficult to determine if and from where Paul may have drawn certain ideas.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ Ibid., 211f.

⁷⁶ Ibid., 209.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ Hoyle, *Holy Spirit*, 202.

⁷⁹ Cited in Davies, *Rabbinic Judaism*, 212.

Rabbinic Judaism would have understood the future Age to Come as the “Messianic Age” or the “Age of the Spirit.”⁸⁰ There was an expectation that the future Messiah would reign “powerful in the holy spirit” (*Pss. Sol.* 17:37) and “in wisdom of spirit” (*Pss. Sol.* 18:7). He would be empowered by “the glory of the Most High” and be filled with “the spirit of understanding and sanctification” (*T. Levi* 18:7).

Paul was a Pharisee who believed the Messiah had come and inaugurated his kingdom, which brought with it all the expected accoutrements, especially the Spirit. The Epistle to the Galatians emphasizes that “the fullness of time” had come when God sent his Son. In turn, the Son imparted his Spirit into the hearts of believers (*Gal.* 4:4-6). For Paul, those who presently experience the new age “walk by the Spirit” and do not “carry out the desire of the flesh” (*Gal.* 5:16, 25). The idea of a future outpouring of the Spirit is clearly evident in the OT, thus Paul does not necessarily have to rely upon rabbinic thought for his comprehension of this concept.

No clarity exists regarding the extent of influence rabbinic pneumatology upon Paul’s doctrine of the Spirit. One can conclude that the extant rabbinic writings represent rabbinic thought from the last quarter of the first century until the end of the second century. But one cannot maintain certainty that these texts represent all of rabbinic thought pre-A. D. 70. Certain rabbinical schools survived the destruction of Israel, while others did not. On the other hand, many rabbis evidently felt free to use metaphorical descriptions of the Spirit, which Paul carries forward.

The community at Qumran stood in contrast with the most of the writers of the Second Temple period, because they understood themselves to be a people endowed with the holy רִיחַ of God.⁸¹ A person’s sins are cleansed “by the spirit of holiness uniting him to His truth” and expiated “by the spirit of uprightness and humility” (1QS 3.7). For them, the holy רִיחַ of God dwelt within the righteous person who obeyed Mosaic Law and the Community Rules of the Qumranian society (1QS 9.3).

The Dead Sea Scrolls also offer the idea that the “holy spirit,” which dwells within an individual, should not be defiled. The Damascus Document commands, “They shall keep apart from every uncleanness according to the statutes relating to each one, and no man shall defile his holy spirit since God has set them apart.” (CD 7.4-5). One may see a conceptual parallel with the Jewish concept of the “holy spirit” and Paul’s notion that all believers are “temples of the Spirit” (2 Cor. 3:16). However, Paul’s emphasis is quite different. The reference from the Damascus Document implies that the spirit of

⁸⁰ Ibid., 216.

⁸¹ Wright, “Pneuma,” 19.

holiness is the reward for the pious person who maintains purity, while for Paul, the Spirit is the means by which a person remains undefiled.

The Revelation of Jesus the Messiah

Paul based his pneumatology upon the revelation of God's Spirit recorded in the OT, but this understanding was enriched by the further revelation of God's Spirit through his Son Jesus Christ. For Paul, the Spirit was the primary focus of life in Christ at the point of salvation, in the present Christian life and the future eschaton. Paul understood that to be "in the Spirit" was synonymous with being "in Christ" (cf. Rom. 8:9). Hamilton notes that for Paul "the Christian life altogether a product of the Christocentric, eschaton-related Spirit."⁸² And he further asserts that the Lord Jesus Christ is the key for understanding Paul's pneumatology.⁸³

Meyer sets forth the thesis, "While there is little...distinctively Christian about either the language about the Holy Spirit or the notions of the Spirit found even in Paul, these become distinctively Christian precisely when they are related, and by virtue of being related, to the figure of Jesus Christ..."⁸⁴ Paul may have contextualized his message regarding the Spirit to fit his Greco-Roman addressees; however, it is impossible to conclude that Paul perceived Jesus Christ and his Spirit as the fulfillment of any mystery religion or philosophy of his day. Therefore, the supporters of a view that insists upon Hellenistic influence upon the core of Pauline pneumatology must prosecute the case that Paul concocted his version of Christianity without divine guidance, that Paul was a man left to his own human creativity. This view deliberately ignores the formative effect of the Damascus Road event for Paul's theological thought.

Summary of Background to the Pauline Concept of πνεῦμα

This survey of the term πνεῦμα reveals the myriad of complexities related to its definition, use and understanding. This is not an exhaustive study, but it has sought briefly to touch upon the major possible backgrounds and influences that affected Paul's understanding of this concept.

⁸² Neill Q. Hamilton. *The Holy Spirit and Eschatology in Paul* (Edinburgh: Oliver & Boyd, 1957), 84.

⁸³ Ibid., 83.

⁸⁴ Paul W. Meyer. "The Holy Spirit in the Pauline Letters: A Contextual Exploration," *Interpretation* 33 (1979), 5.

Some scholars have proposed a heavy Hellenistic mystery religion and/or Greco-Roman philosophical influence. But in order for such arguments to be valid, they must explain the overwhelming similarities between the Spirit in the OT and the Spirit as presented in the Pauline literature. Most of the evidence behind the suggestion that Paul's use of πνεῦμα is directly connected with Greek thought has been subverted. Certainly, Paul contextualized his message to those who lived in the Greco-Roman world through the use of figures of speech, such as metaphors, in order to communicate effectively with his audiences. The recognition of his audience and their background does not, however, indicate that Paul's concept of πνεῦμα departed from its roots in OT theology.

Relevance and Definition of a Term: Tangible

The Christian life is one of faith, a belief in the unseen, although God has accommodated the human need for visible signs of his presence.⁸⁵ Even in the OT, God provided visible signs of his presence within Israel, such as Moses' burning bush (Exod. 3:3-4), the cloud by day (Exod. 16:10) and the fire by night (Exod. 19:19; cloud and fire: 40:34-38), in order to guide Israel's wilderness travels. Although Yahweh prohibited fashioning images of his likeness, he graciously provided images and metaphorical descriptions of his relationship to his people. The Ark of the Covenant exemplified this reality. Miller notes, "When the ark was carried into battle, the people and their enemies believed that Yahweh was present. But there was no statue or image of the deity. Rather, Yahweh was enthroned invisibly upon the cherubim."⁸⁶ Contained within the ark were reminders of what God had revealed and accomplished for the nation of Israel: the Ten Commandments (Deut. 10.1-2), a pot of manna (Exo. 16.32-34) and Aaron's rod that budded (Num. 17:10-11). These images did not depict God's presence, but indicated that God's presence remained with Israel as long as the ark did.

But the terms "visible" and "invisible" narrow the focus too much to what human eyes can or cannot sense, whether literally or figuratively. In his work, *Seeing the Invisible*, Phillips defines "invisible" as "to denote those aspects of reality which, because they escape our physical senses, sometimes escape us. However, we may define it, religion is rooted in man's relationship to the unseen."⁸⁷ Phillips defines "invisible" in a manner that exceeds the boundaries of the literal dictionary definition of the word. Rather than identifying God as

⁸⁵ Henry Fehren, "Holiness Made Visible," *U. S. Catholic* 61:1 (Jan 1996), 26.

⁸⁶ Patrick D. Miller, *The Religion of Ancient Israel* (London/Louisville, KY: SPCK/John Knox, 2000), 16.

⁸⁷ Harold Cooke Phillips, *Seeing the Invisible* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1932), ix.

figuratively “invisible,” a better term for this reality would be “intangible,” for it encompasses a wider range of meaning.

The adjectives “tangible” and “intangible” contain a depth of meaning that is necessary for discussions about the nature and characteristics of the Spirit of God. An entity or object that is described as “tangible” carries with it several nuances of definition. One, a tangible entity must be capable of being treated as a fact through concrete evidence. Second, such an entity must be capable of being understood, not necessarily in a complete sense, but it needs to supply some measure of realization to observers. Third, an entity described as “tangible” also implies that it possesses a material value or benefit.

Under the New Covenant the tangible presence of God can be verified through the incarnation of Jesus Christ, followed by the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, who empowers the church to be witnesses of the gospel. The presence of a naturally intangible Spirit is tangibly experienced by Christians, according to Paul. He expresses this reality through a loose collection of metaphors found scattered throughout his epistles.

As Christians experience Christ through the tangible Holy Spirit, one must accept the fact of a deeper, mystical experience that goes beyond the physical senses that can be difficult to explain in human thought and vocabulary. Paul believed the existence of the Spirit to be real. He asserted that this Spirit could be understood to some measure, and as the presence of the Spirit in the life of the Christian is understood, so one learns more about the nature of God. Finally, Paul attested that the presence of the Holy Spirit in the life of the Christian brought with it material benefit. These assumptions lay behind the Pauline Spirit-metaphors and his belief about the tangible expressions that result from an intangible Spirit.

Within this study, the term “tangible” will be used to include those elements of a Christian’s experience with God, who has revealed himself in manners that can be perceived both by the physical senses as well as in experiential ways that defy logic and empirical scientific procedures. It becomes ironic in Pauline pneumatological thought that the πνεῦμα, which by definition is untouchable, unknowable, unseen, and so value-neutral becomes distinguishable, knowable, seen, and of value to its recipients.

Metaphorical Language and Descriptions of Deity

Throughout the Old and New Testaments (OT and NT), biblical writers have used metaphors to bridge the chasm between the invisible spiritual and visible

physical worlds.⁸⁸ The demarcation between the physical and spiritual blurs because the intangible God has been revealed tangibly to humanity.⁸⁹

Most biblical scholars presume that divinity can never be conceived of in a direct way. Von Rad notes that Israel's God "transcends all human ability to comprehend it, and that it cannot be captured by or comprised in a material object."⁹⁰ Lakoff and Johnson assert that since God cannot be understood literally and *directly* he must be discussed metaphorically and *indirectly*. David Aaron has proposed a system of "gradient judgments" that attempts to place statements about God on a "continuum of meaning." He thinks that classifying statements as simply metaphorical or literal neglects metaphor's ambiguity. Instead, he writes, "Metaphor, like all concepts, must be understood as a series of points on a line to represent the gradient continuum of meaning."⁹¹ Avis suggests that such attempts to establish degrees of literalness are "a wild-goose chase" because all assertions of theology are "irreducibly metaphorical."⁹² Gunton agrees with Stanford that the key in the relationship between language and the world is its *indirectness*. And because all language is inherently indirect, the emphatically indirect nature of metaphor makes it an appropriate linguistic tool. For Gunton, if all language about the world is indirect, certainly language about God must be as well.⁹³ According to Brueggeman, the ambiguity of metaphor protects humans from the form of idolatry that results when people believe they fully comprehend the deity.⁹⁴

Metaphors about God are necessary because without them individuals could know little or nothing about God. The same holds true for the Holy Spirit. God's revelation about Himself throughout the Bible emphasizes belief by faith in the indirect rather than belief by sight in the direct. An interpreter of

⁸⁸ Ellyn Sanna, *Touching God: Experiencing Metaphors for the Divine* (New York: Paulist, 2002), xiv.

⁸⁹ Berkhof notes that two kinds of metaphor specifically refer to the Divine Being. First, *anthropopathisms*, in which human emotions, passions and desires are ascribed to God (cf. Eph. 4:30). Second, *anthropomorphisms*, in which parts of human bodies and physical activities are ascribed to God (cf. Jam. 5:4). Louis Berkhof, *Principles of Biblical Interpretation: Sacred Hermeneutics* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1974), 83.

Caird adds that anthropopathisms and anthropomorphisms do not exhaust the metaphors applied to God, for there are also metaphors of relationship and activity. G. B. Caird, *The Language and Imagery of the Bible* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1980), 172.

⁹⁰ Gerhard Von Rad, *Old Testament Theology*. 2 volumes (trans. D. M. G. Stalker; San Francisco: Harper, 1962), 1:214. This reference cited in Aaron, *Biblical Ambiguities*, 9.

⁹¹ Aaron, *Biblical Ambiguities*, 111.

⁹² Paul Avis, *God and the Creative Imagination: Metaphor, Symbol and Myth in Religion and Theology* (London/New York: Routledge, 1999), 102.

⁹³ Gunton, *Actuality of Atonement*, 37-38.

⁹⁴ Brueggeman cited in Aaron, *Biblical Ambiguities*, 9.

Scripture must acknowledge indirect, metaphorical language as an acceptable part of divine revelation.

Interpreters of biblical metaphors associated with God are left with several suppositions. First, biblical writers had no language besides metaphor with which to express concepts surrounding God.⁹⁵ Human beings are restricted to the context of the created world around them in order to depict the Creator. Those who want to learn about and experience God must learn to interpret this troublesome figurative language.⁹⁶

Second, the biblical writers intentionally used metaphors. These writers were skilled communicators, but were also well aware of the nature (and limitations) of their tools.⁹⁷ Some critics presuppose that biblical writers were pre-scientific and naïve, and that the intellectual development of the primitive mind was at a “mythopoeic” stage in which concepts too difficult to grasp were set in a mythical context.⁹⁸ For example, this was a primary presupposition of Bultmann’s essays such as “New Testament and Mythology” and “On the Problem of Demythologizing.”⁹⁹ Thus, metaphors should be interpreted as mythical with a golden nugget of truth hidden somewhere inside. Yet, the biblical writers assumed that what they wrote best conveyed what they meant about the Father, Jesus Christ, and the Spirit of God.

Third, because metaphor was an acceptable tool for the biblical writers to use when speaking about God, then metaphor must have a degree of accuracy, because if it cannot, then the biblical text does not accurately depict God. And if metaphor cannot communicate truth about the supernatural, then agnosticism remains humankind’s only reasonable conclusion regarding God. For if metaphors do not enlighten audiences and do not reveal truth, then the vast array of metaphors about God in the Bible is worthless, even misleading.

Two of the three members of the God-head traditionally are depicted in metaphorical ways. The Trinitarian baptismal formula of Father, Son and Holy Spirit (cf. Matt. 28:19) provides a familial picture of Father and Son; Christians are adopted children. These are crucial metaphors for understanding the nature and character of God and Jesus Christ. But these descriptions are only one group of an infinite collection of possible images for these members of the God-head. Metaphors about the Spirit are equally crucial for understanding because

⁹⁵ Caird, *Imagery of the Bible*, 174; Soskice, *Religious Language*, ix-x.

⁹⁶ McFague notes that religious language poses a problem for those who want to understand God on *experiential* and *expressive* levels. McFague, *Metaphorical Theology*, 1.

⁹⁷ Caird, *Imagery of the Bible*, 131.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 193.

⁹⁹ Cf. Rudolf Bultmann. *New Testament & Mythology and Other Basic Writings* (ed. and trans. Schubert M. Ogden; Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1984).

they make the invisible, intangible, elusive Spirit visible, tangible, and comprehensible for finite human senses.

The Apostle Paul recognized the inherent intangibility of the Spirit. Yet, for him, the reality of the Spirit was foundational for the Christian life. The tangible presence of the Spirit could be best illustrated through a collection of thoughtfully constructed metaphors. Paul did not write a comprehensive systematic theology. Paul never wrote a tome that fully explained his pneumatology, part of which could have included a catalogue of Spirit-metaphors. Paul simply used metaphors to illustrate the Spirit's tangible presence in a way that his audiences could understand.

Studies Related to the Pauline Metaphors of the Spirit

It is relevant to mention briefly a sample of the significant works related to the topic at hand in this study. The seminal examination on the topic of the ancient use of metaphor in classical writing is *Greek Metaphor: Studies in Theory and Practice* by Bedell Stanford (1936). Stanford investigates classical definitions, varieties, and functions of metaphor from the perspectives of philosophers and rhetoricians such as Homer, Aristotle, Cicero, Hermogenes, Quintilian, and others. Stanford concludes that metaphor is common in language, aesthetically pleasurable, and intellectually perplexing. Also, he asserts that Greek writers/poets recognized the usefulness of metaphor and utilized it to the fullest extent. Some of Stanford's findings and works tangential to his study will offer principles used by the Apostle Paul in the metaphors found in his epistles, in particular, Paul's metaphors of the Holy Spirit. This study will differ from Stanford because he did not include the Apostle Paul in his work. Granted, Paul never wrote about metaphor theory and practice; he simply utilized metaphors as a first-century writer of epistles in Koine Greek.

David Williams' *Paul's Metaphors* (2000) is the most comprehensive survey of the topic.¹⁰⁰ Williams organizes his metaphors by themes such as city life, country life, family life, the business world, travel, warfare, and soldiering. He asserts that his work possesses an historical, exegetical, and even homiletical purpose. Although *Paul's Metaphors* is beneficial for the exposition of particular

¹⁰⁰ Also see J. S. Howson. *Metaphors of St. Paul and Companions of St. Paul* (Cambridge, MA: Riverside Press, 1872). Howson exegetically investigates the meaning of Paul's metaphors and divides them thematically into the categories of "Roman soldiers," "classical architecture," "ancient agriculture," and "Greek games." W. D. Davies classifies what he calls "The Great Pauline Metaphors" into the following areas: the Exodus, Creation, the Sacrificial System, and the Law. *Invitation to the New Testament: Guide to Its Main Witnesses* (Garden City: Doubleday, 1966), 310.

passages, the monograph does not contribute much to an understanding of Pauline theology as a whole. Williams presents little discussion regarding philosophical matters such as the nature or function of metaphor; rather, Williams explains specific metaphors in a practical way. One of the few principles he discovers regarding Paul's metaphors is that they are "an aid to the perception of truth" and possess "a reality that is more than the metaphor."¹⁰¹ Williams rightly observes (by using a metaphorical image) that "metaphors open a window on the world of those who employ them."¹⁰² In other words, their value remains today as the Greco-Roman world of Paul's first-century missionary travels becomes visible to 21st century interpreters of Paul. In sum, Williams has provided a fine catalog of Paul's metaphors and their meaning within their original historical context.

Gordon Fee, in his massive work *God's Empowering Presence: The Holy Spirit in the Letters of Paul* (1994), theorizes that Paul perceived the Spirit "as an experienced and living reality...the absolutely crucial matter for Christian life, from beginning to end."¹⁰³ He sees the Spirit as God's *personal* and *empowering* presence in the individual and community life of the church.¹⁰⁴ Fee classifies selected Pauline Spirit-metaphors as "eschatological" (seal, first fruits, down-payment), "soteriological" (adoption, washing/rebirth, sanctification) and images associated with the people of God (family, temple, Christ's body). This study will present a significant re-categorization of Pauline metaphors of the Spirit. Fee proposes that the Spirit is God's *empowering presence* in the Christian. This study will take a different approach by examining Paul's perspective of the Spirit as God's *tangible, perceptible presence* in the life of the Christian. These are not necessarily contradictory approaches: this thesis builds on and extends the work of Fee.

D. Michael Martin's dissertation "Pauline Metaphors of Christian Leadership" (Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1980) presents a collection of metaphors found in the Pauline corpus. Martin accentuates the philosophical aspects of metaphor, and he puts forth a process of interpretation in which the two primary elements of a metaphor go through stages of encounter, search, and resolution in order for an interpreter to arrive at the probable metaphoric meaning.¹⁰⁵ Martin arrives at a composite view of the Christian leader that results from his survey of Pauline use of metaphor and

¹⁰¹ David Williams, *Paul's Metaphors: Their Context and Character* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2000), 1.

¹⁰² Ibid., 2.

¹⁰³ Fee, *God's Empowering Presence*, 1.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., 5.

¹⁰⁵ D. Michael Martin, "Pauline Metaphors Describing Christian Leadership" (Ph. D. diss., Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1980), 60.

exegesis of metaphors of Christian leadership. In a manner similar to that used by Martin, this study will recognize the philosophical aspects of metaphor through a determination of their nature, identity, and function. Exegetical evaluation of these Spirit-metaphors should provide a composite Pauline understanding of the Spirit's role within the Christian life. But this study will focus upon the most important linguistic and conceptual theories for the interpretation of metaphor, and apply them to the Spirit-metaphors of Paul.

Another contribution to this area is David M. Park's dissertation entitled, "The Interpretive Value of the Metaphorical Constructions in 2 Corinthians" (Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1976), which determines several principles necessary for the interpretation of biblical metaphors. These include identification, analogy, solidarity, univocity (each metaphor accentuates one primary idea), context, socio-linguistic correlation (the relationship between vocabulary and culture), and accommodation. In his article "Interpreting Biblical Metaphors," Park includes the importance of the theological heritage of the biblical writer in the explication of scriptural metaphors.¹⁰⁶ This study of Pauline Spirit-metaphors presents many of these principles in a re-categorized manner under metaphor's nature, identity, and function. Park divides the Pauline metaphors in 2 Corinthians into the categories of faithfulness, ministry, eschatology, stewardship, consecration, and suffering. He focuses intently upon triumph in 2 Cor. 2:14-17 and suffering in 2 Cor. 12:1-10. He then lists the "value" of each of these with regard to the interpretation of Pauline metaphors. This examination of Pauline metaphors of the Spirit is tied together with the notion that Paul expresses the invisible Spirit's visible presence in the life of the Christian through the use of metaphor. Park's work has no such unifying theological theme.

Dunn adds unique insights to the metaphorical imagery used by Paul. He calls the early Christians' "conceptualized experience" something fresh and not based solely upon traditional formulations.¹⁰⁷ This new experience caused Paul to struggle with the production of "language suitable to express a reality freshly experienced, which lies behind the diversity of Paul's imagery."¹⁰⁸ His discussion regarding Paul's metaphors of salvation help to communicate that the Spirit functions as "the bridge between the present and the future, between the already and the not yet."¹⁰⁹ The chapters of this study divide the eras of the Christian life into three parts, rather than simply present and future. The third, or middle section, entitled "Pauline Spirit-metaphors of Progression" convey the notion of

¹⁰⁶ David M. Park, "Interpreting Biblical Metaphors," *Military Chaplain's Review* 15:1 (1986), 51.

¹⁰⁷ Dunn, *Paul*, 428.

¹⁰⁸ Dunn, *Paul*, 428.

¹⁰⁹ Dunn, *Paul*, 466, 469.

an overlap between the present and the future in which the Christian currently resides.

Concluding Observations and Proposal

Interpreters of Pauline literature must consider the *intended* meaning of his metaphors in order for their work to be complete. Paul ubiquitously utilizes the tool of metaphor so that his readers can conceptually grasp the invisible, intangible, and incomprehensible character of the Holy Spirit. This study seeks to examine Paul's use of these metaphors, which specifically describe the role of the Holy Spirit within the life of the Christian. The findings of this investigation will provide insight into Spirit-metaphors that will prove beneficial for interpreters of Pauline pneumatology and for broader theology. An understanding of these "Pauline metaphors of the Spirit" provides interpreters with a collection of carefully crafted, conceptual pictures that reveal the depth of intimacy between God and Christians. As of yet, no work has isolated the "Pauline metaphors of the Spirit" as a select cluster of material to be studied in this way.

The next chapter will establish a theoretical foundation for the examination of metaphor as a phenomenon of communication, both in the classical period and in the modern day. This investigation will arrive ultimately at some summary conclusions regarding the characteristics of metaphor. The principles gleaned from this general analysis of metaphor then will be applied to the metaphors of the Spirit found in the Pauline literature of the NT.