

Liberty University School of Divinity

**The Context and Effects of the Spirit Filled Seventy Elders**

A Dissertation Submitted to  
The Faculty of the School of Divinity  
In Candidacy for the Degree of  
Master of Divinity  
School of Divinity

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August, 2016

The views expressed in this thesis do not necessarily represent the views of the institution and/or of the thesis readers.

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**Abbreviations**

ANE	Ancient Near East
ANF	Ante-Nicene Fathers
ESV	English Standard Version
HS	Holy Spirit
LXX	Septuagint
MT	Masoretic Text
NEB	New English Bible
NIV	New International Version
NT	New Testament
OT	Old Testament
SOL	Spirit of the Lord

## Chapter 1

### Introduction

#### Statement of the Problem

With the founding of the Pentecostal, Charismatics and Third Wave movements there has been an ongoing debate among Christians about how to understand the gifts of the Holy Spirit (HS). One side arguing that all the gifts of the Spirit or some, specifically tongues, is available to believers today as it was during the time of the Apostles; the other side arguing that all the supernatural gifts of the Spirit have been done away with, and are no longer applicable to today's believers. In arguing one's case, both for and against, both sides have repeatedly overlooked the testimony of the Old Testament (OT) Scriptures. When they do look at the OT they are often concerned only with New Covenant passages such as Jeremiah 31:34, Ezekiel 11:14-19, or Joel 2:28-32 as seen through the lens of New Testament (NT) writers. While it is important to look at these passages and understand them in light of the NT, one should not negate the theological outlook of the OT and its influence on the NT.

In looking at this debate, it is important to consider the relevance of the OT teachings on the HS for the debate on the gifts of the Spirit. As MacArthur observes, some Christians neglect the HS entirely, [in teaching or practice], or they focus too much on the HS to the neglect of the work and person of Jesus Christ.<sup>1</sup> Thus, this paper is set to help broaden the knowledge and understanding of the role and the work of the HS in the OT.

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<sup>1</sup> John MacArthur, *Strange Fire: The Danger of Offending the Holy Spirit with Counterfeit Worship*, (Nashville, Tennessee: Thomas Nelson, 2013), Xii.

The passage to be covered in this thesis is Numbers 11:16-17, 24-29.<sup>2,3</sup> This passage has constantly been overlooked even though it is a foundational passage for the prophecy of Joel 2:28-29, the events of Pentecost in Acts 2, and other events of Acts relating to the work of the HS. Therefore, in light of the importance of this passage this thesis will set out to do a thorough investigation into the Numbers 11 passage.

### Statement of the Importance of the Problem

In looking at the gifts of the Spirit as a whole there appears to be much neglect towards the teachings of the OT on the matter. As Ma states, “[The] Old Testament has been systematically ignored by Pentecostal scholarship when it comes to any Pentecostal doctrine, and . . . the OT provides a surprising rich pattern for the current subject.”<sup>4</sup> There are many places to analyze the gifts of the Spirit in the OT; however, the Numbers 11 passage is the focus of this work, out of its direct or indirect influence through out the rest of Scripture.

In looking past the Pentecostal and Charismatic debate, it is important to understand what was understood by the original recipients of the teachings on the HS, in seeing theological concepts through their understandings. It is also important to look at how the Bible as a whole understood the gifts of the Spirit in a canonical view. It is then

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<sup>2</sup> Verses 18 though 23 of Numbers chapter 11 relates to the people’s complaint in the beginning of chapter 11, verses 1-15, and also with the ending of Chapter 11, verses 31-35. Though these verse are important to understanding the main passage of this thesis Numbers 11:16-17, 24-29; and more prevalent verses 24, 25, and 29. They will not be examined in-depth like those of the main passage, because a through examination of these verses will take away from main passages of focus for this thesis.

<sup>3</sup> The English Standard Version (ESV) is the translation of choice for this thesis, except where otherwise noted.

<sup>4</sup> Wonsuk Ma, "If It Is a Sign': An Old Testament Reflection on the Initial Evidence Discussion." *Asian Journal Of Pentecostal Studies* 2, (1999): 163-175. *Old Testament Abstracts*, EBSCOhost, accessed July 18, 2016, <http://web.b.ebscohost.com.ezproxy.liberty.edu:2048> (164).

important to see what the early Church understood about the gifts of the Spirit in order to get a historical view on the matter at hand.

#### Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this thesis is to examine the Numbers 11 passage as it pertains to the ministry of the HS. Specifically, my purpose is to examine its context, meaning, and significance in order to understand its role in the canon of Scripture. The purpose of this thesis is not to get into the Pentecostal/ Charismatic debate, but to analyze Biblical and historical evidence on the understandings of the gifts of the Spirit. This is to be viewed with the primary focus on the Numbers 11 passage and its influence on the rest of Scripture.

Also, another purpose of this thesis is to examine the importance of the OT for NT Christians. The average believer does not have a good understanding of OT theology. This work hopes to educate the reader on the importance of seeing the OT passages in their own light and seeing their effects on the NT. With this in mind, this thesis will focus specifically on the OT passage of Numbers 11:24-26 and 29.

#### Statement of Position

The position of this thesis is that the seventy elders with Moses in the Numbers 11 passage were filled with the Spirit of the Lord (SOL) and that the results of this filling had an effect on how we interpret subsequent relevant NT passages. Though we see the effects more clearly in the book of Acts, they do appear in the prophecy of Joel 2:28-32 and in three important verses in Paul's work (Galatians 3:28, and 1 Corinthians 12:31 and 14:1). Thus, in looking at these passages, with the main focus on Numbers 11, one sees

that the filling of the Spirit is closely linked to the act of prophecy. This can be understood either as ecstatic utterings, instruction/ preaching, or as foretelling.

The position of this paper is not to suggest that believers today that are filled with by the Spirit will experience ecstatic behavior. For this paper is intent to look at what Israel understood about prophecy, especially in view of the Numbers 11 passage, and how this understanding relates to Joel's prophecy. Furthermore, these passages influence the theological understandings of Acts 2 and the Spirit filling events of the Book of Acts (Acts 2, 10, and 19).

It is important to get a canonical and historical view on the gifts of the Spirit, out of it's current impact on Christianity and theological debate. As Allison states in regards to an overview of historical theology, "As a result of Pentecostalism, the charismatic movement, and the third wave evangelicalism, the doctrine of the Holy Spirit has been elevated to its appropriate place among Christian doctrines."<sup>5</sup> Thus, study and attention to the HS is now in a more impactful state than before this debate began, and this thesis hopes to continue scholarly work on this topic for the edification of the Church.

#### Limitations

In this paper there are a few limitations, most notably that of the historical record itself. When considering historical events, especially those of the Bible, there is a lot of information that has not been written down, and unlike most science it is not exactly repeatable. With this in mind it is hard to know precisely what happened during the filling of the seventy elders by the Spirit. For one, the passage is contained in only a few verses and so descriptive detail of the event is scarce; for another, the words used to

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<sup>5</sup> Gregg R. Allison and Wayne A. Grudem, *Historical Theology: An Introduction to Christian Doctrine: a Companion to Wayne Grudem's Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011), 449.



describe the scene are vague and provide a great deal of latitude for interpretation as we will see in some of the work below. Thus, while the arguments that are presented in this Thesis will help move the discussion further on the Biblical understanding of the gifts of the Spirit.

Another limitation is that there is little direct scholarship on this passage in relation to how this passage relates to Pentecost. Obviously there are hundreds of commentaries on the book of Numbers that look at this passage, yet this passage does not appear in a number of discussions on the gifts of the Spirit. Although this passage is included in some works, its function is usually to support a discussion of another passage, most notably that of Joel 2:28-32. There is not very much to go on; however, this paper will attempt to bring scholarly light to this passage by investigating its meaning and impact.

#### Development of Argument

The development of the argument in this passage is going to begin with the context of the passage itself and finish with its significance for believers today. In Chapter Two of this thesis, the work is going to focus on the passage itself. It will begin with a look at some of the relevant background information and then move on to an exegesis of the passage itself. From there the paper will look at some terms that are important in understanding the passage. Finally, at the end of the chapter, there will be a discussion of OT and NT understandings of the passage and what the Church Father's understood.

In Chapter Three, the focus will be on prophecy in the (ANE), and the Mediterranean world. This will start with some broad observations before moving into

more specific understandings of prophecy as it relates to Israel's understanding of prophetic utterances. The Most notable of the ANE prophecies would be those from Mari, which has contributed a lot to understanding both ANE prophecy in general, but also to Israel's understanding of prophecy. The conclusion of this chapter will look at Greek understandings of prophecy and how they are similar or dissimilar to Israel's understandings of prophecy.

In Chapter Four, attention will focus on how the Numbers 11 passage affects the development of the prophecy in Joel 2:28-32 and the recorded history of Acts, most notably the Day of Pentecost. Between discussion of the Joel and Acts passages there will be an investigation of the Septuagint (LXX) and how it translates the passage in Numbers. The chapter will conclude with a brief look at a few key texts in Paul's letters that reflect an alignment with the events described in Numbers 11.

Chapter Five is the application chapter where I will argue that the Numbers 11 passage has an effect on Christians today. In addition, I will examine the role of the HS as well as how the HS manifests himself among believers. This will then bring us back full circle to the current Pentecostal and Charismatic debate.

## Chapter 2

### Numbers 11:16-17, 24-29

#### Background Information

##### Historical Background

By the time of the events of Numbers Egypt was in the rear view mirror of the Israelites, despite a number of calls among the people to go back.<sup>6</sup> For at the time of the Exodus, Egypt was a mighty empire living in abundance. This was in part because of the fertility of the region provided by the Nile River. Thus, while being a slave was the bottom position of the social ladder it was preferable being free in a barren wasteland of the Sinai peninsula. Though Egypt was strong at this time, the events leading up to the Exodus definitely dissuaded any motivation to attempt to recover their lost slave population.

The events of Numbers 11 follow the departure of Moses and the Israelites from Egypt. Some scholars believe this event occurred around 1446 B.C. while others place it around 1270 B.C. Although this debate is somewhat important, it is not relevant to the meaning or interpretation of the Numbers 11 passage. As Walton asserts, “Most important is that under either chronological scheme, God delivered the Israelites from Egypt during the reign of a powerful pharaoh who oversaw a vast empire that stretched through much of Canaan.”<sup>7</sup> Walton then goes on to insert, that Egypt was very invested in the northern third of the Sinai Peninsula, because of the major trade routes that ran

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<sup>6</sup> Exodus 14:11-13, 17:3, Numbers 14:3-4, 20:5, 21:5,

<sup>7</sup> John H. Walton, *Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2009), 341.

through it (Via Maris and Central Ridge Route). However, Egypt was less concerned with the southern two thirds since their potential economic value was much less.<sup>8</sup> As a result, the Israelites lived in relative safety during their time in the desert with God for no major army from Egypt or anyone else was concerned enough or cared enough to attack them in that region. While Egypt at this time was doing well for itself, despite the devastation that happened due to the plagues (Exodus 7 to 12), they probably were not in the mood to go after their former slaves whose God had turned their world upside down.

The book of Numbers covers the period of time that Israel spent in the wilderness from Sinai (seen in Numbers 1:1-10:10) to the Plains of Moab (seen in Numbers 22:1-36:13). At the particular time of the passage of interest the Israelites were leaving the Sinai wilderness and entering the Paran Wilderness (seen in 10:11-12:16) located in the Northeast part of the Sinai Peninsula. The book begins with the census of Israel and ends with the issue of inheritance for the daughters of Zelophad. Although, as mentioned previously, Israel had no real external threats during this time, the nation constantly encountered internal threats that hampered it from moving into the Promised Land.

### Leadership Theme

The theme of leadership and spiritual guidance are crucial to the particular context of Numbers 11:24-26 and 29 and from Numbers 11 to 20 in general. The main points are that the rebellious nature of the Israelites demanded the need for spiritual leaders to guide her during the time of the Exodus. These elders that made up the seventy were experienced leaders among the leaders of Israel. Also, this group of elders should not be

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<sup>8</sup> Walton, *Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy*, 340. Although at times turquoise was mined there during the Old, Middle, and New Kingdoms, it appears that Egypt was not too concerned with Israel being in that region during the time of the Exodus.

confused with the group of elders recommend by Jethro's advice (Exodus 18:17-26).

These seventy may have been among that group, but were also part of a second, spiritually focused group, serving in a special and distinct role from the other elders.

Intermixed in this chapter is Israel's complaint about food so God gives them quail to eat. However, due to the hardness of heart a plague breaks out among the Israelites. Firth correctly assumes that, "Although attempts have been made to separate the element of leadership and the sharing of the Spirit as a later accretion, it is preferable to consider it as a whole piece, because, . . . it is actually the theme of leadership that is central."<sup>9</sup> In most cases, if not all, the resting of the SOL on an individual or group in the OT involves some element of leadership. Thus, prophecy and leadership are integral parts not only of the Numbers 11 passage, but also in understanding the SOL in the OT.

The challenges to Moses' leadership are not unique to Numbers 11 for a series of revolts/ grumblings occur in the subsequent chapters. Miriam and Aaron's rebellion is recorded in Numbers 12, the people rebel in Numbers 14, and Korah's rebellion occurs in Numbers 16. Previously, there was also the golden calf incident in Exodus 32. On the whole, the people of Israel were a troublesome lot. So much so, that it is stated, "And the Lord said to Moses, "I have seen this people, and behold, it is a stiff-necked people." (Exodus 34:9). It appears that the issue of meat in Numbers 11 begins a repeated theme of Israel's hardness of heart that goes until chapter 20, moving from the people rebelling to Moses' disobedience to God's commands (Numbers 20:10-13). The Spirit-empowered elders of Numbers 11 greatly eased the burden of leadership that Moses had suffered and

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<sup>9</sup> David G. Firth and Paul D. Wegner, *Presence, Power, and Promise: The Role of the Spirit of God in the Old Testament* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2011), 263.

will suffer in the subsequent chapters, yet Moses' burden eventually leads to his disobedience.

As seen later in this work, the SOL had rushed or rested upon a number of leaders; however, except for the reference in verse 25 (“ . . . [A]nd He took of the Spirit that was upon him . . .”) the Pentateuch does not really identify the SOL as resting upon Moses. Hildebrandt writes, “Although the book of Exodus does not specifically indicate that Moses' leadership is a result of being endowed with the *rûah* there are indications that he is so endowed.”<sup>10</sup> I will define *rûah* later, but it is relevant to say that the *rûah* (Spirit) of the Lord is an important aspect of Israelite and later Christian theology. The wisdom and perseverance that Moses had in leading Israel, through overwhelming times, gives evidence of the Spirit of God working in him. Furthermore, it is clear from this passage that the Spirit that God gives the seventy elders from Moses is really that of God's Spirit.

These elders were leading men in the Israelite community, men who apparently were leaders of Israel before the Exodus in Egypt. As to the function and name of elders (in general) Cole points out that, “The Hebrew term *šōtēr* (“official” or “scribal assistant”) is attested in the Akkadian *šatāru* “to write” and Aramaic *šētārāh*, “document,” suggesting a kind of official with scribal function within a given group.”<sup>11</sup> This term was given to the group of Israelite foremen who were charged with organizing the Israelite slaves to make mud bricks for Pharaoh in Exodus 5:14-19. Thus, it is quite

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<sup>10</sup> Wilf. Hildebrandt, *An Old Testament Theology of the Spirit of God*, (Peabody, Mass: Hendrickson Publishers, 1995), 22.

<sup>11</sup> R. Dennis Cole, *Numbers* (Nashville, Tenn: Broadman & Holman, 2000), 188.

reasonable to suspect that the office of “Elder” in the OT had an administrative function to the extent of keeping records of people or production.

The narrative recounting the selection of elders begins in Numbers 11:16-17 where God tells Moses to “Gather for me seventy men of the elders of Israel, whom you know to be the elders of the people and officers over them, and bring them to the tent of meeting, and let them take their stand there with you.” (Numbers 11:16, ESV). Although even after this event God, only spoke directly to Moses (see 12:8 where Aaron and Miriam speak against Moses), yet God nevertheless intended to share Moses’ burden with other spiritual leaders.<sup>12</sup> However, as verse 17 suggests, this group, unlike other groups that helped govern the body of Israel, would have the same spirit as Moses.

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<sup>12</sup> Leon James Wood, *The Holy Spirit in the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1976), 49.

## Exegetical Analysis

### Verse Sixteen And Seventeen

*“Then the Lord said to Moses, “Gather for me seventy men of the elders of Israel, whom you know to be the elders of the people and officers over them, and bring them to the tent of meeting, and let them take their stand there with you. And I will come down and talk with you there. And I will take some of the Spirit that is on you and put it on them, and they shall bear the burden of the people with you, so that you may not bear it yourself alone.” (Numbers 11:16-17)*

In connection with the Israelites’ demand for meat and the subsequent plea of Moses, God commands Moses to appoint elders to help Him bear the load of the people. The appointing of elders here is not the same as in Exodus 18:25-26. For in the Numbers 11 passage there is the indwelling of the SOL that is involved in the commissioning of the elders that is not found in the Exodus account. Also, the seventy elders are summoned here are more focused on spiritual matters than the leadership that is organized in the Exodus account, which is more focused on judicial and administrative matters. The account in Exodus 18:25-26 is that of Moses following his father-in-law Jethro’s advice and appointing leaders over “thousands, hundreds, fifties and tens” (Exodus 18:25-26 ESV). The latter is from God’s commands, the former would require more people than the seventy that are present in the Numbers 11 passage. Thus, it can be assumed that there were different groups of leaders responsible for different functions in Israelite society.

In choosing the elders to serve alongside him, Moses chose those that were already leaders and who stood out among the rest of the elders. Levine concurs when he writes, “Here the elders are the group from which the leaders are chosen. The seventy are to be selected from a larger group of elders. They are, in effect, the elders whom Moses



considers to be the true leaders of the people (Num 11:16).”<sup>13</sup> Thus, the spiritual leaders of Israel can be seen as seasoned leaders who have demonstrated their leadership skills before being called by Moses to this select group of elders.

In looking at the concept of the giving of the Spirit one should see this as not just a quality, but also a quantity event. For as Budd states, “‘the spirit.’ This is evidently a divine endowment giving all necessary resources for the leadership of God’s people . . . The endowment received by Moses can be seen as of quantitatively (cf. 2 Kgs 2:9-10), and is to be shared among the seventy.”<sup>14</sup> The quality involves a person’s ability to be indwelt by the Spirit, the quantity point means that multiple people can experience the indwelling of the Spirit at the same time. Thus, the seventy elders can all experience the indwelling of the SOL without Moses experiencing any less of the presence of God than before some of the Spirit that was upon him was taken.

#### Verse Twenty-Four

*“So Moses went out and told the people the words of the Lord. And he gathered seventy men of the elders of the people and placed them around the tent.”* (Numbers 11:24, ESV)

Verse twenty-four reinforces verses sixteen and seventeen showing Moses being obedient to God’s commands and setting the scene for what is to come in the next verses. As a reminder of the leadership theme of this passage, the elders who are gathered for this event are to combat the continuously rebellious nature of the Israelites as seen throughout their time in the wilderness. Cole finds, “In contrast to the ravenous assembly

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<sup>13</sup> Baruch A. Levine, *Numbers 1-20: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, (New York: Doubleday, 1993), 339.

<sup>14</sup> Philip J. Budd, *Numbers* (Waco, Tex: Word Books, 1984), 128. (c.f. Num 24:2; Judg 3:10; 11:29; 1 Sam 10:6; 19:20; Isa 11:2; 61:1; Ezek 11:5).

(*hā'sapsūp*), that insatiable assembly who incited rebellion throughout the camp, a group of devout elders was assembled (*wayye'ēsōp*) who would aid Moses in the spiritual oversight of the people."<sup>15</sup> So as to not be confused with the elders that are tasked with administrative and judicial tasks in Exodus 18:25-26, it is important to note the difference of focus between these two groups. One group is instituted to keep social order and the other to spiritually guide Israel along a righteous path.

Verses twenty-four and twenty-five contain a unique event in that a group of prophets prophesying together. As Aune states in regard to the Early Church, "Apart from a few instances of groups experiencing possession trance in the OT (Num. 11:24-25; 1 Sam. 10:5; 19:20; 1 Kgs. 18:17-29; 22:5-10) and a few instances of group prophecy in Greco-Roman mystery cults, models for congregational prophecy were nonexistent."<sup>16</sup> Although the instances listed above provide enough evidence for early Christians to note this uncommon, but not rare occurrence, yet at the time of the Numbers 11 passage it would be seen as rare and unique.

In this passage, the sharing of God's Spirit occurs. The sharing of the Spirit in this passage compares to that of the disciples in the upper room, which comes under consideration later. Montague makes the statement, "It is the spirit that is upon Moses. The unity of the office, though shared by many, is thus affirmed . . . the disciples would make a similar claim, that the spirit poured out upon the many was none other than the Spirit that dwelt in Jesus."<sup>17</sup> Thus, the gathering of the elders to share in one spirit given

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<sup>15</sup> Cole, *Numbers*, 192.

<sup>16</sup> David Edward Aune, *Prophecy in Early Christianity and the Ancient Mediterranean World* (Grand Rapids, MI.: Eerdmans, 1983), 200.

<sup>17</sup> George T. Montague, *The Holy Spirit: Growth of a Biblical Tradition* (New York: Paulist Press, 1976), 15.

by the HS, just as the gathering of the disciples, displayed a group outpouring that lead to spiritual leadership and discipleship.

#### Verse Twenty-Five

*“Then the Lord came down in the cloud and spoke to him, and took some of the Spirit that was on him and put it on the seventy elders. And as soon as the Spirit rested on them, they prophesied. But they did not continue doing it.”* (Numbers 11:25, ESV)

The specific words of what was prophesied remains unknown to scholars since the text does not give a clear indication of what was said during the elders’ prophetic utterances. However, Budd insists that there is evidence in the text that the prophesying was ecstatic in nature.<sup>18</sup> To his point, early prophecy in Israel tended to be ecstatic in nature.<sup>19</sup> This can be seen in 1 Samuel 10:10-13 and 19:20-24. However, as shown later, it is the effect that appears to be the purpose for the prophetic utterances. As Gane concludes, “Similarly, the point of prophesying (hithpael of *nb*’) on only one occasion by seventy elders chosen by Moses (Num. 11:24-26) is not the content of their utterances but the fact that the Lord authorizes them to be under his control and to be accountable to him as his representative.”<sup>20</sup> Thus, along with Moses these seventy elders were seen as representatives under God’s authority, as justified by their ecstatic display of being indwelt by the SOL.

Although these seventy elders prophesied it is recorded that they never did it again. In regards to this, Ashley advises, “The verb *yāsāpū* is used in combination with

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<sup>18</sup> Budd, *Numbers*, 128.

<sup>19</sup> William D. Mounce, *Mounce's Complete Expository Dictionary of Old & New Testament Words* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2006), 543.

<sup>20</sup> Roy Gane, *Leviticus, Numbers: NIV Application Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2004), 585.

other verbs to indicate a continuous or repeated action. With the negative, the meaning is that the action (here “prophesying”) did not continue beyond this one occurrence.”<sup>21</sup>

Thus, while considered to be prophets they only engaged in the activity once that makes them to be known as prophets.

Although the Spirit that God gave to the elders was first given to Moses it did not diminish the Spirit that was already upon Moses. As Cole argues, the language of the text itself does not give any indication that the Spirit indwelling in Moses was diminished in any way.<sup>22</sup> Later it is seen that God in confronting Aaron and Miriam, reminds them that God speaks face to face with Moses unlike with anyone else (Numbers 12: 6-9). Also, it is seen that Moses intercedes for the people in a unique way for it was in dialogue manner in chapter 14:13-19. Furthermore, though it was against God’s commands Moses strikes the rock in Numbers 20:10-13. All of this shows the Spirit of the Lord rested on, or at least enabled, him to do these tasks. Thus, the sharing of the Spirit did not diminish the effects it had on Moses nor his special role in leadership and God revealing himself to him (Numbers 12:6-8).

Though further discussed later in the thesis, the ecstatic utterances that happened here in the Tent of Meeting seems very similar to another event. Walton suggests that the sign of the elders prophesying is comparable to the tongues of fire seen in the upper room of Acts 2.<sup>23</sup> For in both instances, assuming as argued later that Acts 2 is divided into two settings, the resting of the Holy Spirit results in ecstatic behavior. This is evident when some charge that the disciples were filled with wine (Acts 2:13), but also earlier when it

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<sup>21</sup> Timothy R. Ashley, *The Book of Numbers* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1993), 214.

<sup>22</sup> Cole, *Numbers*, 192.

<sup>23</sup> John H. Walton and Victor Harold Matthews, *The IVP Bible Background Commentary: Genesis--Deuteronomy*. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1997), 186.

is said that the “tongues as of fire appeared to them and rested” (Acts 2:3b), furthered by the statement that the “Spirit gave them utterance” (Acts 2:4b).

#### Verse Twenty-Six

*“Now two men remained in the camp, one named Eldad, and the other named Medad, and the Spirit rested on them. They were among those registered, but they had not gone out to the tent, and so they prophesied in the camp”.* (Numbers 11:26, ESV)

The display of Eldad and Medad, as an extension of the events with the seventy elders at the Tent of Meeting, showed the Spirit of God also working in their lives. This is supported by Cole’s statement that, “the outward manifestation of the Spirit validated their appointment, evidenced their anointment, and evoked an announcement.”<sup>24</sup> Thus, the Spirit empowerment of Eldad and Medad should not be seen as a hoax, but the demonstration of the SOL at work among the people.

It is important in terms of prophecy, and in the leadership theme established in this passage, that the SOL works outside the normal leadership structure as well. As Budd states, “The leadership must be prepared to hear the authentic voice of prophecy in such as Eldad and Medad who here represent nonprofessional prophets.”<sup>25</sup> As informed by Wood, this verse supports the notion that Eldad and Medad could have been prophesying longer than the other seventy individuals that were with Moses at the tent of meeting.<sup>26</sup> This would naturally cause some grief to the existing leadership, especially after the experiences of the wilderness with rebellious Israel and its rebellious leaders, as Joshua fears when stating in verse twenty-eight, “My lord Moses, stop them.” (Numbers 11:28b,

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<sup>24</sup> Cole, *Numbers*, 194.

<sup>25</sup> Budd, *Numbers*, 130.

<sup>26</sup> Leon James Wood, *The Prophets of Israel* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1998), 40.

ESV). Yet it is important, as Moses states in verse twenty-nine, that there is a great benefit for all of God's people having the SOL empowering them.

Verse twenty-six also supports the notion that this event with the seventy elders was not under Moses' control, but rather under God's control for Eldad and Medad were not with Moses at the time of the filling of the Spirit. As Gane states, "The fact that Eldad and Medad prophesy 'outside the box' of human expectation buttresses the point that it is God who is in control."<sup>27</sup> This reinforces the point that God, not Moses, caused the behavior experienced by the seventy elders, but also legitimizes the work of God to express His power, glory, and control outside the normal forms of leadership. Thus, verse twenty-six helps to show that prophecy can happen outside a leadership structure or an Israelite prophetic court.

#### Verses Twenty-Seven and Twenty-Eight

Verse twenty-seven records, "And a young man ran and told Moses, "Eldad and Medad are prophesying in the camp." The identity of the young man is unknown, and as Ashley informs, "It is impossible to determine the chronological age of this young man, since the Hebrew term can refer to males from infancy (Exod. 2:6) through mature manhood (2 Sam. 14:21). It is possible that the term here refers to the man's immaturity."<sup>28</sup> Nonetheless the young man runs up to Moses and reports on the two men prophesying. The intent of the young man in reporting this; whether to tell of the SOL at

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<sup>27</sup> Gane, *Leviticus, Numbers*, 585-86.

<sup>28</sup> Ashley, *The book of Numbers*, 215. Jer. 1:6 records that the prophet thinks of himself as "only a young man". Thus, speaking of his immaturity.

work in these men, or to state how they are causing a scene, is unknown. Yet, what is known is Joshua's reaction in verse twenty-eight.

In verse twenty-eight Joshua asks Moses to stop Eldad and Medad from prophesying; for the prophesying of Eldad and Medad could be seen as a leadership challenge that might hamper Israel from going in the right direction. As Ashley maintains, "Here Joshua strongly desires that Moses be the leader; he is devoted to him as his servant. He sees the unauthorized actions of Eldad and Medad as a challenge to Moses' leadership,"<sup>29</sup> Although Moses is aware of the leadership problems, especially since he has faced the rebellious nature of Israel during their time in the wilderness and more so to come, yet he sees the work of the SOL in the lives of the seventy elders and wishes for an extension of this to all of God's people as seen in verse twenty-nine.

#### Verse Twenty-Nine

*"But Moses said to him, "Are you jealous for my sake? Would that all the Lord's people were prophets, that the Lord would put his Spirit on them!""* (Numbers 11:29, ESV)

Moses, though speaking of a wish, provides an anticipation of the empowering of the Spirit that is to come. Olson writes, "But Moses also sought to share authority and receive wisdom from the people of the spirit among those outside the institutional leadership of God's people."<sup>30</sup> As seen later, verse twenty-nine shows a wish, which turns into a promise in Joel 2:28-32 and comes to fruition in the book of Acts.

There can be debate about whether Moses expressed a wish or was prophesying, especially in light of the Joel 2:28-32 prophesy, Pentecost, and the events recorded in the

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<sup>29</sup> Ashley, *The book of Numbers*, 216.

<sup>30</sup> Dennis T. Olson, *Numbers*. (Louisville: John Knox Press, 1996). 68.

book of Acts for example in Acts 10: 44-48 and 19: 1-7. However, regardless of the answer it is believed that Moses' wish or prophecy was very much in line with the redemption plan for God's people. As Cole insists, "Moses commends the Lord's movement among the two elders and expresses the desire that all the people would be so endowed with his Spirit. In doing so they would evidence the aspirations of a closer relationship to God."<sup>31</sup> This is very much in line with God's plan of redemption and the purpose of the covenants, which ultimately lead to Jesus and the coming heavenly kingdom.

The fillings of the Spirit in the OT, especially in light of Numbers 11, introduce an eschatological element that surfaces in later OT writings. Köstenberger writes, "The eschatological element in OT 'filling' language is most evident in Ezek 36 26-27 where God promises a new covenant entailing the giving of a 'new spirit,' even 'my [God's] Spirit' This eschatological component is frequently linked with a corporate element."<sup>32</sup> This starts with an understanding of Moses' wish in Numbers 11:29 and is furthered by Joel's prophesy in 2:28-29.

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<sup>31</sup> Cole, *Numbers*, 195.

<sup>32</sup> Andreas J. Köstenberger, "What Does It Mean to Be Filled with the Spirit? A Biblical Investigation." *Journal Of The Evangelical Theological Society* 40, no. 2 (June 1997): 229-240. *ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials*, EBSCOhost, accessed July 18, 2016, <http://web.b.ebscohost.com.ezproxy.liberty.edu:2048>, 230.



## Biblical and Historical Understandings

### Translation and Understanding

It is important to realize that while early Israelite prophecy had obtained some of its theological understanding from the ANE, later Jewish theologians were concerned about how much ANE influence affected their theological understandings. In looking at the passage of Numbers 11, an important issue that comes up involves the LXX. The term *manteuomai* indicates ecstatic activity; however, the LXX instead uses the words *prophētēs* and the verb *prophēteuin*. As Blenkinsopp suggests, “Such usage probably reflects the translators’ enlightened suspicion of the more uncontrolled aspects of religious behavior as well as their desire to emphasize the more declarative aspects of Israelite prophecy.”<sup>33</sup> This also reflects the Masoretic Text (MT), yet according to Wevers reflects the same idea of ecstatic prophecy as the word could imply.<sup>34</sup> Although, with the early statement, this is more helpful for theology sake, if in fact the Greek word *manteuomai* should have been used, then a slightly, though not significant change of understanding takes place. This is not to say there reason was done negatively, but, if true, then it is misleading.<sup>35</sup>

In working on the LXX, the translators make an important distinction. In translating the LXX, Hui informs us that, “according to the translators of the LXX,

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<sup>33</sup> Blenkinsopp, *History of Prophecy in Israel*, 36.

<sup>34</sup> John William Wevers, *Notes on the Greek Text of Numbers* (Atlanta, Georgia: Scholars Press, 1998), 176.

<sup>35</sup> A simple comparison to this would be of two people running a race. In the race the slower runner won. Now it is because the slower runner was faster, or that the faster runner slipped and fell taking themselves out of the race. In one sense the slower runner won the race; however, it could be said and more accurately that the faster runner lost the race. Both are true, but one gives a better more complete idea of what is happening.

prophecy is the direct result of the coming of the Spirit upon the seventy elders (Nu. 11:25-27), Saul (1 Kgdms. [1 Samuel] 10:6, 10; 19:23-24), Saul's men (1 Kgdms. [1 Samuel] 19:20-21) . . . , and future Israel (Joel 2:28).”<sup>36</sup> Thus, the SOL is foremost connected with prophecy as a sign of His empowerment.

This can be seen in the Targums and in Rabbinic Judaism. According to Rabbi Nathan, prophecy is one of ten names given of the HS. The others are: parable, metaphor, riddle, speech, saying, glory, command, burden, vision.<sup>37</sup> Hui concludes that, “This text is significant in two ways. On the one hand, 'prophecy' is one of the ten names given to 'the Holy Spirit'. On the other hand, other rabbinic lists often names sometimes replaced 'the Holy Spirit' with 'prophecy' (see, e.g., *'Abot R. Nat. B. 37; Gn. Rab. 44.6; Ct. Rab. 3.4.*)”

<sup>38</sup> Thus, Jewish theology, that is in its' understandings of the OT links the work of the SOL (HS) to that of prophecy

In looking at the OT, the Targums and the LXX one needs to, in order to more fully understand the SOL, look at the SOL involvement with prophecy. In summing up, Hui writes, “in Judaism, the divine Spirit is simultaneously the Spirit of prophecy (or the Spirit of revelation), the Spirit of wisdom, the Spirit of power, the Spirit of ethical living (or the Spirit of righteousness), and the Spirit of salvation and life.”<sup>39</sup> Thus, in understanding the mind of the Jewish writers as expressed in the Targums, the translation of the LXX, and that of Rabbinic Tradition one sees a clear link between the SOL and the gift of prophecy.

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<sup>36</sup> Archie Hui, "The Spirit of Prophecy and Pauline Pneumatology." *Tyndale Bulletin* 50, no. 1 (1999): 93-115. *ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials*, EBSCOhost, accessed July 18, 2016, <http://web.b.ebscohost.com.ezproxy.liberty.edu:2048>, 96.

<sup>37</sup> (*'Abot R. Nat. A.34*)

<sup>38</sup> Hui, "Prophecy and Pauline Pneumatology", 96.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, 104.

### The Term *Ruach*

There are important issues that are involved with the word *ruach* and its' meaning in the passage, which can mean, “wind,” “breath,” or “spirit.” According, to Fabry, since the term *ruach* appears in different times [in the OT] and is used in different ways it is hard to determine a semantic development of the word.<sup>40</sup> According to Firth, of the 378 times the word *ruach* is used, about forty percent of the time, depending on how one understands certain passages<sup>41</sup>, the word literally refers to air or breath.<sup>42</sup> Thus, one needs to not automatically assume that *ruach* is equivalent to “spirit”, “human spirit”, “God’s Spirit”, and especially the “HS”. For purposes of this paper *ruach*, in the context of this passage, is understood to be God’s Spirit being first upon Moses and then from Moses, to the seventy elders.

In order to fully understanding God’s *ruach* it needs to be seen as part of God’s power and control. Firth goes on to state, “Throughout the OT the Lord’s *ruah* is a separate entity, or an ‘endowment’ over which the Lord has control, in the sense that he can pour it out on whom he pleases. Thus ‘my Spirit’ is ‘the self-manifesting activity of God himself, the extension of his person(al?) vitality’.”<sup>43</sup> While the text does not refer directly to the “pouring out” of the Spirit, yet there are a few references later in the Bible that seem related. Both Ezekiel 39:29 and Joel 2:28-29 mention God stating, “I will pour out my Spirit” in a future way that shows up in Acts. Now the pouring out of the Spirit is

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<sup>40</sup> Gerhard Johannes Botterweck, Helmer Ringgren, Heinz-Josef Fabry, and David E. Green. *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament. Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament. Vol. XIII* (Grand Rapids, MI.: W.B. Eerdmans, 1998). 373.

<sup>41</sup> Firth says about 140 times the term *rúah* is used to mean breath or wind

<sup>42</sup> Firth and Wegner, *Presence, Power, and Promise*, 27.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, 249.

only specifically mentioned in Acts 10:45; however, it can be seen as also occurring in Acts 2, 8, 10, and 19. In each of these cases the pouring out of the Spirit happens in groups. Though as stated earlier, the Numbers 11 passage does not directly say that the Spirit was poured out like in the cases just mentioned; yet, there is enough of a correlation to see that the pouring out language of Acts fits the description of what is going on in Numbers 11.

Though often times the SOL is manifested on an individual it<sup>44</sup> can also be spread amongst the people as with the case with this passage. Mounce writes that, “the Spirit is sent by the Lord ([Isa.] 48:16), and he is placed on individuals (Num. 11:17, 29; Isa. 42:1) . . . . In all his activities, he assumes a distinct personality while at the same time being the very presence of God among those with whom he is pleased to dwell.”<sup>45</sup> This can encourage debate regarding how much Israel knew about the HS before the NT or even during the inter-testament period; however, it can be seen that some knowledge of the HS (though more known as the SOL) was understood by those living in OT times.

Historically, the Church Fathers have seen the SOL to be the same as the HS. Firth explains that this is because “they are typically more concerned about a canonical view of theology than about grammatical-historical exegesis. The Israelites had sufficient trouble grasping the concept of one God even without the complexity of Trinitarian theology.”<sup>46</sup> Because there was no clear Trinitarian concept in Israelite theology there will naturally be both continuity and discontinuity when comparing the SOL and the HS

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<sup>44</sup> The pronoun “it” will at times be used to refer to the Spirit of the Lord (SOL), due to not being viewed as a separate being to that of God in the Old Testament. The Holy Spirit (HS) on the other hand will be referred to as “He”, because in the writing of the New Testament the HS is understood as a separate being, as part of the Trinity, and also because the HS is given a masculine personal pronoun.

<sup>45</sup> Mounce, *Mounce's Complete Expository Dictionary*, 675.

<sup>46</sup> Firth and Wegner, *Presence, Power, and Promise*, 66.

and the indwelling that occurs. However, it should be noted that there is some conception of the Trinity in the OT that is brought to a fuller light by the NT.

The *ruach* is seen as an extension of God in accomplishing his will. Firth writes, “The *rûah* brings about God’s plan, and the servants of the Lord, including the Davidic agents, depend upon the *rûah* to carry it out.”<sup>47</sup> This can be seen in the book of Judges with Othniel (3:10), Gideon (6:34), Jephthah (11:29), and Samson (13:25, 14:6 and 14:19). Also this can be seen with Saul in 1 Samuel 10:6, 10 and David in 1 Samuel 16:13. Thus, the *ruach* of God was often given to the leaders of Israel in order to rule according to God’s will.

Much can be said of the differences in the understanding of the Trinity between OT and NT believers. For one OT believers did not have a Trinitarian theology. However, there are indications of the HS being the same as the “SOL” in the OT, although a full understanding only comes from the teachings of the NT. As Kaiser states, “The complete revelation of the triunity of the one God of Scripture is not revealed until later in the biblical text, but there are certainly earlier intimations of the fact that the unity of the Godhead came in a Trinitarian form.”<sup>48</sup> Thus, the Apostles were not completely at a loss when Pentecost happened and the rushing of the HS was felt.

### The Term *Nuach*

The Hebrew word *nuach* is also important in understanding this passage and the SOL. The word can refer to the idea of rest from one’s enemies (Esther 9:16, 22), the rest

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<sup>47</sup> Firth and Wegner, *Presence, Power, and Promise*, 336.

<sup>48</sup> Trevor J. Burke and Keith Warrington, *A Biblical Theology of the Holy Spirit* (Eugene, Oregon: Cascade Books, 2014), 1.

of wisdom or justice (Proverbs 14:33, 21:16), or rest as part of the covenant in resting on the seventh day (Exodus 23:12). Or as observed from Preuss, “The qal [simple verb paradigm] is often associated with the gift of the Spirit, as in Nu. 11:25f . . . in 2 K. 2:15 with reference to Elisha on whom the spirit of Elijah rests . . . and in Isa 11:2, which states that the Spirit of Yahweh will rest on the shoot from the stump of Jesse.”<sup>49</sup> In combination with the *ruach* one see the SOL indwelling in an individual or group. Thus, the combination of *ruach* and *nuach* leads to the idea that OT believers, at least to some extent and only some of, were indwelt by the SOL, similar to that of the indwelling of the HS in believers of the NT Testament.<sup>50</sup>

The term *nuach* implies that the dwelling or rest is not caused by itself, but is caused by other forces. Mounce again writes, “Frequently the object does not come to rest on its own but is caused to rest or be placed in a particular location by someone else (104x).”<sup>51</sup> Thus, the SOL is caused to rest (upon a person or group) by the sending forth of God’s will.

### The Term *Nābā’*

Thirdly, the term *nābā’* is also important for understanding this passage and the empowering of the SOL. According to Mounce the term *nābā’* means ““to prophesy, speak (or behave) as a prophet.” Such prophesying encouraged the Hebrews to be faithful

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<sup>49</sup> Gerhard Johannes Botterweck, Helmer Ringgren, Heinz-Josef Fabry, and David E. Green. *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament. Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament. Vol. IX* (Grand Rapids, MI.: W.B. Eerdmans, 1998). 279.

<sup>50</sup> See Kaiser, *Holy Spirit in the Old Testament*, 315.; Wood, *Holy Spirit in the Old Testament*, 70.; Daniel P. Fuller *The Unity of the Bible: Unfolding God's Plan for Humanity* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1992). 229-30.

<sup>51</sup> Mounce, *Mounce's Complete Expository Dictionary*, 585.

to the Lord.”<sup>52</sup> Prophecy had major importance in Israel, not only with the classical prophets of Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel, but also with earlier prophets such as the seventy elders (Numbers 11:25-26), Deborah (Judges 4:4)<sup>53</sup>, and Samuel (1 Samuel 3:20), along with other prophetic messages that was not recorded in Scripture. Thus, prophecy should be seen as an integral part of Israel’s theological framework and practical living, for the prophet was a guide for God’s people, kings and the common people, calling them to live a holy and righteous life.

The source of the term *nābā’* remains a bit of a mystery. As Mounce reveals,

Scholars debate where the word *nābā’* comes from and present four views. (a) *nābā’* means “to announce.” Thus, those who deliver *nābā’* may be understood as “spokespeople.” (b) Some believe *nābā’* literally means to “bubble up” or “boil forth.” This meaning would be of pouring forth words with passion or under divine inspiration. (c) Others understand *nābā’* “to be called.” Hence, prophets experience a calling from the Lord. (d) Finally, some interpret *nābā’* as deriving from an unknown Semitic root. The fourth group insists that while the root of *nābā’* remains a mystery, the function of *nābā’* is unambiguous: *nābā’* is prophecy from an authorized spokesperson.<sup>54</sup>

Regardless of the origins of the word, it is clear that prophecy and prophets, both professional and non-professional, were very important to Israel, the ANE and other societies, such as the Greeks at Delphi and the Romans. The elders in Numbers would reflect a professional group of prophets.

In looking at the etymology of this word, there appears a connection with what is understood as ecstatic behavior, as seen in Numbers 11:25-27, 1 Samuel 10:11-12, and 19:24. In referencing the etymology of this word, Müller states, “In the case of the

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<sup>52</sup> Mounce, *Mounce's Complete Expository Dictionary*, 543.

<sup>53</sup> The fact that Deborah was a woman did not exclude her from being called a prophetess, other women include Huldah (2 Kings 22:14) and Philip’s daughters (Acts 21:8, 9)

<sup>54</sup> Mounce, *Mounce's Complete Expository Dictionary*, 543.

Hebrew prophets, too [as with ANE and Mari prophets], the ecstatic impulse can occasionally be translated into reflection and be articulated to those addressed as 1st-person discourse spoken by God. The “way” that leads from impulse to articulation is symbolized as the consequence of being sent”<sup>55</sup> Also, in looking at this passage a number of commentators refer to the Number 11 passage as being an ecstatic event.<sup>56</sup> Although, Cole points out the language of the text itself does not provide explicit indication that ecstatic activity is going on.<sup>57</sup> As Ashley puts it in referring to the term *nābā*, “It means, literally, ‘to act the prophet.’ In such passages as 1 Sam. 10 and 19 the verb is clearly connected with behavior that might be called abnormal or, better, ‘ecstatic.’”<sup>58</sup> While conclusive prove is not shown to support using the word ecstatic for the behavior of the seventy elders; yet the evidence for it, or at least abnormal activity, demonstrates the likelihood of its occurrence, and thus will be called ‘ecstatic’ through out the thesis.

Prophets in both the ANE and in Israel were highly sought after by kings and rulers. In all ANE societies kings and rulers would consult prophets in order to learn the will of the gods, especially in military adventures, the meaning of dreams and events that happened.<sup>59</sup> An easy Biblical case to support this is seen when King Jehoshaphat of Judah and King Ahab of Israel consult Micaiah the prophet in 1 Kings 22. Additionally, King Jehoshaphat and Jehoram king of Israel seek out the prophet Elisha during the rebellion of Moab in 2 Kings 3:11-20.

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<sup>55</sup> Botterweck, *Dictionary of the Old Testament, Vol. IX*, 136.

<sup>56</sup> Levine, *Numbers*, 313, and Wenham, *Numbers*, 123

<sup>57</sup> Cole, *Numbers*, 193.

<sup>58</sup> Ashley, *The book of Numbers*, 213-214

<sup>59</sup> Mounce, *Mounce's Complete Expository Dictionary*, 544.



When surveying the early history of Israelite prophecy, it is noted that importance was placed on whom God was using rather than on what he or she was saying. Gane suggests (regarding Saul's prophecy), "The primary point of this kind of early Israelite prophecy was not the content of what Saul said or did as a prophet (unlike later "classical" prophecy by Isaiah, Jeremiah, etc.), but simply the fact that the Lord exercised full control over him."<sup>60</sup> Thus, in the case of seventy elders and others in early Israelite history, it is far more significant that a message was uttered than what the message contained, especially when no mention is given of what was uttered.

*Nābā'* is first used in reference to Abraham. Although there are no hints of prophecy given by him or any ecstatic utterances, yet God calls Abraham a prophet before Abimelech, king of Gerar, in Genesis 20:17. The second occurrence of *nābā'* in the Bible refers to Moses and Aaron in Exodus 7:1. "And the Lord said to Moses, "See, I have made you like God to Pharaoh, and your brother Aaron shall be your prophet" (Exodus 7:1, ESV). So Moses is God's prophet Aaron will be like Moses prophet.<sup>61</sup> Thus, Moses as a prophet relays messages to Israel and to Pharaoh, but in a fashion dissimilar to that of the classical prophets Isaiah, Jeremiah and Ezekiel. However, it is worth noting that God revealing Himself to Moses is unrivaled compared to later prophets (Deuteronomy 34:10-12). It should also be mentioned that in Deuteronomy 34:10 Moses is directly called a prophet. Thus the seventy elders can be put in the same category as Abraham and Moses as prophets

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<sup>60</sup> Gane, *Leviticus, Numbers*, 585.

<sup>61</sup> A similar sight is seen, although not intentional and not said by God, with Barnabas and Paul on their first missionary journey, which the people at Lystra mistake (Acts 14:11-18).

## Ecstatic Nature and Prophecy

It is important to determine what it is meant by ecstatic utterances and revelatory trance. First being ecstatic involves an overwhelming emotion. This can be seen as deep happiness or sadness. This is not to be confused with ecstasy the drug (known as MDMA), which has sensory effects, making it a common rave culture drug. In this thesis the ecstatic nature involves that of being religious in nature. Though this has mystic connotations to it, usually seen as part of pagan rituals, yet it has connections with the Bible and Church history in positive ways.

In connection to religious ecstasy is the term revelatory trance. A trance is defined as being in a half-conscious state that does not respond to external forces.<sup>62</sup> This can be brought about by hypnosis or hypnotic rhythms as in music or sounds. In religious contexts during this trance state a person may receive revelatory message from the Deity. Thus, ecstatic or revelatory trances, of a religious nature, were seen in the ANE, Greece, and Israel as a blessing from the Deity in that the Deity they was revealing its will or some message.

Ecstatic Prophecy, which was experienced in the ANE, Israel, and many other places, may be described as a revelatory trance. In relation to Israel, Aune states, “. . . [I]t was widely believed that the Spirit of God caused the revelatory trance. For this reason a prophet could be popularly designated a “man of the Spirit” (Hos. 9:7). OT prophets also referred to their experience of revelatory trance as “Yahweh’s hand” being upon them

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<sup>62</sup> Merrill C. Tenney, and J. D. Douglas. *The New International Dictionary of the Bible*. (Grand Rapids, MI, U.S.A.: Regency Reference Library, Zondervan Pub. House, 1987). 1031.

(Ezek. 3:14; 8:1; 33:21-22; Isa. 8:11; Jer. 15:17).”<sup>63</sup> These trances were seen as evidence that a prophet was truly under divine control.

The ecstatic nature of the prophecy that is seen in Numbers 11 does not only appear in OT works, but also in the book of Acts. Garrett enlightens readers by stating, “Many other passages also associate the coming of the Spirit upon a person with ecstatic or even unnatural behavior (1 Sam 10:6; 19:20; Acts 2:15-17; 10:44-46; 19:1-6). Many texts link the prophetic gift to dreams and visions (Gen 31:10-13; 37:5-11; Isa 6; Ezek 12:27; Dan 9:24; Acts 10:9-16).<sup>64</sup> Thus, ecstatic prophecy cannot be limited to early Israelite experiences, but must also include those of the early Christian Church as supported by passages in the book of Acts and the writings of the Church Fathers as seen below.

While further analysis will look at ecstatic prophecy in other ANE and Mediterranean cultures, when looking at the context of Israelite worship and theological understandings, ecstatic worship is seen as an appropriate occurrence. Hildebrandt concludes that the Numbers 11 passage is understood in two ways: one, to validate the appointment of the elders to a leadership position, or two, to legitimizing ecstatic prophecy.<sup>65</sup> Thus, there appears to be some similarities that the Israelites were able to draw from their counterparts. Though it should be clearly stated that the source of ecstatic prophecy comes from the one true God it was experienced by other ANE prophets.<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>63</sup> Aune, *Prophecy in Early Christianity*, 86.

<sup>64</sup> Duane A. Garrett, *Hosea, Joel* (Nashville, Tenn: Broadman & Holman, 1997), 368.

<sup>65</sup> Hildebrandt, *Theology of the Spirit of God*, 111.

<sup>66</sup> Though a case can be made that God could use pagan prophets to recite his message; as with the case of Balaam in Numbers 22-24. And also the stirrings of the Spirit that can be seen in Cyrus in 2 Chronicles 36:22-23 and the pagan king Nebuchadnezzar being called God’s servant in Jeremiah 25:9, 26:6 and 43:10.

### The Holy Spirit: Indwelling, Filling, or Resting

In looking at the different passages for this a few additional terms need to be defined, especially in an OT context. One of them is the term indwelt or indwelling. As argued, OT believers were indwelt by the Holy Spirit, as evidence by them performing great feats of strength as in the case of Samson, or giving prophetic messages like Elijah and Isaiah, or by living Spirit filled lives like in the case of Enoch, Abraham, and Moses. As Wood states, “By *indwelling* is meant the continuedness of the Spirit’s residence within the saint following the occasion of regeneration. . . . Indwelling means that this relation continues from that point forward.”<sup>67</sup> This does not prevent an OT believer from sinning, but does suggest the Spirit of the Lord is continually with him, much like that of the Holy Spirit in the NT.

The filling of the Spirit is closely linked to that of the indwelling of the Spirit. For as Wood states, “There is again a close relation in idea to the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, but a clear distinction exists. . . . Filling, however, speaks of the extent of control which the abiding Spirit has over the person.”<sup>68</sup> A difference in the NT from the OT is that the HS indwells in every believer (Ezekiel 36:27, Romans 8:9-11, and 1 Corinthians 3:16). Yet, only a relative few people, in relation to the total number of believers in the Bible, display supernatural acts that were empowered by the HS. This can be seen with Peter and John healing a lame man (Acts 3), the speaking in tongues by Gentiles (Acts 10), and Paul healing on Malta (Acts 28).

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<sup>67</sup> Wood, *Holy Spirit in the Old Testament*, 69.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*, 71.

Additionally, another term that needs some defining is that of resting, particularly what is meant by the Spirit of the Lord resting upon an individual. It bears some resemblance to the filling terminology in that the resting of the Spirit is a gift by God to do a supernatural act as seen with the seventy elders (Numbers 11), and Elisha (2 Kings 2:15, though it is stated the Spirit of Elijah). Thus the terms filling and resting, when used in context of the Spirit of the Lord enabling a person to do a supernatural act, can be somewhat interchangeable though with some necessary caution.

### Old Testament Understandings

It is very important to see the passage of Numbers 11 in the context of the Pentateuch and the OT. Since the time of the Exodus, Israel had trouble with leadership and with obedience to God. Thus, qualified and spiritually minded leaders were important to Israel's well being. As Hildebrandt notes, "Once Israel is established as the people of God, the need for rulers or leaders becomes evident. In this context, the majority of references in the Pentateuch to *rûah* as spirit deal with some kind of leadership ability given by the *rûah* for a particular task."<sup>69</sup> Although, as mentioned earlier, the idea of the HS, or God's Spirit, is not as defined as it is in the NT, it nevertheless does play a vital role in the theological mindset of OT believers.

Not only is the Spirit of God shown in leadership, but it is also shown in skillful work. According to Cotton, "The only previous statement by God about the work of his Spirit in people appears in the book of Exodus (28.3; 31.3; 35.31)."<sup>70</sup> In this passage

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<sup>69</sup> Hildebrandt, *Theology of the Spirit of God*, 22.

<sup>70</sup> Roger D. Cotton, "The Pentecostal Significance Of Numbers 11." *Journal Of Pentecostal Theology* 10, no. 1 (October 2001): 3. *Religion and Philosophy Collection*, EBSCOhost, accessed July 18, 2016, <http://web.b.ebscohost.com.ezproxy.liberty.edu:2048>, 6.

Bezalel was filled with the Spirit in order to preform the tasks of building the various items related to the Tabernacle. Other experiences involve prophecy in 1 Samuel 10:10 and the troubling spirit of 1 Samuel 16:14 (which is not the SOL in this case). Thus, although rarely mentioned in comparison to its length, there is ample evidence of God's Spirit at work in the OT, as compared with the NT and especially the book of Acts. Though admittedly the way the HS moved in the NT would not have been understood in the eyes of OT believers.

When it comes to the empowering work of the Spirit in people it is important to understand that it comes with a specific purpose. Mounce writes that, "in the imagery of anointing, the "Spirit" of God is said to be "poured out" on those he endows with his redemptive presence (always of the restoration of Israel as God's covenant nation, Isa. 32:15; 44:3-4; Ezek. 39:29; Joel 2:28)."<sup>71</sup> Thus, the pouring out of the Spirit has a redemptive purpose in relation to the covenant. This can also be seen at Pentecost with the ushering in of the New Covenant, as well as seen in Numbers with Moses and the elders leading the Israelites into the Promised Land.

By comparing Moses' comment in Numbers 11: 29 to the prophecy in Joel 2:28-32, a case for prophecy having eschatological blessings can be made by Sjoberg states, "There was an apparently widespread view in early Judaism that at the end of the present age or in the age to come the Spirit of God would be poured out on all Israel and all Israelites would have the gift of prophesying."<sup>72</sup> This perhaps had some influence on the audience at Pentecost in Acts 2, hence why Peter quotes Joel 2 in his sermon, and at the subsequent outpourings of the HS that are recorded in Acts and in Early Christian history.

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<sup>71</sup> Mounce, *Mounce's Complete Expository Dictionary*, 676.

<sup>72</sup> E. Sjoberg, *Der verborgene Menschensohn in den Evangelien* (Lund 1955), 384ff.

This idea of a widespread resting of the Spirit of the Lord on believers is also recorded in rabbinic literature. In *Numbers Rabbah 15:5*, it is said: “In this world some men have prophesied, but in the world to come, all Israelites will prophesy.”<sup>73</sup> This is supported by the Spirit of the Lord resting or pouring out on believers sometimes leads to verbal utterances; as with the case of the seventy elders in Numbers 11 and King Saul in 1 Samuel 10:6-10, not to mention cases in the NT as in Acts 2, 10 and 19. The rabbis and perhaps Joel were probably thinking only of all Jews. However, with God revealing His salvific plan the progression of the Spirit filling or resting on believers from Moses’ wish (Numbers 11:29) to Joel’s foretelling (Joel 2:28-32) is finally begun to reach fulfillment in the book of Acts. Not only with the disciples at Pentecost, but especially with the gift of the Spirit being poured out on Cornelius’ household in Acts 10:44-48.

In reference to the SOL in the OT one should realize that it is not just the source of prophecy, but also the source of other supernatural occurrences. Turner lists five categories for the HS involvement in the OT. They are: revelation and guidance (Genesis 41:15-36; 2 Samuel 7:27), wisdom and understanding (Deuteronomy 34:9; 1 Kings 3:38), prophecies (Numbers 11:25; 1 Samuel 10:6), praise skills (1 Chronicles 25:3; 2 Chronicles 5:13; the Psalms), and finally supernatural strength and power (Judges 14:6, 16:30).<sup>74</sup> This is important because one should not emphasize the gift of prophecy as the only spiritual gift given in the OT.

However, one must understand what is meant by the indwelling presence of God. Here Kaiser helps out by stating, “The indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit is defined

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<sup>73</sup> Aune, *Prophecy in Early Christianity*, 193.

<sup>74</sup> Turner, M. "The Spirit in Luke-Acts: A Support or a Challenge to Classical Pentecostal Paradigms?." *Vox Evangelica* 27, (1997): 75-101. *New Testament Abstracts*, EBSCOhost, accessed July 18, 2016, <http://web.b.ebscohost.com.ezproxy.liberty.edu:2048>, 80. See

as the abiding and on-going work of the Holy Spirit of God, in which he resides within the believer to bless or to judge each, as determined by the standard of God's covenant and will."<sup>75</sup> By this definition it is hard to see the seventy elders and some OT believers as not being filled with the SOL, yet it should be maintained that the filling of the Spirit in the NT is still unique and different.<sup>76</sup>

### New Testament Understandings

It should also be mentioned that even before Pentecost prophecy was experienced in the NT by the filling of the HS. In Luke 1:67 Zechariah, the father of John the Baptist prophesied. This was because he was "was filled with the HS" (Luke 1:67b, ESV). Although this was different from the type of prophecy experienced in the Numbers 11 passage, in that the words are recorded so clearly they could be understood as a human language, it can be seen as similar and fitting with the understandings of being filled by either the SOL (OT) or the HS (NT)

The gift of prophecy was clearly important for NT believers (Luke 1:67; Romans 12:6; 1 Corinthians 12:10, 14:1-22; 1 Timothy 4:14; 2 Peter 1:20-21; Revelation 1:3, 22:7-19). Furthermore, it is stated that, "For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy" (Revelation 19:10b, ESV). As Aune states, "The ability to prophesy, which was closely associated with the presence of the Spirit in Judaism, was also regarded as a natural manifestation of the presence of the Spirit in the church, a view reflected in both

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<sup>75</sup> Walter C. Kaiser Jr. "The indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit in the Old Testament." *Evangelical Quarterly* 82, no. 4 (October 2010): 308-315. *Religion and Philosophy Collection*, EBSCOhost, accessed July 18, 2016, <http://web.b.ebscohost.com.ezproxy.liberty.edu:2048>, 309.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*, 315.



Acts and 1 Thessalonians.”<sup>77</sup> In understanding that Christianity comes from Judaism, it is important to note the theology of the writers of the NT, who were mostly, if not all Jewish.<sup>78</sup> Thus, as with the OT the NT saw prophecy as revelation from God.

### Early Church Understandings

It is now important to look at how the early Church understood prophecy in light of the passages in the OT. One can see that passages like Joel 2:28-32 and Numbers 11:29 had a significant imprint on both Jewish and Christian theological beliefs. Blenkinsopp informs the reader that, “In the course of time both Judaism and early Christianity (Acts 2:16-21) would find in this passage [Numbers 11:29] an essential aspect of eschatological and messianic faith.”<sup>79</sup> Thus, it should be seen that Moses’ wish in Numbers 11:29, as foretold in Joel 2:28-32, had significant impact on the growth of Christianity, as recorded in Acts, and in the first few centuries.

Regarding verses twenty-five and twenty-six of the Numbers 11 passage Cyril of Jerusalem (313-386 A.D.) writes about the gifts of the Spirit and the seventy elders. He states, “It was not that the Spirit was divided, but his gifts were distributed according to the vessels and the capacity of the recipients. . . . To make it clear that it was not Moses who bestowed the gift but the Spirit who wrought.”<sup>80</sup> Cyril of Jerusalem also states that God knew of the things to come and accomplished them according to His will.<sup>81</sup>

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<sup>77</sup> Aune, *Prophecy in Early Christianity*, 193.

<sup>78</sup> It is not here for debate about the ethnicity of Luke, nor for who the writer of the book of Hebrews is and their ethnicity.

<sup>79</sup> Blenkinsopp, *History of Prophecy in Israel*, 258.

<sup>80</sup> Lienhard, *Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture: Old Testament III*, 218. (FC 61:117-18) Catechetical Lecture 16.25

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*, 218.

Although the theological orthodoxy of Tertullian (155-220 A.D.) can be debated, he definitely had theological viewpoints that would be in line with later Pentecostal understandings. Regarding the nature of prophecy and ecstasy that was experienced in his day he states, “For when a man is rapt in the Spirit, especially when he beholds the glory of God, or when God speaks through him, he necessarily loses his sensation (*excidat sensu*), because he is overshadowed with the power of God.”<sup>82</sup> Though it is not clear what the experience was like to witness, it is clear that the early Church experienced some prophetic utterances. One not only sees this in Tertullian’s works, but also from Biblical accounts that are not in connection with the Apostles. The book of Acts contains several examples including the prophets at the Church of Antioch (13:1), the brothers Judas and Silas (15:32), the daughters of Philip the Evangelist (21:9) and Agabus (21:10).

Irenaeus (130-200 A.D.), who lived around the same time as Tertullian (155-220 A.D.), also spoke of prophetic events happening in his area. Irenaeus resided in Gaul, modern day France, while Tertullian was in Carthage, in North Africa and it can be presumed that prophetic events were not just limited to those areas, though this is in part an argument from silence. Irenaeus states that, “In like manner we do also hear many brethren in the Church, who possess prophetic gifts, and who through the Spirit speak all kinds of languages, and bring to light for the general benefit the hidden things of men, and declare the mysteries of God.”<sup>83</sup> Thus, prophecy is attested to exist in the Church for at least a century after the death of the last Apostle around 90 or 100 A.D..

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<sup>82</sup> Alexander Roberts, James Donaldson, A. Cleveland Coxe, and Allan Menzies. *The Ante-Nicene Fathers: Translations of the Writings of the Fathers Down to A.D. 325. Vol. 3* (Edinburgh: T. & T Clark, 1989), Tertullian, *Against Marcion* iv.22, (Roberts ANF 3:383)

<sup>83</sup> Alexander Roberts, James Donaldson, A. Cleveland Coxe, and Allan Menzies. *The Ante-Nicene Fathers: Translations of the Writings of the Fathers Down to A.D. 325. Vol. 1* (Edinburgh: T. & T Clark, 1989), Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* v.6.1 (Roberts, ANF 1:531.)

The part that early Church history plays in the larger argument of interpreting the Numbers 11 passage goes with consistence of understanding beyond the writing of the New Testament. This leads to relevance to modern believers. For if the supernatural work by the HS in believers happened in the early Church then it has implications for modern believers as well as to the historical interpretation and understanding of the work of the HS in the lives of OT, NT and early Church believers.

## CHAPTER 3

### Prophecy In The Ancient Near East And Mediterranean World

#### Broad Analysis

In the ANE much like in Israel, one finds two main types of prophet. Scholars identify the first type as formal or professional prophets. These prophets would serve the king of their respective nation or the leader of a temple. As Walton states, “In the ancient world people could train to be prophets, could play an active role in cultivating prophetic messages, and could serve under the sponsorship of the king as professional advisors who were paid for their services”<sup>84</sup> In like manner Moses, who functions as a king, has these seventy elders serving as his prophetic court.

Professional prophets were not just in the ANE, but also in Israel. Waltke observes, “Professional prophets are counted among the ruling social class, along with kings, princes, priests, and wise men . . . . Correlatively, some are attached to the royal court . . . , just as diviners and “wise men” are present at oriental courts . . . .”<sup>85</sup> Just like with Ancient Near Eastern Courts, Israel’s professional prophets spoke either while being sought after by counsel or by intervening on behalf of God, or their respective gods. Unfortunately many of their prophecies have been lost (cf. 2 Chronicles 2:29).

The other type of prophet in the ANE is the informal prophet. This type may be compared to the prophet Amos or in direct regards to, this passage, Eldad and Medad.

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<sup>84</sup> John H. Walton, *Ancient Near Eastern Thought and the Old Testament: Introducing the Conceptual World of the Hebrew Bible* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2006), 240.

<sup>85</sup> Bruce K. Waltke, and Charles Yu. *An Old Testament Theology: An Exegetical, Canonical, and Thematic Approach* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2007), 806. See (Isa. 3:2-3; 28:7; Mic. 3:11; Jer. 2:26; 4:9; 6:13; 8:1; Ezek. 13:9) with prophets being counted among the ruling classes. See (2 Sam. 7:17; 12:1-15; 1 Kings 1:8, 10-11, 22, 32; 2 Sam. 24:11, 18) with prophets being attached to the royal court.

Walton notes that, “The hallmark of informal prophecy is that it is more spontaneous and occasional. The recipient could be either a layperson or a priest. These prophetic messages often came in dreams or ecstatic experiences.”<sup>86</sup> While these prophets were not necessarily belonging to a king’s or temple’s court they were important in understanding the will of the gods and in guiding the king through military adventures and social needs.

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<sup>86</sup> Walton, *Ancient Near Eastern Thought*, 240-241.

### Ancient Near Eastern Prophecy

When looking at prophecy and ecstatic behavior as seen in the Numbers 11 passage it is important to investigate what prophecy looked like in the ANE. Since not much detail exists, and what little details there are can appear foreign to a western context, it is important to seek out ANE understandings to help Biblical Studies. By seeking native understandings it is hoped to thereby increase one's own understanding of history and theology. When contrasting and an Israelite, and ANE native's, and our own understanding of prophesy, Firth concludes, “. . . [A]nyone from the Ancient Near East would understand the divine endowment indicated by the role of the SOL. Nevertheless, revelation to Israel qualified the immanence of God such that it would not have fitted the theology of the Ancient Near East.”<sup>87</sup> Although it is important not to over equate ANE understandings with that of Israel's, yet it is also important to note that Israel did not understand prophecy in a vacuum or in their own bubble. They had derived their own understanding of prophecy from Egypt, Mari, and other sources. Regarding prophecy, God, as with the covenants spoke to Israel in terms that they understood<sup>88</sup>, though He obviously corrected their understandings in many cases. Thus, when seeking to understand prophecy and the events of the Numbers 11 passage, a look into an ANE understanding will be very informative.

As mentioned previously, there are some parallels between the prophecies that appear in Israel and those, which appear in the ANE and other parts of the world. This did not escape the writers of the Bible who held similar roles to that of the classical

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<sup>87</sup> Firth and Wegner, *Presence, Power, and Promise*, 65.

<sup>88</sup> While not diving too much into the subject, the covenants that God enacted throughout the Old Testament, especially the Mosaic covenant, fits similarly into a standard formula for covenants used in the ANE at the time.

prophets. As written in Jeremiah 27:1-15 prophets were not only in Israel, true prophets or otherwise, but also in Edom, Moab, Ammon and elsewhere. In the Jeremiah passage in particular, the prophecies that were done in and outside the country of Israel that supported rebellion against Nebuchadnezzar were deemed to be from false prophets (Jeremiah 27: 8-15; 29: 8-9, 15-23). The prophet with the true message of God was that of Jeremiah.

It should be noted that, in comparison to the rest of the ANE, Egypt had a more dominant priestly and scribal class. One Egyptian prophecy that is worth mentioning is the prophecy of Neferti that predicts the end of the Old Kingdom, the time of the First intermediate period, and the rise of the Middle Kingdom. In many ways the prophecy is reminiscent of some messianic prophecies. However, this prophecy was discovered to be an example of *vaticinium ex eventu* or “Prophecy after the event”.

With the exception of the prophecy of Neferti, there is little similarity between Ancient Egyptian Prophecy and Ancient Israelite Prophecy. Blenkinsopp concludes: “But it is tolerably clear that whatever historical links can be discerned between Israelite prophecy and types of mediation in the great urban centers of the Near East are with Syria and Mesopotamia rather than Egypt.”<sup>89</sup> Space and time does not permit a thorough investigation of the differences between the two theological understandings of prophecy. However, it is important to see the aforementioned example of theological similarity that Egypt had with Israel and the OT.

Further investigation of Ancient Egypt, the ANE, and their relationship to Israel reveals a striking difference in theological understanding of the personality of the SOL.

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<sup>89</sup> Blenkinsopp, *History of Prophecy in Israel*, 56.

Firth writes that, “The Near East – and especially Egyptian – literature personifies the endowing agent of the gods. The OT does not personify the SOL, through the NT presents the HS as a person of the Godhead.”<sup>90</sup> Thus, it can be concluded that the personality of the HS in the NT is more compatible with the understanding of the ANE than with that of OT Israel. Although from a canonical view of Scripture the SOL and the HS are the same, it is just how they were viewed is different.

While regarding the ANE, another major group to consider is the Hittites. Like Egypt, the Hittites had a state controlled priesthood that was tasked with divination, interpretation, and prophecy. However, the Hittites were more open to ecstatic behavior and prophecy. Blenkinsopp proposes, “In this respect, as in others, the Hittites were dependent on the religious traditions and practices of Mesopotamia, where ecstasy had always been an acknowledged form of possession and communication with the gods.”<sup>91</sup> Thus, Israel’s theological understanding of prophecy lines more with the Hittites than with the Egyptians.

As with the prophets of Israel that served their God, the ANE prophets can be seen as agents of their respective gods. However, Walton writes about ANE prophecies that, “The prophecies were not intended to reveal the nature of deity; they simply functioned to advise the king in a course of action.”<sup>92</sup> This is one fundamental difference in comparing prophets of the ANE and those of Israel. Israel’s prophets continually called for holiness, not just a course of action. At best, ANE prophets did sometimes call for a king to act justly and maintain some morals.

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<sup>90</sup> Firth and Wegner, *Presence, Power, and Promise*, 66-67.

<sup>91</sup> Blenkinsopp, *History of Prophecy in Israel*, 56.

<sup>92</sup> Walton, *Ancient Near Eastern Thought*, 241.



One final comparison finds an interesting connection between ANE theology and NT Theology, in slight contrast to OT Theology. Firth describes this by saying that, “The extent of the HS’s embodiment (indwelling) compares more favorably to the Ancient Near East than to the SOL.”<sup>93</sup> This can also be seen in Peter’s Pentecost sermon, which sees the HS’s work in relevant OT passages that an OT theologian would not necessarily have noticed or understood.

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<sup>93</sup> Firth and Wegner, *Presence, Power, and Promise*, 66.

## Mari Prophecy

When looking at Ancient Near Eastern prophecies, those that most closely resemble biblical prophecies are the prophecies of Mari, which appear before the year 1760 B.C. when Mari was destroyed by Hammurabi. As Parker informs, “This is true above all of the many comparative studies that look to the Mari letters for illumination of aspects, or the origins, of biblical prophecy.”<sup>94</sup> One of the most important elements of comparison between Israelite and Mari prophecies is that of the verification of prophecies. Among the writings of the Mari letters there has been found not only references of prophecies that have been written, but also of officials seeking independent confirmation that the prophecies were true.<sup>95</sup> Thus, while Israelite prophecy can be said to be superior to that of other Ancient Near Eastern nations because of God’s divine influence in conceiving them, yet common comparisons can be made between the two.

In looking at early Israelite prophecy, ecstatic or otherwise, it is important to recognize what sort of influence Mari prophecy may have had on Israelite prophecy. To this extent Blenkinsopp concludes, “Despite the seven centuries which separated the reign of Zimrilim [a Mari King] from that of David, there seems no reason to deny that Israel was familiar with the same pattern [of prophecy]. The important questions, however, have to do not with origins but with development . . . .”<sup>96</sup> This is especially relevant to the rise of the classical prophets of Israel. However, confining the consideration of the development of ecstatic prophecy from Mari to the Numbers 11

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<sup>94</sup> Simon B. Parker, "Official attitudes toward prophecy at Mari and in Israel." *Vetus Testamentum* 43, no. 1 (January 1993): 50-68. *ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials*, EBSCOhost, accessed July 18, 2016, <http://web.b.ebscohost.com.ezproxy.liberty.edu:2048>, 51.

<sup>95</sup> *Ibid.*, 57.

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid.*, 59.

passage, one should admit that the Israelites, and especially a learned man such as Moses, at least knew of their practices. Although, admittedly, the Hebrew knowledge of the Mari prophetic acts was better after Israel entered the land of Canaan for they would be in more contact with these acts, it is still important to recognize Mari influence in its Wilderness days. For as Thus, especially from the time of Joshua and the conquest of the Promised Land, Israel found itself countering, if not embracing, the prophetic understandings of the Mari prophets and their later influences.

Another important element that should be established, though admittedly it is more important after the Numbers 11 passage, is the influence that Mari had on its neighbors even after its collapse. Blenkinsopp again helps by informing that, “There are sufficient indications from other sites in Syria and Mesopotamia to suggest that, in this respect, the situation at Mari was fairly typical of the entire area.”<sup>97</sup> Though he readily admits, “while we are in no position to trace the history of Mesopotamian “prophecy,” the personal, practices, and types of oracles seem to remain fairly constant over a very long period of time.”<sup>98</sup> In relation to the Numbers 11 passage it can be determined that although these influences would have a greater impact during and after the conquest of Canaan, the establishment of the Mari prophecy centers several centuries before the events of the Exodus would appear to have some influence on Israel and their theological understandings of prophecy.

In discussing parallels between Mari prophecy and early Israelite prophecy, it is important to analyze the Mari prophets. The ecstatic prophets at Mari were called *mahḥu*

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<sup>97</sup> Parker, *Prophecy at Mari and in Israel*, 58.

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid.*, 58.

(or *muhḫum*; female *muhḫutum*) and operated as “divination personal”.<sup>99</sup> Walton provides some insight into them by stating, “The maḫḫu would go into a frenzied trance and speak utterances believed to be derived from gods or goddesses like Ishtar, Nergal, or Adad. These “prophets” (or better “diviners”) were sometimes considered madmen because of their abnormal behavior.”<sup>100</sup> One can note a resemblance to that of the events of Numbers 11, with what is perceived as ecstatic, or abnormal, activity; and also that of Acts 2 in appearance, where some people thought that the Disciples were drunk on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:12-15). Thus, there are some conclusions that can be drawn from understanding Mari ecstatic prophecies that will help the reader understand what happened in Numbers 11.

Just like with Israel prophets and prophecy in general, there has been a tension between prophets and officials, especially when officials received negative messages. This can be seen in 1 Kings 22:8, with King Ahab stating that he hated Micaiah the prophet. Though for the benefit of a prophet’s life a negative message was uncommon, for a king could kill any prophet for being against him, assuming the king was willing and had the political will power. However, negative messages were actually a less common problem than that of positive messages since positive messages could be seen as false and manipulative, thus causing skepticism among officials. Regarding this, Parker concludes, “There is no reason to think that the attitudes of Mari officials toward prophecy were unique in the ancient near east. Rather, for lack of other evidence they may be taken to be representative.”<sup>101</sup> This can also be seen in the rest of the passage of 1

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<sup>99</sup> Walton, *Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy*, 355.

<sup>100</sup> *Ibid.*, 355.

<sup>101</sup> Parker, *Prophecy at Mari and in Israel*, 67.

Kings 22:14-16, where king Ahab knew the positive message from Micaiah was a lie.

Thus, as it was important for verification of prophecies by the ANE by officials, so it was important for the Israelites (Deuteronomy 13:1-5, 18:20-22).

### The Divine Name in the Ancient Near East

When analyzing the theological nature of God empowering a person, there is little to compare between the ANE and the OT. For, as Firth points out, “any investigation using this method will quickly meet a dead end, as there is neither Akkadian nor Egyptian use of the collocation ‘spirit of [divine name]’ to indicate empowerment by deity.”<sup>102</sup> Another important thing is to recognize that Yahweh is portrayed differently than that of other Ancient Near Eastern deities.<sup>103</sup> Thus, in examining any parallels between Israel and the ANE, it must be understood that an event such as the empowering of the SOL or the HS that is seen in Numbers 11 is not compatible with ANE theological understandings.

However, one important parallel between Israel and the ancient world involves creation stories. As discussed previously, the SOL was seen more as the presence of the Lord rather than a separate entity. This is particularly evident when comparing creation accounts from Israel and the ANE. As Firth states, “More information from both the OT and the Ancient Near East confirms that the *ruah* is related to the presence of the deity preparing to participate in creation.”<sup>104</sup> Thus, in showing further parallels between the understandings of the Spirit of a deity it appears that both the ANE and Israel would have trouble with a Trinitarian understanding of the HS and God, through in different ways.

When looking at God placing His Spirit upon individuals there are some ideas that are shared between Israel and the ANE. As seen earlier, the leadership motif in the Numbers 11 passage as well as in the book of Numbers as a whole, it is important to

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<sup>102</sup> Firth and Wegner, *Presence, Power, and Promise*, 38.

<sup>103</sup> *Ibid.*, 38.

<sup>104</sup> *Ibid.*, 42.

understanding the empowering of the SOL on the seventy elders. Similarly, is the idea of the empowering of a ruler by a deity in the ANE. This can be seen in some literature of a king or ruler receiving authority from a deity to rule over the deity's kingdom.

In Israel, a number of rulers received their authority from God, and in reference to Romans 13 it is known that all of them received their authority from God: Israel's rulers, the ANE Rulers, and in fact all rulers. This is the case with Moses (Exodus 3:13-18; Hebrews 3:16), Saul (1 Samuel 9:17, 10:1), David (1 Samuel 16:1-13), and Jesus (Matthew 28:18; John 5:19-27, 8:28, 14:10).<sup>105</sup> As Firth states, "In Ancient Near Eastern texts the divine endowment on the king is considered a visible manifestation, just as the biblical text sometimes alludes to a visible manifestation of the SOL."<sup>106</sup> There does not appear to be the same authority link between the Numbers 11 passage and that of Acts 2, except that the disciples from then on display acts of courage in spreading the Gospel. As though under the direction of God as seen in Acts 4:13-22 and per the Great Commission of Matthew 28:16-20. Thus, in connection with the empowering of the SOL that is seen in the Numbers 11 passage, the visible effects of that empowerment help to show to the Israelite assembly that God has put the seventy elders and Moses under his authority and for them to exercise authority over the Israelite community.

Above it has been discussed that the SOL was not considered a separate entity; however, in two biblical texts interesting statements are made. Two, ANE rulers that had an important impact on Israelite history had curious insights as to the agency of the prophecy done by the Hebrews. Firth writes, "Interestingly, when foreign kings encounter

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<sup>105</sup> By this statement, it is not meant that Jesus is less than God, but to demonstrate that he showed himself to have authority from God, the Father.

<sup>106</sup> Firth and Wegner, *Presence, Power, and Promise*, 53.

Israelite prophecy or dream interpretation in biblical texts, they name the Spirit of God, rather than God directly, as the agent (Pharaoh, Gen. 41:38; Nebuchadnezzar, Dan. 4:8, 18; 5:11-14).”<sup>107</sup> This is most likely not a result of their understanding of the Israelite God and theology, but rather a reflection of their own theology or understandings of Israelite theology.

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<sup>107</sup> Firth and Wegner, *Presence, Power, and Promise*, 62.



## Greek Understanding of Prophecy

In examining Greek prophecy, especially those of the Delphi oracles, one does not find much in common or significant with the Numbers 11 passage. Scott states that, “Oracles were an essential, and respected, part of the Greek world. They were also everywhere you looked.”<sup>108</sup> However, complicating the matter and unlike the Mari prophecies no good sources on how the oracles at Delphi were done appeared until after their heyday, coming from first century B.C. to fourth century A.D.<sup>109</sup>

Despite the lack of major significance to the study of the Numbers 11 passage, one important observation from the oracles at Delphi is that the priestess would be in an ecstatic trance. For example, Pythia, the Delphi priestess, would deliver oracles by, as stated by Stoneman, “mounting a tripod (in which incense would normally be burnt) inside the innermost shrine of the temple of Apollo at Delphi, going into an ecstatic trance (or, in other terms, becoming possessed by the god) and pronouncing her oracles.”<sup>110</sup> Her ecstatic nature is said to be caused by a powerful vapor that appeared in a chasm where the temple was built.<sup>111</sup> The message would then be given, but due to the ecstatic nature of the priestess, the temple priests would give an interpretation as to what she was saying.<sup>112</sup>

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<sup>108</sup> Michael Scott, *Delphi: A History of the Center of the Ancient World* (Princeton, NJ : Princeton University Press, 2014), 24.

<sup>109</sup> *Ibid.*, 10-11.

<sup>110</sup> Richard Stoneman, *The Ancient Oracles: Making the Gods Speak* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2011), 31.

<sup>111</sup> Scott, *Delphi*, 20.

<sup>112</sup> According to ancient sources, the chasm that produced this vapor was found by some goats that were grazing on the mountain. They found a hole in the ground that brought forth a powerful gas that made them basically high; the goat herders discover this and also got high. The apparent side effect of being high, according to those writing about it, was the foretelling of future events. Thus, the oracle at Delphi began by intoxicated goats.

## CHAPTER 4

### JOEL 2:28-32 AND ACTS 2

#### Joel's Connection with Numbers 11

The passage of Joel 2:28-32 is very much linked with the Numbers 11 passage. Both passages are then linked to the events of Pentecost in Acts 2. Allen, in looking at the Joel passage, states, "The immanence of Yahweh in Israel's ongoing history would be manifested in a special way, by the charismatic endowment of every member of the community with this prophetic gift. The promise takes up the wistful longing of Moses expressed in Num. 11:29."<sup>113</sup> The simple wish of Moses is now to be stated as a prophecy of a future event. The passage in Joel, whether influenced by Moses or not, informs the reader of a coming event(s) that is partly shown at Pentecost.

In looking at this passage, one finds two specific points of focus. The first is that of the resting of the Spirit; however, the terminology in Joel is that of SOL being "poured out" Joel 2:28; and the second is democratization of the Spirit. The meaning of democratization of the Spirit is that the Spirit is given to everyone, though Biblical and historical accounts show that not prophesied or displayed supernatural spiritual gifts. Stuart, in looking at the first point, identifies that, "The first is addressed by the verbs in the verse ("prophesy," "have dreams," "see visions"), all of which describe revelatory functions associated with the fullness of God's Spirit (on the "fullness" of the Spirit as heightening of obedience and revelatory powers)"<sup>114</sup> This can also be seen in Deut. 34:9,

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<sup>113</sup> Leslie C. Allen, *The Books of Joel, Obadiah, Jonah, and Micah* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1976), 99.

<sup>114</sup> Douglas K. Stuart, *Hosea-Jonah* (Waco, Tex: Word Books, 1987), 260.

Acts 7:55, 11:24, and Eph. 5:18-20. These verbs reinforce the idea of being filled with the Spirit and what the effects are of being filled.

In relation to these verbs and to the events of Numbers 11 and those of Acts, one sees all of these (prophecy, having dreams, and seeing visions) being displayed. In Numbers 11 and Acts 19:1-6 one sees acts of prophecy. Additionally, in Acts 11 Agabus foretells of a famine and there are prophets that were in Antioch as seen in Acts 13:1. As far as having dreams, there is the example of Paul having a dream in Acts 18:9, though it is translated as “vision”. Additionally, dreams do appear in Matthew’s Gospel to Joseph the husband of Mary in Matthew 1:20, 2:13, 19, and 22.<sup>115</sup> Regarding the seeing of visions, Levison suggests that Numbers 11 is more like a vision experience.<sup>116</sup> Further support is seen in the vision experiences of Ananias in Acts 9:10-12, Cornelius and Peter in Acts 10, and Paul in Acts 16:9-10.

In looking at the wish proposed by Moses in Numbers 11:29 the prophet Joel provides more information regarding what was to take place among God’s people. As Burke states, “Joel would predict as he envisioned what all classes and all peoples who trusted Messiah would individually demonstrate in that future day (Joel 2:28-29).”<sup>117</sup> This is in relation to the New Covenant (Jeremiah 31:31-34) where God will put His Law in their hearts and they will be His people. This is done through the work of the HS in the lives of believers.

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<sup>115</sup> Also in Matthew’s Gospel one sees the Wise Men having a dream (Matthew 2:12) and Pilate’s wife (Matthew 27:19).

<sup>116</sup> John R. Levison, "Prophecy in ancient Israel: the case of the ecstatic elders." *The Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 65, no. 4 (October 2003): 503-521. *ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials*, EBSCOhost, accessed July 18, 2016, <http://web.b.ebscohost.com.ezproxy.liberty.edu:2048>, 504.

<sup>117</sup> Burke and Warrington, *Biblical Theology of the Holy Spirit*, 10

## Old Testament Understandings

In reflecting on Jeremiah's prophecy about all of God's people receiving the Law of the Lord written on their hearts (Jeremiah 31:33), it is important to note the inclusiveness of that statement. Though Joel 2 is primarily focused on the pouring out of the SOL on all Jews, it is later seen to include the Gentiles. To this effect Firth informs that, "Slave girls will receive the Spirit in similar fashion to the elders of the land as possession by God's Spirit will not be the privilege of the few, but the experience of all (Num. 11:25; 12:6)."<sup>118</sup> The racial and national prejudices that are seen in the Bible such as the issue of Moses' Cushite wife (who was probably black) in Numbers 12:1, the Assyrians in Jonah, the Samaritans (who were despised by the Jews) as seen in John 4:9, and the Gentiles as seen in Galatians 2:14<sup>119</sup>, will not be seen in the Kingdom of God. These examples are not to be taken as the majority view of the Israelites. For as the Abrahamic covenant tells of Israel being a blessing to the nations (Genesis 12:1-4). In particular, Paul, in his letters concerning Jews and Gentiles, takes up this theme of racial equality in the eyes of God.

Outside of the books of Numbers and Joel, one sees evidence of the SOL working outside of prophets. Evidences for those who, while not serving as prophets, are sometimes called prophets range throughout the OT from Abraham to Joseph to Daniel. These men see visions, interpret dreams and possess unique abilities because they are filled with the Spirit. Additionally, one sees the Spirit resting on Samson in Judges 14:6 and 19, 15:14 and 19, as well as upon Amasai in 1 Chronicles 12:18 (chief of King David's mighty thirty men). Thus, by the time of Joel and the NT there has been

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<sup>118</sup> Firth and Wegner, *Presence, Power, and Promise*, 253.

<sup>119</sup> This is not intended as an exhaustive list.

precedence of the Spirit of God working in the lives of non-prophets. One can also say, though carefully, that although the seventy elders are called prophets, they do not function as a typical prophet and really are more like elders than prophets.

## Pentecost and Numbers 11 and Joel 2

In looking at the Bible there are a number of signs that point to God being at work among His people. For Noah it was the sign of a rainbow to mark a covenant in Genesis chapter nine; for Moses it was the plagues of Egypt in Exodus 7-12. For Jesus, the Gospel of John records signs of the Messiah. Leeper states that, "Just as a sign accompanied God's empowering of individuals in Numbers 11, so too a sign accompanied the Spirit's empowering in Acts 2, as well as in other instances later in Acts."<sup>120</sup> In showing God's work through the different men, whether elders or apostles, God left a sign for the people to witness in order to believe that this was God at work.

In looking at the book of Acts and in the NT there has been exceptional attention given to living in the Spirit; from when Jesus breathed on His disciples in John 20:22 to the events of Pentecost in Acts 2. Woodcock states that, "It is to have His presence saturate one's being with His qualities of godliness in life and power in ministry. To be filled with the HS means He advances His presence and power within a believer."<sup>121</sup> The same power that gripped the seventy elders in Numbers 11 is also the same power that was in the Apostles and in believers today. Thus, the teachings in the NT about the empowering of the HS rely in no small way upon the wish of Moses (Numbers 11:29) and the prophecy of Joel (Joel 2:28-32).

Although this ability was still present among believers in both the OT and NT, the empowering that was received yielded many benefits in one's relations with God. As

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<sup>120</sup> Gregory J. Leeper "The Nature Of The Pentecostal Gift With Special Reference To Numbers 11 And Acts 2." *Asian Journal Of Pentecostal Studies* 6, no. 1 (January 2003): 23. *Academic Search Complete*, EBSCOhost, accessed July 18, 2016, <http://web.b.ebscohost.com.ezproxy.liberty.edu:2048>, 36.

<sup>121</sup> Eldon Woodcock, "The Filling of the Holy Spirit." *Bibliotheca Sacra* 157, no. 625 (January 2000): 68-87. *ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials*, EBSCOhost, accessed July 18, 2016, <http://web.b.ebscohost.com.ezproxy.liberty.edu:2048>, 73.

Woodcock states, "Being filled with the Holy Spirit affects the entire range of a believer's experience. Yet Christians continue to be capable of sinning. The Holy Spirit does not remove the believer's self-control, but does enhance the use of his intelligence."<sup>122</sup> Thus, a continuity between the OT and NT can be established on the basis of the SOL and the HS show the same capabilities.

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<sup>122</sup> Woodcock, "The Filling of the Holy Spirit", 78.

## New Testament Understandings

### Luke's Recording of Acts 2 in Relation to Numbers 11 Teachings

In the Gospel of Luke and the book of Acts the phrase “filled with the Holy Spirit” is mentioned nine times. The first instance refers to John the Baptist (Luke 1:15) then Elizabeth (Luke 1:42) followed by Zacharias (Luke 1:67). In the book of Acts the disciples in Jerusalem are filled (Acts 2:4, 4:31), then Paul is filled (Acts 9:17, 13:9) and finally other disciples with Paul and Barnabas are filled near Iconium (Acts 13:52). In looking at references to the HS, Stronstad insists that Luke in his gospel alone has seventeen<sup>123</sup> as compared with twelve in Mathew<sup>124</sup> and six in Mark.<sup>125, 126</sup> Thus, Luke more than any other writer in the Gospels and in the rest of the NT, identifies the work and filling of the HS.

There is a debate as to what the disciples experienced at Pentecost. According to Dunn and Williams, the Pentecost passage contains ecstatic utterances.<sup>127</sup> On the other hand, Bock and Haenchen argue against ecstatic behavior on the day of Pentecost.<sup>128</sup> Despite this disagreement there is definitely a link between these two passages, Numbers 11 and Acts 2, in terms that prophecy was involved. However, either way one should not

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<sup>123</sup> Luke 1:15, 17, 35, 41, 67, 2:25-27 (multiple references), 3:16, 22, 4:1 (multiple references), 4:14, 10:21, 11:13, 12:10, 12:12.

<sup>124</sup> Mathew 1:18-20 (multiple references), 3:11, 16, 4:1, 10:20, 12: 18, 28, 31-32 (multiple references), 22:43, 28:19.

<sup>125</sup> Mark 1:8, 10, 12, 3:29, 12:36, 13:11.

<sup>126</sup> Roger Stronstad, *The Charismatic Theology of St. Luke: Trajectories from the Old Testament to Luke-Acts* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2012), 39.

<sup>127</sup> See James D. G Dunn, *Jesus and the Spirit: A Study of the Religious and Charismatic Experience of Jesus and the First Christians As Reflected in the New Testament* (London: Xpress Reprints, 1995), 152. and David John Williams, *Acts* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2011), 42.

<sup>128</sup> Darrell L. Bock, *Acts* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2007), 97. and Ernst Haenchen, *The Acts of the Apostles: a commentary* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1982), 168.



deny that a connection can clearly be made between the events of Pentecost and Moses' wish in Numbers 11:29 followed by the passage of Joel 2:28-32.

Before continuing to look at whether the nature of the Pentecost event was ecstatic or not, one should see the broad picture of what is going on. According to Stonstad, "The Pentecost narrative is the story of the transfer of the charismatic Spirit from Jesus to the disciples."<sup>129</sup> This can be seen as a parallel between God taking some of His Spirit from Moses and giving it to the seventy elders (Numbers 11:25). Moving on from Pentecost one sees the HS at work among the Samaritans and the Ethiopian Eunuch in Acts chapter 8 and among the Gentiles from Acts 10 and onward. What appears in only a few instances in the OT (that of Moses and the seventy elders in Numbers 11 and that of Elijah and Elisha in 2 Kings 2:9-14) now appears more frequently in the Luke-Acts narrative. In connection with the democratization shown in Numbers 11 and prophesied in Joel 2, the New Testament shows the fulfilling of Moses' dream of all believers being indwelt by the Spirit.

Although there are many questions about whether ecstatic behavior happened at Pentecost, and that of the Numbers 11 passage, nevertheless, in Paul's work one can see some textual evidence to support ecstatic utterances not only at Pentecost but also in other places in Acts. Williams insists that, "Paul's whole argument rests on the "tongues" not being understood and needing "interpretation" (not translation). It would appear, then, that in the Corinthian church and probably in Acts 10 and 19, "tongues" were some kind of ecstatic utterance, what the NEB [New English Bible] calls "the language of ecstasy"

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<sup>129</sup> Stonstad, *The Charismatic Theology of St. Luke*, 55.

(1 Cor. 14:2) . . . .”<sup>130</sup> This is to be different from that of what happen in the second half of Acts 2 when the language that was spoken was of human languages, whereas in earlier in Acts 2, 10, and 19 it is argued that tongues refers to a heavenly or unknown language. Although this is far from conclusive evidence it does provide some reasonable support for the idea of ecstasy at Pentecost

Another factor arguing for ecstatic utterances in Acts chapter 2 is that the disciples appear in two places in the narrative and not just one. The first would have been at a private location where the HS came “like a mighty rushing wind”, as mentioned in Acts 2:1-4. Then the rest of the passage has the disciples somewhere else. As Williams concludes, “If the disciples had been in their own quarters when the Spirit was given . . . they must by now have moved into the street. They may even have gone to the temple, “walking and jumping, and praising God” like the man in the next chapter. So, naturally, a crowd gathered.”<sup>131</sup> For them to be sitting in a house being filled with the Spirit and drawing a crowd is possible, but unlikely, so it can be assumed that the filling of the Spirit occurred in one place and Peter’s sermon happened in another. Assuming that is how Pentecost occurred one can argue, as this paper supports, that ecstatic utterances occurred in the first location, the upper room, which lead to them praising God outside the upper room that then lead to Peter’s Pentecost sermon in tongues. This does not prove that the two setting solution is correct, but certainly opens the door to the possibility.

### Paul’s Teachings

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<sup>130</sup> Williams, *Acts*, 41.

<sup>131</sup> Williams, *Acts*, 42.

There are two significant texts of Paul's that relate to Numbers 11. The first is Galatians 3:28, which states, "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus." (ESV). Although the context of this passage is dealing with law, works and faith, and not that of the HS, it does echo the statement of Joel 2:28-29, which is in turn echoing the statement of Numbers 11:29. Thus, while it cannot be sufficiently argued that Paul is thinking of Joel or Numbers 11 in this passage, there is enough to suggest that Paul reflects the same line of thought that both Moses and Joel state.

The other important passage or passages, involve Paul insisting that believers seek the HS. More precisely, Paul states in 1 Corinthians 12:31, "But earnestly desire the higher gifts." (ESV). Again in 1 Corinthians 14:1, "Pursue love, and earnestly desire the spiritual gifts, especially that you may prophesy" (ESV). Although the time difference between Moses and Paul is around 1,200 to 1,500 years they both want their respective congregations to be able to prophesy. More precisely, they want to their congregations to be filled with the Spirit according to their theological understandings.

The question of whether the HS dwelt within OT believers is usually answered in the negative; however, there is still some evidence to doubt this theological conclusion.<sup>132</sup> Fredericks insists that, "Although Paul does make numerous references to the indwelling Spirit, at no place does he state that Old Testament believers were devoid of the Spirit or that the Spirit was only "with" them but is now "in" us."<sup>133</sup> Thus, from a textual case one

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<sup>132</sup> Kaiser, *Holy Spirit in the Old Testament*, 315.; Wood, *Holy Spirit in the Old Testament*, 70.; Daniel P. Fuller *The Unity of the Bible: Unfolding God's Plan for Humanity* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1992). 229-30.

<sup>133</sup> Gary Fredricks, "Rethinking the role of the Holy Spirit in the lives of Old Testament believers." *Trinity Journal* 9, no. 1 (1988): 81-104. *ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials*, EBSCOhost, accessed July 18, 2016, <http://web.b.ebscohost.com.ezproxy.liberty.edu:2048/104>.

cannot, at least from Paul, make the case that OT believers were not in some shape or form filled with the HS, though this in part is an argument from silence, which is tricky at best and dangerous most of the time.

In looking at Paul's teachings and exposure to the work of the HS, one sees a close connection between the indwelling HS and Christian living. For as Galatians 5:18 states, "But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law". Now, in the context of the passage Paul walking in the Spirit and not of that in the flesh, yet can be seen in relation to the Numbers 11 passage. In that Moses wished for all of God's people to be prophets, which is to be led by the HS. While a direct reference is in doubt, yet both Moses and Paul wish that their respective adherents would be led by and be indwelt by the Spirit of God resting upon them.

## CHAPTER 5

### APPLICATION

#### The Role of the Holy Spirit

It is important to understand that the role of the HS is to bring glory to God and Christ. In doing this work, the HS empowers believers so as to live in harmony with God's will. As Wenham well states, "The gift of the spirit drew men towards God."<sup>134</sup> This is clearly seen in the events of Pentecost and in the book of Acts, but can also be seen in the Numbers 11 passage.

One would be quick to conclude that at Pentecost all of what was wished by Moses and prophesied by Joel came to pass; however, this would be a mistake. For, as Leeper states, "Peter's quotation of Joel in Acts 2:19-20 requires some explanation. The observable cosmic phenomena Joel anticipates are not described as having happened in Acts 2 or anywhere in the New Testament."<sup>135</sup> Acts chapter two, as well as the rest of Acts, is only a small fraction of what is to be expected by Joel's prophecy. For a careful inspection of the prophecy itself reveals that not all has come to pass.

In looking at Joel's prophecy, it should be noted that the events of Pentecost, and the subsequent events recorded in Acts, should not be seen as the complete fulfillment of "the time" mentioned in the prophecy. For according to Stuart, "The wording "at that time," literally, "in those days" (בימים ההמה), is one of the standard ways of describing the indefinitely future timing of the restoration era (Jer 31:29, 33; 33:15, 16; Joel 4:1; Zech

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<sup>134</sup> Gordon J. Wenham, *Numbers: An Introduction and Commentary* (Nottingham, England: InterVarsity Press; Downers Grove, IL.: Intervarsity Press, 2008), 123.

<sup>135</sup> Leeper, *The Nature Of The Pentecostal Gift*, 32.

8:23; etc.).”<sup>136</sup> In Peter’s quoting of Joel in Acts 2 there does not appear any indication that this new era begins and ends with Pentecost, the book of Acts, or in the first four centuries. There does not appear to be an ending of the events described, at least not until the age of Jesus’ return, and that end is only for a greater beginning. Thus, one can use as a argument for the noncessationism position that there is no recording of the supernatural gifts ending in Scripture, nor is there any direct statement that supernatural gifts would end before Jesus return. Though whether the supernatural gifts are being used today is different debate for another time.

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<sup>136</sup> Stuart, *Hosea-Jonah*, 261.

### The Holy Spirit with Present Believers

There is much that is applicable in the events of Numbers to the lives of present day believers. One of the more crucial applications involves faith and obedience and how they relate to receiving the HS. Cotton informs the reader that, “Faith and obedience are keys and are motivated by the Spirit. The grumbling, murmuring and complaining seen repeatedly in Numbers are not produced by those who are yielding to the work of the Spirit of God.”<sup>137</sup> The seventy elders that were with Moses in the Numbers 11 passage were not just leaders, but were leaders that were ordained to help Moses with spiritual insight. Just as Caleb and Joshua in Numbers eleven reported back on the Promise Land and the provision of God, so should believers’ today practice faithfulness and obedience, for this will help open them to being receptive to the HS and His works.

This leads to the two important factors that are present when a person is filled with the Spirit. For while it is ultimately up to God to choose who gets to experience the HS, it is important for believers to prepare themselves to receive the Spirit. As Woodcock writes, “There are two aspects to being filled with the Holy Spirit: His personal guidance and provision of power (the divine factor), and the believer's response of complete openness and yieldedness to His leading (the human factor).”<sup>138</sup> This is not to say that all believers that respond this way will receive the empowerment of the HS in ways similar to that mentioned earlier, but it does say that Christians need to develop these qualities.

It is important that in light of OT history, NT teachings, and modern events that the more things change the more they stay the same. As Goldingay writes, “In practice the position and lives of Christian believers are not so very different from those of OT

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<sup>137</sup> Cotton, “Pentecostal Significance Of Numbers 11”, 9.

<sup>138</sup> Woodcock, "The Filling of the Holy Spirit", 74.

believers. We are like Ruth and Hannah who produce the fruit of the Spirit, but also like Jacob and David who more obviously live more according to the flesh.”<sup>139</sup> Thus, in relation to the Numbers 11 passage, though the seventy elders and those in the OT, were indwelt among believers they were still capable of sinning<sup>140</sup>, which has not changed even after the fillings that took place after Pentecost. Even Peter sinned and he was not only filled with the Spirit, but also walked with Jesus during His ministry.<sup>141</sup>

Another application point that needs to be addressed involves the case of Eldad and Medad. Although the two were outsiders, they were also filled with the HS and they bring hope for those that are not often recognized for their spiritual service. Also, they bring hope to those that are not leaders, but faithful workers of Christ in the various capacities. The SOL dwelt in these men and so can He dwell among those that are not in leadership positions who are faithfully serving the Lord.

One last issue of application deals with false prophets, like Bar-Jesus in Acts 13:6 and those of the ANE and Israel who were not speaking God’s message. The Church needs to be cautious of such men and women for they can do great harm to the Church and take away many believers. Their teachings insult the work of Christ and the HS and should be addressed for the sake of the flock through correct theological teaching and application by all Christians. Thus, the Apostle John states, “Beloved, do not believe

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<sup>139</sup> John Goldingay, "Was the Holy Spirit Active in Old Testament Times?: What Was New about the Christian Experience of God?." *Ex Auditu* 12, (1996):14-28. *Old Testament Abstracts*, EBSCOhost, accessed July 18, 2016, <http://web.b.ebscohost.com.ezproxy.liberty.edu:2048>, 23.

<sup>140</sup> As argued earlier with Jephthah (Judges 11:29,11:39), Saul (1 Samuel 11:6, 13:8-15), and Samson (Judges 14:6, 19, and 15:14, 15:17, chapter 16).

<sup>141</sup> Matthew 16:22-23, Mark 8:32-33 (Peter’s mind on man not God); Matthew 26:69-75, Mark 14:66-72, Luke 22:54-61, John 18:15-27 (Peter’s Denial of Jesus), Galatians 2:11-14 (Peter acting as a hypocrite)



every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, for many false prophets have gone out into the world.” (1 John 4:1).

## CHAPTER 6

### CONCLUSION

In looking at the value that the Numbers 11 passage has on understanding the role of the HS in the OT several observations can be made. Firstly, is that the OT has significantly more value in understanding the HS than that with which it has been credited. The short passage of Numbers 11:24-26 and 29 sends small ripples in the OT with waves into the NT, especially in the book of Acts. Thus, the passage of Numbers 11 should have more consideration in further theological studies of the HS and that of the book of Acts, especially in connection with Joel 2:28-32.

Secondly, and significantly, the HS is very much a part of Godly leadership in Israel in the OT. One of the themes of Numbers, especially in chapter 11, is leadership and one sees how the SOL comes upon the seventy elders in order to help Moses lead rebellious Israel. This is not only the case in the Pentateuch, but it is also true during the time of the Judges and kings and also with the prophets that tried to spiritually guide Israel during their respective times. As the context of the story shows, it is not when Israel faced foreign threats that the indwelling of the HS was needed, but when Israel was in its infancy as a people group outside of Egypt. Also, as shown, the elders chosen were tried and tested men in leadership.

Thirdly, although the seventy elders are not considered to be classical prophets such as Isaiah, Jeremiah, or Ezekiel, they still are said to be prophets. This goes to show that not all prophets are named in the Bible and that not all prophets are professional

prophets. Eldad and Medad are a testament to the SOL coming upon those not on board with the professional leadership structure.

Fourthly, Israel, as well as other ANE theologies, expected ecstatic behavior in connection with prophecy. This behavior is seen as being under the hand of the deity that the prophet was supposed to represent. This is not only seen in Numbers and the early prophets but also with the later classical prophets. This not only carries over into the NT as recorded in the book of Acts, but also with the Church Fathers attesting to such acts. In being careful not to argue one way or the other in the Pentecostal and Charismatic theological debate, it should nevertheless be noted that at the very least there appears a historical precedence for the supernatural gifts of prophecy and ecstatic speech/ tongues up to at least the third century AD.

Fifthly, the resting of the SOL (HS) is part of the redemption process. The resting of the Spirit upon a believer, as with the case of the seventy elders, is not done at random, but with a purpose. Now, it may appear to be random as with the case of Eldad and Medad, yet it always works for a purpose. It is important to recognize that this purpose is to glorify God and further the salvific work of Jesus Christ. Thus, when the resting of the HS occurs, it is done for a divine purpose.

Sixthly, the filling of the HS appears prior to Pentecost in the NT. Although it can be said that they were still OT believers, Elizabeth (Luke 1:41, note that the first person said to be filled with the Spirit is in fact a woman, which relates to Joel 2:28) and Zechariah (Luke 1:67), the mother and father of John the Baptist, were filled with the Spirit. Although Pentecost changes the nature of the role of the HS, there are certainly fillings of the HS before Pentecost, as evidenced in the Gospels. All these fillings have a

verbal empowerment part of them that link these fillings from the Numbers 11 passage to the events of Acts 2, 10 and 19.

Seventh, the indwelling of the HS leads to a call of holiness. Unlike the ecstasy experiences of Ancient Near Eastern counterparts, the indwelling of the SOL, as well as the rest of the Bible, calls for a life of holiness. However, being indwelt with the HS does not prevent one from sinning, as with the case with the Judges, especially Jephthah and Samson. The seventy men were chosen to be leaders of Israel and, in a special ceremony, they were indwelt with the Spirit in order to help Moses spiritually guide Israel.

Eight, the HS can and will dwell in any believer that He wishes. In connection with Moses' wish and Joel's prophecy, the HS indwells Jews and Gentiles, but also indwells men and women from all social standings and from all races. This has often been forgotten or purposely ignored by Christians throughout history, especially in instances of slavery and social injustice. Thus, as Moses wished, the HS lives not only in western white males, but also in African, Arab, and Asian believers both men and women.

Ninth, due to theological understandings the translators of the LXX appear to have been wary of wild, ecstatic behavior. In an attempt to not be like other ANE religions it appears, though not conclusively, that the LXX used a broader term for prophecy, instead of what could possibly be a more accurate term connoting ecstatic activity. This postulate is in need of further research and may never be proven conclusively. However, whether this observation is true or not does not change any fundamental teachings of the church, though it may slightly affect the Pentecostal and Charismatic debate.

Finally, believers today need to realize that the role of the HS in their lives is to bring glory and honor to God. The display of God's power in the lives of Christian believers was not finished in Pentecost nor by the end of the book of Acts. Even if speaking in tongues and prophecy ceased as the cessationist believes, the power and comfort of the HS can change lives in a drastic and positive way.

In examining Numbers 11:16-17, 24-29 passage one really needs to take seriously the history and teaching of the OT. This passage expresses a simple wish of a weary man of God, and through direct or indirect means leads to a great missionary outreach of the HS at Pentecost as part of God's redemptive plan for His people. The resting of the Spirit on Moses and the seventy elders with him by the HS eventually leads to all believers receiving the HS in their lives. By the ministry of the SOL/HS believers are filled with the presence of God and can be embolden to speak the Gospel to non-believers, whether in the OT or NT. This is neither by any special work of Moses nor by the seventy elders, but by the grace, mercy and salvific plan of God for His glory.

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