

The Holy Spirit in Luke-Acts: Personal Entity or Impersonal Power?

A Synchronic Approach

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In modern research, we can trace both the position in favour of the personal character of the Spirit in Luke, as well as the one maintaining that Luke understands the Spirit as an impersonal divine power.¹ It suffices to mention here, on the one hand, Jacob Jervell, who seems to be certain that the Holy Spirit in the work of Luke is an impersonal power of God,² and on the other hand, François Bovon, who is convinced that in Luke-Acts the Holy Spirit is understood as a real person.³

In the long Orthodox theological tradition, however, the answer to this problem has been unanimous and above any questioning: The Holy Spirit is the Third Person of the Holy Trinity and consequently a real person.⁴ Even during the first

¹ Although this does not seem to be a central focus of contemporary research, cf. the excellent survey of Lukan pneumatology up to the year 2005 by F. BOVON, *Luke the Theologian: Fifty-five Years of Research (1950–2005)* (Waco, 2nd rev. ed. 2005), 225–274.

² J. JERVELL, *The Theology of the Acts of the Apostles* (New Testament Theology; Cambridge, 1996), 44, 133; cf. along the same lines, J. A. FITZMYER, “The Role of the Spirit in Luke-Acts,” *The Unity of Luke-Acts* (ETL 142; ed. J. Verheyden; Leuven, 1999), 178f.

³ BOVON, *Luke*, 251 (n. 1); cf. also the references of BOVON, *Luke*, 238, 250, to the relevant position of John H. E. HULL, *The Holy Spirit in the Acts of the Apostles* (London, 1967), 171f. Cf. along the same lines, F. F. BRUCE, “The Holy Spirit in the Acts of the Apostles,” *Int* 27 (1973), 173.

⁴ Cf. on the Orthodox pneumatological tradition, among others, P. EVDOKIMOV, *L’Esprit Saint dans la tradition orthodoxe* (Paris, 1969); J. D. ZIZIOULAS, “Christ, the Spirit and the Church,” in *Being as Communion: Studies in Personhood and the Church* (Crestwood, 1985), 123–142; T. STYLIANOPOULOS, “The Filioque: Dogma, Theologoumenon or Error?” in *Spirit of*

centuries B.C.E., the question discussed was not primarily about the personhood of the Holy Spirit but about its divinity, or to put it in a dogmatically more precise way, the question about whether or not it should be understood as belonging to the same ontological level of God the Father or not.⁵

Consequently, the above-mentioned contemporary pneumatological question is a challenge to Orthodox theologians, not least because it disputes theological principles and understandings that in the Orthodox tradition have not been called into question for many centuries or have never even been thought about at all. In my opinion, reception of relevant, modern scholarly insights on the part of Orthodox theology can be very fruitful and constructive, although it would definitely appear dangerous to some. Personally, however, I am convinced that Orthodox theology, and in our case Orthodox biblical scholarship, has to be able to enter into dialogue with each and every era and culture, as the church fathers have done in their own respective times.⁶

I am fully aware that the question under consideration probably did not bother the historical author of Luke-Acts. This, however, does not mean that there is no answer to the question. It just means that we should proceed with extreme caution and not draw firm conclusions too easily.

In this study, I will examine the references in both Luke and Acts to the Holy Spirit and compare them, on the one hand, with those to other characters of the narrative, and on the other hand, with other relevant, parallel semantic and narrative elements in Luke-Acts.

This means that any theological conclusions will be based upon an analysis on the semantic and narrative levels. The question reflected upon here is not whether in Luke-Acts the Holy Spirit is indeed a person in the doctrinal sense of the word, according to the patristic⁷ and/or to the modern-day understanding of the term.⁸

Truth: Ecumenical Perspectives on the Holy Spirit (eds. T. Stylianopoulos and M. Heim; Brookline, 1986), 25–58.

⁵ Cf., for instance, G. FLOROVSKY, *The Eastern Fathers of the Fourth Century* (Vaduz, 1987), 56f, 102–107, 134–137, on the pneumatologies of Athanasius, Basil, and Gregory of Nazianz.

⁶ Cf. G. FLOROVSKY, *Bible, Church, Tradition: An Eastern Orthodox View* (Vaduz, 1987), esp. 107–113.

⁷ Cf. the milestone article of J. D. ZIZIOULAS, “From Mask to Person: The Birth of an Ontology of Personhood,” in *Being*, 27–49 (n. 4).

⁸ Cf., for instance, C. TAYLOR, “The Person,” in *The Category of the Person: Anthropology, Philosophy, History* (eds. M. Carrithers, S. Collins, and S. Lukes; Cambridge, 1985), 257–281.

Rather, the question is whether in Luke-Acts the Holy Spirit is an individual character or not, and on this basis, whether on the narrative and theological level it is understood as a personal entity or as an impersonal power of God.

Therefore, I will not get involved in the modern philosophical discussion about the definition of “person.” The criterion I use for defining a person is the following: if in Luke-Acts πνεῦμα has values, properties, characteristics, behaviors, and reactions similar to other narrative characters, but dissimilar to clearly non-character elements of the narrative, then it also has to be a narrative character itself, and for the understanding of the author, it is probably also a personal entity, even outside of the narrative.

There is no reason to suppose that for the implied author the narrative world would be different from the real world. Quite on the contrary, the implied author obviously intends to move his implied readership in the direction of believing in the direct and indirect claims within his narrative. His pneumatology is not an exception in this regard. I fail to see any sign at all that the implied author uses the narrative exclusively in a symbolic way in order to point towards eternal truths regardless of the narrative itself. My position is, therefore, that if the implied author presents the Holy Spirit as a normal, narrative character like all other characters of his narrative, then he aims at presenting the Holy Spirit also as a personal entity to his implied readers. At this point, I choose to speak of implied and not historical readers because the distance between what the text wants its readers to understand and what its readers indeed did or could understand can be significant.

On this basis and for the aim of the present paper, I define person as a narrative character able to think, make decisions, and interact with other narrative characters, and presented by the implied author in such a way that it should or at least could also be understood as a person even outside of the narrative – that is, in the historical world of the real author and readers of the Lukan work.

1. The Concept of πνεῦμα

The primary meaning of spirit, in Greek πνεῦμα,⁹ is wind or breath.¹⁰ Of course,

⁹ On the relation between the Hebrew רוּחַ and its Greek rendering as πνεῦμα, see M. E. ISAACS, *The Concept of Spirit: A Study of Pneuma in Hellenistic Judaism and its Bearing on the New Testament* (HeyM 1; London, 1976), 10–17. According to Isaacs, “attempts to detect a

in primitive thought, these two are connected with each other inasmuch as the wind is understood as originating from God – as are all weather conditions – perhaps even from the mouth or the nostrils of God’s anthropomorphic image.¹¹ The question here is whether the author literally thinks of *pneuma* in this way or whether this original image has lost for him its initial semantic and metaphorical power. In my view, the following indications point in the direction of the existence and usage of such imagery in the Lukan narrative.

In Luke-Acts, the Spirit is normally invisible just like the wind. People are not able to see the Spirit. To name just a few examples, the Spirit that comes upon Mary is invisible although it has a decisive impact on her existence and life (Luke 1:35).¹² Jesus is driven to the desert in the Spirit, which again cannot be seen (Luke 4:1). The Spirit speaks to, with, and through people, while still remaining invisible (Acts 8:29; 11:12; 13:2; 21:4; 28:25).

The Spirit can be sensed and even heard in a way similar to the wind. In the Pentecost narrative, a strong sound like a very violent wind signified its coming (2:2). Luke, however, uses at this point the word πνοή, which is synonymous to the word πνεῦμα, meaning both breath and wind.¹³ In this way, he is able to differentiate between the actual Spirit and the phenomena that declare or symbolize its presence.¹⁴ Indeed, in other contexts, when simply referring to the wind without any connection to the Spirit, Luke uses the words ἀήρ and ἄνεμος.¹⁵ Of course, the Holy Spirit is not to be understood as being an actual wind, but it can

significant change in the meaning of ruach, resulting from its translation in terms of πνεῦμα, are unfounded” (14).

¹⁰ Cf. G. W. H. LAMPE, “The Holy Spirit in the Writings of St. Luke,” in *Studies in the Gospels: Essays in Memory of R. H. Lightfoot* (ed. D. E. Nineham; Oxford, 1967), 160; FITZMYER, “Role,” 170 (n. 2). Due to the fact that the present paper has a synchronic approach, I will not examine the origin of the Lukan concept of πνεῦμα in light of its widely recognized Old Testament background; cf. D. MARGUERAT, *The First Christian Historian: Writing the ‘Acts of the Apostles’* (SNTS.MS 121; Cambridge, 2002), 110.

¹¹ On God’s spirit in the Old Testament, cf. W. BIEDER, “πνεῦμα,” *TWNT* 6: 363–66.

¹² Luke’s parallel use of πνεῦμα and δύναμις in Luke 1:35 is not sufficient evidence for concluding, along with J. A. FITZMYER, *The Gospel according to Luke* (vol. 1; AB 28; New Haven, 1970), 350f, that the Spirit is here understood in its Old Testament sense as God’s impersonal power.

¹³ Cf. *BDAG* “πνοή,” 838.

¹⁴ Cf. F. F. BRUCE, *The Book of Acts* (NICNT 5; Grand Rapids, 1988), 50; J. ZMIJEWSKI, *Die Apostelgeschichte* (RNT 5; Regensburg, 1994), 106.

¹⁵ See Luke 7:24; 8:23–25; Acts 22:23; 27:4, 7, 14f.

appear in the form of a wind.¹⁶

The Spirit can fill the interior of human beings, such as Elizabeth (Luke 1:41), Zacharias (Luke 1:67), and Stephen (Acts 6:5). This is also a property of the air or wind, which can be inhaled and fill the interior of a person in an invisible way, unlike, for instance, food or drink.

Even when the Spirit is visible, its visible forms are notionally and semantically connected with the concept of wind. There are two examples of a visible appearance of the Holy Spirit. In Luke 3:22, the Holy Spirit descends upon Jesus from heaven in the form of a dove. Obviously, the Spirit has not transformed itself into a real dove, but it has only adopted the external appearance of a dove in order to be seen and witnessed by the people present at the scene.¹⁷ Apart from any particular, symbolic connotation of the dove according to the relevant Old Testament imagery,¹⁸ from a certain point of view, the dove's natural habitat is not only the ground but also the air and in this sense also the wind.

In Acts 2:3, tongues of fire appear upon every disciple. It is clear that the Spirit has not actually transformed itself into real fire (just as in the scene of Jesus's baptism it has not transformed itself into a real dove).¹⁹ It only appears like (ὥσεί) fiery tongues. The appearance of tongues at this point means that the Spirit will immediately enable the christological witness of the disciples to reach all existing languages.²⁰ The element of fire is one of the ways in which God reveals himself in the Old Testament (cf. Exod 19:16–19). In the present context, it is also noteworthy that the existence of fire presupposes wind or at least air. Moreover, it is common experience that a strong fire grows even stronger where there is a strong (in our case, a violent) wind blowing.

¹⁶ When Luke compares the coming of the Holy Spirit to the disciples with a violent and strongly sounding loud wind from above (Acts 2:2), he uses a simile, a kind of a metaphor that allows him to compare one thing with another thing of a different kind in order to make his reference clearer and more emphatic; and clear, cf. on similes and metaphors, G. B. CAIRD, *The Language and Imagery of the Bible* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1980), 144–159.

¹⁷ Cf. A. CORNILS, *Vom Geist Gottes erzählen: Analysen zur Apostelgeschichte* (TANZ 44; Tübingen, 2006), 45; L. MORRIS, *Luke* (TNTC 3; Leicester/Grand Rapids, 1988), 109; M. WOLTER, *Das Lukasevangelium* (HNT 3; Tübingen, 2008), 170f.

¹⁸ Cf. esp. Gen 8:8–12 and a summary of the relevant discussion in J. HUR, *Dynamic Reading of the Holy Spirit in Luke-Acts* (London, 2004), 158f.

¹⁹ On the comparison between Luke 3:22 and Acts 2:3, see J. ROLOFF, *Die Apostelgeschichte* (NTD 5; Göttingen, 1981), 42.

²⁰ Cf. D. L. BOCK, *Acts* (ECNT 5; Grand Rapids, 2007), 98f; D. MARGUERAT, *Les Actes des Apôtres (1-12)* (vol. 1; CNT 5; Genève, 2007), 73f; ZMIJEWSKI, *Apostelgeschichte*, 107 (n. 14).

On the basis of the above, we can make the following observations: The πνεῦμα is elusive. On the one hand, it is powerful, it can be felt, and it has an impact upon people's lives and their way of thinking and acting. On the other hand, it normally cannot be seen but only sensed. Only twice does the πνεῦμα appear in a visible way. However, in both of these cases, it is not the πνεῦμα itself that is seen but just an external manifestation of it, which functions as a narrative metaphor and/or a theological symbol. This means that even in these two instances the essence of πνεῦμα remains elusive.

The πνεῦμα is connected with God, it comes from God, and it belongs to God. It is not any πνεῦμα, but the ἅγιον πνεῦμα. Already in the creation narrative of Genesis, the importance of God's *pneuma* is evident.²¹ In just one sentence: The πνεῦμα of God gives life.²² Furthermore, the *pneuma* is able to fill the people with its presence and thus to define their way of thinking, their actions, and their very existence. Just like the wind, the *pneuma* is everywhere, and it cannot be controlled. Its actions and reactions are not governed by human wishes or rules.

Apart from the Holy Spirit, other πνεύματα are mentioned in the Lukan narrative. In order to secure semantic clarity, we will briefly discuss the other categories of spirits, which are the following:

A) The human *pneuma* as an anthropological category:²³ In Luke's Gospel, John the Baptist is presented as acting in the spirit and power of Elijah (Luke 1:17). The joy of Mary is presented as a rejoicing of her spirit (Luke 1:47). John the Baptist's spirit is presented as being strengthened while he was growing (Luke 1:80). Upon dying, the human *pneuma* leaves the body, although it can return upon Jesus's intervention (Luke 8:55). In Luke 23:46, just before his death, Jesus himself says that he is surrendering his spirit to his Father. This obviously

²¹ On Luke's understanding of the Spirit in light of Genesis, see S. D. BUTTICAZ, *L'identité de l'Église dans les Actes des apôtres: De la restauration d'Israël à la conquête universelle* (BZNV 174; Berlin/New York, 2011), 94. R. P. MENZIES, *The Development of Early Christian Pneumatology with Special Reference to Luke-Acts* (JSNT.SS 54; Sheffield, 1991), 122–130, on the contrary, sees any creative background of the Spirit in Luke-Acts as pre-Lukan, while he considers the Lukan conception of the Spirit as being of an exclusively prophetic nature.

²² On the life-giving character of the Spirit in biblical thought, cf. J. D. G. DUNN, "The Lord, the Giver of Life": The Gift of the Spirit as Both Life-Giving and Empowering," in *The Spirit and Christ in the New Testament and Christian Theology* (eds. I. H. Marshall, V. Rabens, and C. Bennema; Grand Rapids, 2012), 1–17.

²³ On the Jewish background of πνεῦμα as a component of human beings, see ISAACS, *Concept*, 35–42 (n. 9).

refers to his human spirit, since he is about to die and according to Luke 8:55 death results in the separation of σώμα and πνεῦμα.²⁴ In Greek, ἐκπνέειν means to exhale for the last time in life and not to give up the spirit.²⁵ This is also the case in Acts 7:59, where Stephen asks Jesus in prayer to accept his spirit. Evidently, he does not mean the Holy Spirit but his human spirit, which after his death will be in paradise with Jesus (cf. Luke 23:43).²⁶

B) The demonic spirit as a self-standing spiritual entity: The demonic *pneuma* (πνεῦμα δαιμονίου) is an unclean (ἀκάθαρτον) or evil (πονηρόν) spirit.²⁷ There are many such spirits, which are presented as the real reason behind illness (πνεῦμα ἄσθενείας, cf. Luke 8:2). In Luke 9:39 and 10:20, even plain πνεῦμα without an attribute can mean an evil spirit. The demonic spirit is also called a πνεῦμα πύθωνα (Acts 16:16).²⁸

C) Πνεῦμα denoting a ghost: This is the case in Luke 24:37. Perhaps this should not be understood differently from the first meaning of the human *pneuma*, which is believed to be able to appear as a ghost after its separation from its body. This is why Jesus says to the scared disciples that a *pneuma*, possibly meaning a ghost or a spirit separated from its body, does not have flesh and bones (Luke 24:39).²⁹

Since not much can be said about ghosts, only the demonic spirits as exclusively spiritual beings are of interest to the present study. From a comparison of the references to the Holy Spirit with those to the demonic spirits, we can draw the following conclusions: The Holy Spirit is one and therefore always mentioned in the singular, while the evil spirits are many, even though in some instances there is a reference to just one of them (Luke 8:29; 9:42; 11:24; Acts 16:18). The Holy Spirit is the πνεῦμα of God (cf. Acts 5:32) or of Jesus (Acts 16:7)³⁰ or of the

²⁴ Cf. F. BOVON, *Das Evangelium nach Lukas (Lk 1,1-9,50)* (vol. 1; EKK 3; Zürich, 1989), 452.

²⁵ Cf. *BDAG*, “ἐκπνέω,” 308.

²⁶ Cf. ISAACS, *Concept*, 71 (n. 9). Another way of expressing this reality is by saying that the human being as a person will be with Jesus in paradise (cf. Luke 23:43). It is obvious that the human πνεῦμα can be used as an alternative expression of the human self or person.

²⁷ Luke 4:33, 36; 6:18; 7:21; 8:2, 29; 9:42; 11:24, 26; Acts 5:16; 8:7; 19:12–16. On the Jewish conception of evil spirits, see ISAACS, *Concept*, 31–34 (n. 9).

²⁸ On the particularity of this characterization, see *BDAG*, “πύθων,” 897.

²⁹ On πνεῦμα as meaning a ghost, see the comment of L. T. JOHNSON, *The Gospel of Luke* (SP 3; Collegeville, 1991), 401.

³⁰ Cf. R. I. PERVO, *Acts: A Commentary* (Hermeneia 5; Minneapolis, 2009), 390.

Lord (Luke 4:18; Acts 5:9; 8:39). The evil spirits are often characterized as δαυμόνια,³¹ spirits of python (Acts 16:16), or spirits of illness (Luke 13:11), and are considered as being unclean (ἀκάθαρτα)³² and evil (πονηρά).³³ On the other hand, since the same lexeme is used for both the πνεῦμα and the πνεύματα, we should conclude that semantically and therefore also narratologically there is some common ground between the two.

2. The Actions of the Holy Spirit

In narrative texts, verbs are extremely important because they are the signifiers of the subjects' – and thus more often than not also of the narrative characters' – actions.³⁴ I will therefore begin my analysis by examining the verbs that are governed by the Holy Spirit as their subject.³⁵

The verb διδάσκειν is normally connected with the teaching of Christ and the apostles, having therefore a positive meaning.³⁶ In Luke 12:12, Jesus says that the Holy Spirit will teach the disciples what to say when questioned by the Jewish and Roman authorities. From a narratological point of view, it would seem that only a character can concretely teach other characters what to say in a certain situation.

The Holy Spirit never simply comes (ἔρχεσθαι). It comes *upon* a character (ἐπέρχεσθαι: Luke 1:35; Acts 1:8). In Luke-Acts, when not connected with the Holy Spirit, the verb ἐπέρχεσθαι bears the negative meaning of an intrusion or an

³¹ Luke 4:33, 35, 41; 7:33; 8:2, 27, 29f, 33, 35, 38; 9:1, 42, 49; 10:17; 11:14f; 18–20; 13:32; Acts 17:18.

³² Luke 4:33, 36; 6:18; 8:29; 9:42; 11:24; Acts 5:16; 8:7.

³³ Luke 7:21; 8:2; 11:26; Acts 19:12f, 15f.

³⁴ On the primary importance of a character's actions compared to his or her inner world in a narrative, see the analysis of CORNILS, *Geist*, 43f (n. 17).

³⁵ J. FREY, "How Did the Spirit Become a Person?" in *The Holy Spirit, Inspiration and the Cultures of Antiquity* (Ekstasis 5; eds. J. Frey and J. R. Levison; Berlin/Boston, 2015), 363, following F. AVEMARIE, "Acta Jesu Christi: Zum christologischen Sinn der Wundermotive in der Apostelgeschichte," in *Die Apostelgeschichte im Kontext antiker Historiographie* (BZNTW 162; eds. J. Frey, C. K. Rothschild, and J. Schröter; Berlin/New York, 2009), 558, speaks of the Spirit in Acts as being an "acting subject." Cf. also MARGUERAT, *Historian*, 113 (n. 10).

³⁶ Luke 4:15, 31; 5:3, 17; 6:6; 13:10, 22, 26; 19:47; 20:1, 21, 37; 23:5; Acts 1:1; 4:2, 18; 5:21, 25, 28, 42; 11:26; 15:1, 35; 18:11, 25; 20:20; 21:21, 28; 28:31.

affliction (Luke 1:22; 21:26; Acts 8:24; 13:40; 14:19). However, in the case of the Holy Spirit, it describes its descent from heaven upon concrete people. The same meaning of descending is also expressed by the verb καταβαίνειν (Luke 3:22), which is almost exclusively used in the narrative for describing an action of concrete persons.³⁷

We can observe a similar usage of the synonymous verb ἐπιπίπτειν, which in Luke-Acts can refer to the embracing of human beings (Luke 15:20; Acts 20:10, 37), to sudden changes of feelings (Luke 1:12; Acts 19:17), or to the Holy Spirit (Acts 8:16; 10:44; 11:15). Therefore, the use of this verb is not conclusive as such within the scope of the present paper. The possibility seems to remain open for this particular verb to imply that the Holy Spirit could be something analogous to an impersonal, inner procedure within human existence.

The verb ἐκπέμπειν is used both for denoting the sending out of Paul and his collaborators from Thessaloniki to Beroea (Acts 17:10), and for the Spirit's sending out the apostles from one place to another (Acts 13:4). Here, too, the Spirit seems to be acting in a way similar to the characters in the narrative.

The decision of the so-called apostolic synod includes the notable sentence, ἔδοξεν γὰρ τῷ πνεύματι τῷ ἁγίῳ καὶ ἡμῖν (Acts 15:22). In all other usages of the verb δοκεῖν in Luke-Acts, an individual³⁸ or a collective character³⁹ thinks, believes, concludes, and utters an opinion. In the case of Acts 15:22, the Holy Spirit actually co-decides along with the apostles. The fact that it precedes the apostles could even imply that its contribution to the final, common decision of the apostolic synod has a greater significance than that of the apostles.

In all the twelve cases that the verb κωλύειν is used in the Lukan work, it has a person as its subject.⁴⁰ Most interesting is the case of Acts 16:6, in which Paul and his associates are prevented by the Holy Spirit from preaching the Gospel in Asia Minor. Again, the Holy Spirit acts here as a narrative character, exerting

³⁷ Luke 2:51; 6:17; 8:23; 9:54; 10:15, 30f; 17:31; 18:14; 19:5f; Acts 7:15, 34; 8:15, 38; 10:11. Luke 10:15 refers to the population of Capernaum and in this sense to a narrative character. The reference in Luke 22:44 is an exception to this rule, although from a text-critical point of view the authenticity of 22:43f is highly doubtful. The expression in Acts 8:26, τὴν ὁδὸν τὴν καταβαίνουσαν ἀπὸ Ἱερουσαλήμ, does not refer to an action but is a description of a permanent trait. Acts 10:11 and 11:5 is the only clear case in Luke-Acts in which the verb καταβαίνειν describes the movement of a "non-character."

³⁸ Luke 1:3; 8:18; 10:36; 22:24; Acts 12:9; 17:18; 25:27; 26:9.

³⁹ Luke 12:40, 51; 13:2, 4; 19:11; 24:37; Acts 15:22, 28; 27:13.

⁴⁰ Luke 6:29; 9:49f; 11:52; 18:16; 23:2; Acts 8:36; 10:47; 11:17; 16:6; 24:3; 27:43.

power over Paul and his associates, and deciding about the course of their missionary activity. In an analogous way, the verb ἔαν always has concrete narrative characters as its subject.⁴¹ In the particular case of Acts 16:7, it is the Holy Spirit that does not allow Paul and his associates go to Bithynia, but leads them towards Troas.

From a semantic point of view, a very interesting case is the verb διαμαρτύρεσθαι, a middle-voice verb with an active meaning.⁴² Of course, only true narrative characters can make official verbal statements and give official witness.⁴³ This is also what the Holy Spirit does, when in Acts 20:23 it solemnly reveals to Paul that in the imminent future he is going to have to endure imprisonments and tribulations.

Furthermore, the verb τιθῆναι always has a character as its subject.⁴⁴ It is interesting that in Acts 20:28, the Holy Spirit is presented as the character who had appointed bishops to shepherd the church of Christ. The work of appointing bishops is a very responsible work that can only be undertaken by a true character with special qualities. So here, too, the Holy Spirit is presented as a character of the narrative.

According to the book of Acts, the Holy Spirit talks (λαλεῖν: Acts 28:25; cf. 23:9) and articulates words (λέγειν: Acts 20:23; 21:11) to the faithful, while it also speaks through the faithful.⁴⁵ On the other hand, in Luke, the Spirit's talking is only indirectly performed through people who are filled with it (Elizabeth: Luke 1:41–45, Zacharias: Luke 1:67–79, Simeon: Luke 2:25–32).⁴⁶ According to Luke, in the Old Testament the Holy Spirit speaks through the prophets⁴⁷ or even through wisdom (Luke 11:49). Of course, only true narrative characters have the

⁴¹ Luke 4:41; 22:51; Acts 14:16; 16:7; 19:30; 23:32; 27:32; 27:40; 28:4.

⁴² Luke 16:28; Acts 2:40; 8:25; 10:42; 18:5; 20:21; 20:23; 20:24; 23:11; 28:23.

⁴³ Cf. also Acts 5:32 and the relevant comment of FREY, "Spirit," 363 (n. 35).

⁴⁴ Luke 1:66; 5:18; 6:48; 8:16; 9:44; 11:33; 12:46; 14:29; 19:21f; 20:43; 21:14; 22:41; 23:53, 55; Acts 1:7; 2:35; 3:2; 4:3; 4:35, 37; 5:2, 4, 15, 18, 25; 7:16, 60; 9:37, 40; 12:4; 13:29, 47; 19:21; 20:28, 36; 21:5; 27:12.

⁴⁵ Acts 2:4, 17; 4:31; 6:10; 18:25; 19:6; 21:4; cf. ISAACS, *Concept*, 88 (n. 9).

⁴⁶ According to H. GUNKEL, *Der heilige Geist bei Lukas: Theologisches Profil, Grund und Intention der lukanischen Pneumatologie* (WUNT 2/389; Tübingen, 2015), 42f, the presupposition for being filled with Holy Spirit is their being righteous.

⁴⁷ Acts 1:16; 4:25; 28:25. Characteristically, the subject of an Old Testament prophecy can alternatively be either God or the Holy Spirit (cf., apart from the above-mentioned references, also Acts 2:17f).

ability to speak.⁴⁸ The Spirit also gives people the gift of speaking in tongues,⁴⁹ which should be understood as being connected to its own ability to talk.⁵⁰

In Acts 13:2, the Holy Spirit declares in the first-person singular that it has invited (προσκαλεῖσθαι) Barnabas and Saulos to do its work. This verb is always connected with a concrete individual or collective character in the Lukan narrative – namely, the Jews (5:40), God (Acts 2:39; 16:10), Jesus (Luke 18:16), John the Baptist (Luke 7:18), the Twelve (6:2), Barjesus (Acts 13:7), a Roman commander (Acts 23:23), Paul (Acts 23:17f), and even parable characters (Luke 15:26; 16:5).

Lastly, the Spirit can snatch away (ἀρπάζειν) someone and subsequently transfer him to another place. This is what happens to Philip after baptizing the Ethiopian eunuch (Acts 8:39). This snatching away seems to be purposeful, as is the case in Acts 23:10, in which the Roman commander sends his troops to snatch Paul from the hands of the Jews and bring him to the barracks.⁵¹

The depiction of evil spirits in Luke-Acts merits consideration here, too. The evil spirits get into people and possess them, thereby depriving them of their free will. Thus, the (ἐν)οχλούμενοι (Luke 6:18; Acts 5:16) need to be cured and freed from them. The evil spirits talk through the people whom they have possessed (Luke 4:33, 41; Acts 19:15), interact with narrative characters (Luke 8:30; 9:39), go away (Luke 8:29, 35, 38; 11:24) and return back (Luke 11:26), are in the company of other evil spirits (Luke 11:18, 26), yield to the apostles (Luke 10:17, 20; Acts 19:12) and of course to Jesus (Luke 4:35f, 41; 8:29; 13:32), whom they fear (Luke 8:31), and finally have superior knowledge compared to human knowledge (Luke 4:41; Acts 19:15).

Through the semantic juxtaposition between verbal expressions used in connection with the Holy Spirit and analogous ones used to describe the activity of the evil spirits, the following conclusions can be drawn: The evil spirits are obviously real characters of the narrative. They can think, they have feelings (since they fear Jesus), they have knowledge, they interact with other characters, and they have a clear place in the character-hierarchy of the Lukan narrative, according to which they are normally more powerful than human beings, although they

⁴⁸ Cf. HUR, *Reading*, 151 (n. 18).

⁴⁹ Acts 2:3f, 11; 10:46; 19:6.

⁵⁰ Obviously, one cannot give a gift that he or she does not possess in the first place.

⁵¹ I will here leave out for the time being the actions of the Spirit with regard to Jesus. This is a crucial issue that will have to be examined in its own right.

have no chance against Jesus and his disciples. The fact that the narrative speaks of multiple spirits (πνεύματα or δαιμόνια in the plural) makes it clear that these are understood as individual, and thus also as personal, entities. Had they just been metaphors for evil in general or impersonal manifestations of it, they could certainly not have been counted, as is the case in Luke 8:30 (λεγιών) and 11:26 (ἑπτὰ πνεύματα). If, moreover, the evil spirits are not just narrative characters but are also conceived as personal entities that can interact with other persons in the world outside of the narrative, there is no reason to assume that this does not apply to the Holy Spirit as well.

Apart from cases in the Lukan narrative in which the Holy Spirit is the acting character, there are also numerous cases in which it is connected with narrative characters in other ways. From a grammatical point of view, apart from being the subject of verbs with an active meaning, the word πνεῦμα is also used as an object, a constituent of a prepositional phrase, a subject governing a verb of passive voice and meaning or even an adverbial modifier (Luke 10:21). By examining the way in which the Holy Spirit interacts with other narrative characters, we can draw some useful conclusions about its own identity as a character of the Lukan narrative. The following examples are characteristic:

People can be filled with the Holy Spirit by God⁵² and thus be full of the Holy Spirit.⁵³ In this case, the Holy Spirit could theoretically be an impersonal power belonging to God.⁵⁴ However, why should this be the case when equivalent expressions are used in the Lukan narrative about the personal evil spirits that possess human beings according to the above analysis? The following concrete examples should be considered: Jesus rejoices in the Holy Spirit (Luke 10:21). The whole existence and work of Jesus is defined by the presence of the Holy Spirit (Luke 4:18). While the evil spirits trouble the possessed people (ἐνοχλούμενοι: Luke 6:18; ὀχλούμενοι: Acts 5:16), the Holy Spirit not only makes Jesus rejoice but is also the reason for the joy of the members of the Christian community (Acts 13:52). Since everything Jesus does is connected with the Holy Spirit, this applies even to his last commandments to his disciples “through the Holy Spirit” before he departs from earth to heaven (Acts 1:2).

⁵² Luke 1:15, 41, 67; Acts 2:4; 4:8, 31; 9:17; 13:9; these are cases of *passivum divinum*, cf. C. W. STENSCHKE, *Luke's Portrait of Gentiles Prior to Their Coming to Faith* (WUNT 2/108; Tübingen, 1999), 370.

⁵³ Acts 6:3, 5; 7:55; 11:24.

⁵⁴ Cf. M. A. SALMEIER, *Restoring the Kingdom: The Role of God as the “Ordainer of Times and Seasons” in the Acts of the Apostles* (PTMS 165; Eugene, 2011), 73, note 169.

While the evil spirits seem to be acting of their own accord,⁵⁵ the Holy Spirit is given by God.⁵⁶ This, however, does not necessarily mean that the Holy Spirit is not an actual, individual narrative character. Throughout biblical history, God's individual representatives speak and act on his behalf. In the Old Testament, such persons are mainly the prophets, while in Luke-Acts it is Jesus Christ and the apostles who play this role.⁵⁷ Since Jesus and the apostles are clearly individual characters, this could and actually should apply to the Holy Spirit as well.

Δωρεὰ τοῦ ἁγίου πνεύματος (Acts 2:38; 10:45) is a difficult expression from an exegetical point of view. It could mean the gift, *namely* the Holy Spirit itself, or alternatively, it could mean the gift given *by* the Holy Spirit. While the first exegetical alternative is self-evident, the second one is also possible since the Holy Spirit indeed endows people with the gift of speaking in tongues (Acts 2:3f, 11; 10:46; 19:6). In Acts, we also find the similar and possibly parallel expression ἡ δωρεὰ τοῦ θεοῦ (8:20). It is clear that God gives people the Holy Spirit, while he also sends Jesus Christ to the world (Luke 9:48; 10:16). Moreover, Luke cites Old Testament prophecies about the coming of Jesus Christ,⁵⁸ while he also refers to prophecies about the gift of the Holy Spirit.⁵⁹ If what applies to Jesus also applies to the Holy Spirit, why should only Jesus be a proper narrative character? Ultimately, the expression δωρεὰ τοῦ ἁγίου πνεύματος does not offer convincing evidence against the individuality of the Holy Spirit as a narrative character.⁶⁰

Paul's being bounded to the Holy Spirit (δεδεμένος τῷ πνεύματι in Acts 20:22) is an expression that refers to his commitment to doing the will of the Holy Spirit and/or following its guidance. In the Lukan narrative, only a character

⁵⁵ Although according to Luke 11:15–20, the evil spirits also obey their own “king” – namely, Satan himself – which is the actual reason for their power.

⁵⁶ Acts 2:17; 2:33; 5:32; 15:8; cf. the expression τὸ πνεῦμα Ἰησοῦ in Acts 16:7, which in the light of Acts 2:33 implies that Jesus also participates (as a mediator) in the giving of the Holy Spirit by God to the human beings; cf. HUR, *Reading*, 143f (n. 18).

⁵⁷ On the prophetic character of the Holy Spirit in Luke-Acts, see MENZIES, *Development*, 114–279 (n. 21).

⁵⁸ Cf., for instance, Luke 1:35: πνεῦμα κυρίου ἐπελεύσεται ἐπὶ σέ καὶ δύναμις ὑψίστου ἐπισκιάσει σοί, which happens to refer both to Jesus the Messiah, as well as to God's Spirit that would be bestowed upon him.

⁵⁹ Cf. the promise of the risen Christ to his disciples about the coming of the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:8: λήψετε δύναμιν ἐπελθόντος τοῦ ἁγίου πνεύματος).

⁶⁰ Cf. the relevant discussion in HUR, *Reading*, 156 (n. 18), who at this point speaks of a “person-unlikeness of the Spirit.”

can bind another character.⁶¹ A characteristic example of a human being bound by a spiritual being is the binding of the bent woman by none other than Satan himself for eighteen years (Luke 13:11, 16). In this case, a narrative character – and one that is clearly a personal entity – binds another narrative character with an illness.⁶²

People can try to tempt the Holy Spirit (Acts 5:9; cf. 15:10) or to lie to it (Acts 5:3; cf. 5:4), behaviors that end up with tragic consequences (Acts 5:5, 10). Such actions clearly imply that the Holy Spirit is indeed a narrative character, since tempting and lying can only have a narrative character as their object. People can also try to oppose (ἀντιπύπτειν) the Holy Spirit (7:51). Although in this case it may be possible to oppose an impersonal power of God, it is even more probable that such opposition is addressed towards a concrete narrative character.⁶³

The above evidence clearly suggests that Luke presents the Holy Spirit as a distinct narrative character. However, this evidence is not yet fully conclusive. Therefore, after having examined Luke's references to the Holy Spirit in the light of similar references to other narrative characters, we will have to juxtapose these references with the way Luke refers to God's impersonal powers. Here the question will be whether Luke utilizes different language and imagery when speaking on the one hand about the Holy Spirit and on the other hand about such powers, or whether in both cases his language and imagery are similar or even identical.

3. The Holy Spirit and God's Impersonal Powers.

In Luke-Acts, the most characteristic word denoting God's power is the word δύναμις.⁶⁴ Δύναμις is used in proximity with ἅγιον πνεῦμα, sometimes as a parallel expression connected through καί and thereby giving the impression of a

⁶¹ Luke 13:16; 19:30; Acts 9:2, 14, 21; 12:6; 20:22; 21:11, 13, 33; 22:5, 29; 24:27.

⁶² The use of ἐγώ – that is, of the personal pronoun – in Acts 20:22 shows that perhaps the participle δεδεμένος is in the middle voice, meaning that Paul let the spirit bind him.

⁶³ W. H. SHEPHERD, Jr., *The Narrative Function of the Holy Spirit in Luke-Acts* (SBLDS 147; Atlanta, 1994), 172, interprets the narrative character of the Spirit as God's narrative presence and not as an individual person. It remains to be seen whether this conclusion is justified by the evidence of Luke-Acts.

⁶⁴ Luke 1:35; 4:14, 36; 5:17; 6:19; 8:46; 9:1; 10:13; 19:37; 21:27; 22:69; 24:49; Acts 1:8; 2:22; 3:12; 4:7, 33; 6:8; 8:10, 13; 10:38; 19:11. On power in Luke-Acts, see the relevant excursus of PERVO, *Acts*, 42f. (n. 30).

synonymic *parallelismus membrorum* implying an identical meaning expressed in two different ways. A characteristic example in this regard is the angel's word to Mary in 1:35: "The Holy Spirit (πνεῦμα ἅγιον) will come upon you and the power (δύναμις) of the Highest will overshadow you." At this point, the Holy Spirit could indeed be understood as being another word for God's impersonal power. In Luke 4:14, however, Jesus returns to Galilee in the power of the Spirit (ἐν τῇ δυνάμει τοῦ πνεύματος). This clearly implies that the Spirit has a power of its own that is connected with Jesus. If the Spirit had been identical with God's power, the wording of this sentence should have been: ἐν τῇ δυνάμει τοῦ θεοῦ or alternatively ἐν τῷ πνεύματι τοῦ θεοῦ, but not ἐν τῇ δυνάμει τοῦ πνεύματος.

In Acts 1:8, a very important distinction between the power and the Spirit is made. There the risen Jesus says to his disciples: "But you will receive power after the coming of the Holy Spirit upon you" (ἀλλὰ λήψεσθε δύναμιν ἐπελθόντος τοῦ ἁγίου πνεύματος ἐφ' ὑμᾶς). Here, reception of God's power is not identical with the coming of the Holy Spirit but only the result of its coming.⁶⁵

Furthermore, in Luke-Acts, unlike ἅγιον πνεῦμα, the lexeme δύναμις does not bear any personal features whatsoever. Δύναμις does not talk, decide, communicate, interact, prophesy, guide, or prevent, to name a few of the properties that do characterize the Holy Spirit.⁶⁶ The same observation applies also to the lexemes χάρις⁶⁷ and χάρις.⁶⁸ In Luke-Acts, these are clearly presented as impersonal powers and gifts of God that lack any personal properties or narrative character traits.

The only exception could be the Lukan concept of σοφία, which at first sight does indeed seem to have personal properties. As is the case with δύναμις, σοφία should not be identified with the Holy Spirit, since it is mentioned along with the Holy Spirit as a relevant but also at the same time distinctive gift of God.⁶⁹ This is obvious in Luke's reference to Stephen in Acts 6:5, according to

⁶⁵ Cf. ZMIJEWSKI, *Apostelgeschichte*, 60 (n. 14).

⁶⁶ Luke 1:17, 35; 4:14, 36; 5:17; 6:19; 8:46; 9:1; 10:13, 19; 19:37; 21:26f; 22:69; 24:49; Acts 1:8; 2:22; 3:12; 4:7, 33; 6:8; 8:10, 13; 10:38; 19:11.

⁶⁷ Luke 1:14; 2:10; 8:13; 10:17; 15:7, 10; 24:41, 52; Acts 8:8; 12:14; 13:52; 15:3.

⁶⁸ Luke 1:30; 2:40, 52; 4:22; 6:32–34; 17:9; Acts 2:47; 4:33; 6:8; 7:10, 46; 11:23; 13:43; 14:3, 26; 15:11, 40; 18:27; 20:24, 32; 24:27; 25:3, 9.

⁶⁹ On the background of the relationship and eventual identification of σοφία and πνεῦμα in Judaism, see ISAACS, *Concept*, 20–26 (n. 9). Such an identification cannot, however, be traced

which he (along with the other six so-called deacons) was filled with Spirit and wisdom (6:3), and consequently also spoke with wisdom and Spirit (6:10).

According to Luke 7:35, “the wisdom was justified by all its children” (καὶ ἐδικαιώθη ἡ σοφία ἀπὸ πάντων τῶν τέκνων αὐτῆς).⁷⁰ Furthermore, according to Luke 11:49, the wisdom of God has said (in the first-person singular): “I will send to them prophets and messengers, and they will kill and persecute many of them” (ἀποστελῶ εἰς αὐτοὺς προφήτας καὶ ἀποστόλους, καὶ ἐξ αὐτῶν ἀποκτενοῦσιν καὶ διώξουσιν). These two references seem to portray God’s wisdom as a real character. In the case of Luke 7:35, wisdom can only be justified if what she has already said in the past is now being fulfilled in such a way that those who have been gifted with her can connect their present reality with her prophetic words. The same principle applies even more clearly to Luke 11:49, in which wisdom appears as the speaking subject. In both cases, only those who have already listened to wisdom’s voice are able to apply her words to their present reality.⁷¹ Nevertheless, whenever σοφία is mentioned as a gift or power of God in the present, it does not reveal any personal properties, and therefore, it is definitely not a distinct character of the narrative. In other words, wisdom does not play any active role in the Lukan narrative, and therefore her personification should be considered strictly metaphorical in nature.⁷² At this point, Luke seems to be following the Old Testament metaphorical concept of personified wisdom.⁷³ According to this conclusion, in the two aforementioned Lukan quotations, the voice of wisdom is not actually the voice of a real person but just the voice of implied wisdom-literature texts, which supposedly go as far as metaphorically depicting God’s wisdom as dictating to the authors of these texts who thus be-

in Luke-Acts.

⁷⁰ In all other cases in Luke-Acts, the verb δικαιόω is only used in connection with real persons: Luke 7:29; 10:29; 16:15; 18:14; Acts 13:38f.

⁷¹ The fact that modern-day readers cannot track down the supposed texts that Luke has in mind here does not necessarily mean that such texts did not exist at all in the first place; cf. F. BOVON, *Das Evangelium nach Lukas (Lk 9,51-14,35)* (vol. 2; EKK 3; Zürich, 1996), 235f.

⁷² Cf. BOVON, *Evangelium*, 1:382 (n. 24). Apart from wisdom, God’s spirit seems to have been metaphorically personified in rabbinic Judaism without of course ever being understood as a real person; cf. M. TURNER, *Power from on High: The Spirit in Israel’s Restoration and Witness in Luke-Acts* (Eugene, 2015), 43. However, contra Turner, what distinguishes the Lukan Spirit is that it is not just a personification of God’s immanent presence, but that it interacts with concrete human beings in historical time and geographical space, just like all other persons of his narrative. This phenomenon cannot be explained as mere metaphor.

⁷³ Cf. J. L. CRENSHAW, *Old Testament Wisdom: An Introduction* (3rd ed.; Louisville, 2010).

come her voice.

As we have seen, the Holy Spirit does have clear character traits and personal properties that we can also trace in other Lukan characters as well. Truly impersonal divine powers and gifts, however, clearly lack these very traits and properties.

4. The Holy Spirit and Jesus

In the Third Gospel, Jesus's unique traits are one way or another connected with the Holy Spirit. This becomes obvious when comparing Jesus with the "greatest amongst all those born by a woman" (Luke 7:28) – namely, John the Baptist. John the Baptist is conceived through a miraculous act of God (Luke 1:7, 13, 24, 36). The angel predicts that he will be filled (πλησθήσεται) with the Holy Spirit already while in the womb of his mother (Luke 1:15). Moreover, he will possess the spirit and the power of Elijah (Luke 1:17), although he will perform his baptism in plain water (Luke 3:16).

Jesus's conception is of a totally supernatural character since it is directly attributed to a unique and unheard-of divine intervention through the Holy Spirit (Luke 1:35).⁷⁴ Jesus is never portrayed as being filled with the Holy Spirit but only as being full with Holy Spirit (4:1).⁷⁵ This differentiates him in a radical way from other "righteous" (cf. Luke 1:6; 2:25; 23:50) characters of the gospel's narrative, such as Mary (1:35), Elizabeth (1:41), Zacharias (1:67), and Simeon (2:25).⁷⁶ Rather differently from John the Baptist, Jesus will baptize in the Holy

⁷⁴ Cf. Isaacs, *Concept*, 119 (n. 9); Joel B. Green, *The Gospel of Luke* (Grand Rapids, 1997), 91.

⁷⁵ Cf. LAMPE, "Spirit," 168 (n. 10); BOVON, *Luke*, 239 (n. 1); GUNKEL, *Geist*, 67–69, 107 (n. 46). Jesus is not filled with a prophetic spirit but only with the Holy Spirit. This does not speak in favor of his being interpreted in Luke as the "new Elijah"; cf. O. MAINVILLE, *L'Esprit dans l'oeuvre de Luc* (CTHP 45; Québec, 1991), 222; LAMPE, "Spirit," 176f (n. 10).

⁷⁶ Compare the use of the verbs ἦλθεν in the case of Simeon (Luke 2:27) and ἦγετο in the case of Jesus (Luke 4:1), as well as the expression πνεῦμα εἶναι ἐπί + personal pronoun, which is used for both Simeon and Jesus (Luke 2:25; 4:18; cf. also 1:35; 3:22), in contrast with the expression πλήρης πνεύματος (Luke 4:1), which in the Third Gospel is only applied to Jesus. The attribution of this expression also to other narrative characters in Acts (6:3, 5; 7:55; 11:24) but to no character in Luke's Gospel, shows that it is only possible to be full of the Holy Spirit after Christian baptism. Moreover, the use of the verb πιμπλᾶναι in connection with

Spirit and in fire (Luke 3:16).

During Jesus's own baptism, the Holy Spirit descends upon him in the form of a dove, a unique manifestation of the normally invisible Spirit, which is followed by the voice of God coming from heaven and asserting that Jesus is his beloved son (3:22). It is exegetically and theologically misguided to imply that at this moment Jesus received something that he had previously lacked.⁷⁷ Being the Messiah from the very beginning of his earthly existence,⁷⁸ he has always been full of the Spirit, too. The descent of the Spirit and the voice of God are just means for demonstrating to the whole people of Israel (ἅπαντα τὸν λαόν, Luke 3:21) who are present at the scene of Jesus's baptism⁷⁹ that Jesus is indeed the Messiah, because the Spirit is upon him (cf. Luke 4:18f; Acts 10:38) and because God recognizes him as his beloved son according to Old Testament messianic ideology and relevant contemporary Jewish expectations (cf. Luke 3:22; 9:35; cf. 20:13).⁸⁰ Although these narrative details could also be viewed in an adoptionist manner, the Lukan context does not allow for such an interpretation.⁸¹

After his baptism, Jesus is not presented as being guided into the desert by the Spirit (the equivalent expression in Greek would be ὑπὸ τοῦ πνεύματος, cf.

πνεῦμα implies that narrative characters other than Jesus are not always full of the Holy Spirit and do not necessarily speak or act according to its guidance; cf. TURNER, *Power*, 168 (n. 72).

⁷⁷ Cf. HULL, *Spirit*, 92f (n. 3); J. D. G. DUNN, *Baptism in the Holy Spirit: A Re-examination of the New Testament Teaching on the Gift of the Spirit in Relation to Pentecostalism Today* (Philadelphia, 1970), 24; GUNKEL, *Geist*, 76 (n. 46); contra H. KLEIN, *Das Lukasevangelium* (KEK 3; Göttingen, 2006), 177; JERVELL, *Theology*, 32f (n. 2); P. DOBLE, *The Paradox of Salvation: Luke's Theology of the Cross* (SNTS.MS 87; Cambridge, 1996), 242.

⁷⁸ Cf. FITZMYER, *Gospel*, 480 (n. 12); ISAACS, *Concept*, 121 (n. 9); GUNKEL, *Geist*, 66 (n. 46); contra LAMPE, "Spirit," 168–170 (n. 10); JERVELL, *Theology*, 45 (n. 2).

⁷⁹ Cf. HUR, *Reading*, 158 (n. 18); GUNKEL, *Geist*, 74f (n. 46); contra TURNER, *Power*, 196 (n. 72).

⁸⁰ Accordingly, GUNKEL, *Geist*, 73 (n. 46), speaks of a "Demonstrationscharakter" of the passage. In the same direction, MENZIES, *Development*, 154 (n. 21), speaks of the "inauguration of Jesus' messianic task," while FITZMYER, *Gospel*, 481 (n. 12), understands the Lukan account of Jesus's baptism as the announcement of Jesus's identification as "Son."

⁸¹ Cf. I. H. MARSHALL, *The Gospel of Luke* (NIGTC; Exeter, 1978), 154; GUNKEL, *Geist*, 76 (n. 46); MENZIES, *Development*, 153f (n. 21); W. J. LARKIN, Jr., "The Spirit and Jesus 'on Mission' in the Postresurrection and Postascension Stages of Salvation History: The Impact of the Pneumatology of Acts on Its Christology," in *New Testament Greek and Exegesis. Essays in Honor of Gerald F. Hawthorne* (eds. A. M. Donaldson and T. B. Sailors; Grand Rapids, 2003), 129; contra FITZMYER, "Role," 172 (n. 2); GREEN, *Gospel*, 186 (n. 74).

Acts 13:4; 16:6), but *in* the Spirit (ἐν τῷ πνεύματι, Luke 4:1; cf. 10:21).⁸² While semantically ἐν τῷ πνεύματι can be interchangeable with ὑπὸ τοῦ πνεύματος (cf. Luke 2:26f), it is never used for describing the relationship of Jesus with the Holy Spirit. This means that this relationship cannot possibly be misunderstood as one of superiority of the Spirit to Jesus⁸³ but as one of inseparable unity between the two.⁸⁴

In 4:18f, Jesus cites Isaiah, clearly implying that the prophecy refers to him as the one anointed by the Lord and that due to this fact the Spirit of the Lord is upon him. This prophecy reveals that Jesus has the Spirit because he is the Messiah (πνεῦμα κυρίου ἐπ' ἐμέ,⁸⁵ οὗ ἔνεκεν ἔχρισέ με). Since Jesus is the Messiah from the very beginning,⁸⁶ it is self-evident that he has also had the Spirit since the very beginning. The narrative about his exchange with the teachers in the temple of Jerusalem at the age of twelve (Luke 2:46f) implicitly confirms this conclusion.⁸⁸

The relationship between Jesus and the Spirit is also the theme of the *crux interpretum* in Acts 2:33: τῇ δεξιᾷ οὖν τοῦ θεοῦ ὑψωθεὶς, τὴν τε ἐπαγγελίαν τοῦ πνεύματος τοῦ ἁγίου λαβὼν παρὰ τοῦ πατρὸς, ἐξέχεεν τοῦτο ὃ ὑμεῖς [καὶ] βλέπετε καὶ ἀκούετε. In the Lukan narrative, there is no indication whatsoever that the resurrected Jesus has somehow lost the Spirit that he had possessed during his earthly work. Therefore, he does not need to ascend to heaven in order to receive it.⁸⁹ This is also the reason for the lack in Luke-Acts of any

⁸² Contra IBID.

⁸³ Cf. WOLTER, *Lukasevangelium*, 179 (n. 17).

⁸⁴ Cf. ISAACS, *Concept*, 121 (n. 9); contra MENZIES, *Development*, 157 (n. 21).

⁸⁵ The expression ἐπί + personal pronoun for describing the relationship of the Spirit to a narrative character is normally applied to other narrative characters, not however to Jesus, with the exception of 4:18, which is a citation of an Old Testament prophecy and therefore not Lukan usage. This rule even includes Simeon, about whom both expressions πνεῦμα ἐπ' αὐτόν and ἐν τῷ πνεύματι are used.

⁸⁶ According to the witness of the angels right after his birth, as well as the one of Simeon forty days thereafter.

⁸⁸ Cf. ISAACS, *Concept*, 130 (n. 9).

⁸⁹ I cannot enter here into the extensive discussion about whether Jesus is presented in Acts 2:33 and 5:31 as being enthroned or installed into a new status; cf. GUNKEL, *Geist*, 133f (n. 46). I am only noting that the use of the verb ὑψοῦν should primarily signify the movement of the resurrected from the earth to heaven and not his installment into a new position. Moreover, the titles ἀρχηγός and σωτήρ, which are attributed to Jesus in 5:31, apply to him not only as ascended but also during his earthly life; cf. Luke 2:11; Acts 3:15; 13:23. Therefore, in my opin-

ἐπαγγελία of the Holy Spirit addressed to Jesus himself,⁹⁰ as well as for the careful formulation τὴν ἐπαγγελίαν τοῦ πνεύματος τοῦ ἁγίου λαβών, instead of (for instance) τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον λαβών. Consequently, in Acts 2:33, Jesus does not actually receive the Holy Spirit *per se*;⁹¹ rather, Jesus receives only the fulfillment of the promise of the bestowal of the Holy Spirit made twice by himself to his disciples in Luke 24:49 and Acts 1:4.⁹² In both of these cases, as well as in Acts 2:33, Jesus seems to be functioning as the mediator of the Holy Spirit between God the Father and his disciples.⁹³

The above analysis of the relationship between Jesus and the Spirit does not shed any more light on the question about the identity of the Holy Spirit as a distinct narrative character in the Lukan work. It is nonetheless interesting that Jesus and the Spirit have a unique relationship with each other compared to the Spirit's relationship with all other characters of the narrative. While the Holy Spirit reveals Jesus's identity; however, Jesus does not reveal the Holy Spirit's identity, which remains more or less an enigma in the gospel narrative.⁹⁴ The only thing Jesus reveals about the Holy Spirit is that it will indeed come upon the disciples after his departure from the world (Luke 24:49; Acts 1:14).

ion, Jesus's ascension represents the possession of the position which he already owns rather than his installment into a new status, which he only reaches through his resurrection and ascension.

⁹⁰ Contra PERVO, *Acts*, 83 (n. 30).

⁹¹ Contra JERVELL, *Theology*, 44 (n. 2); MAINVILLE, *Esprit*, 340 (n. 75); GUNKEL, *Geist*, 114 (n. 46); FITZMYER, "Role," 181 (n. 2), who speak of a second gift of the Spirit to Jesus from God that is of another quality – in other words, not the messianic Spirit but the ecclesiological Spirit. This differentiation between partial and consequently incomplete bestowals of the Spirit on Jesus is, in my opinion, not found in the text itself.

⁹² Cf., in the same direction, the interpretation of E. GRÄSSER, "Die Lösung des Problems der Parusieverzögerung in der Apostelgeschichte," in IDEM, *Forschungen zur Apostelgeschichte* (WUNT 137; Tübingen, 2001), 54; E. HAENCHEN, *Die Apostelgeschichte* (KEK 5; Göttingen, 7th ed. 1989), 185; MARGUERAT, *Historian*, 115 (n. 10). The "power from above" in Luke 24:49 is explained in Acts 1:4 as the result of the descent of the Holy Spirit and not as being identical with its bestowal.

⁹³ Cf. HULL, *Spirit*, 173 (n. 3); FREY, "Spirit," 362 (n. 35); GUNKEL, *Geist*, 114, 135f (n. 46); quite differently in Acts 2:38, Peter does not speak to his audience about the promise (ἐπαγγελία) but about the gift (δωρεά) of the Holy Spirit.

⁹⁴ Cf. HUR, *Reading*, 130f (n. 18).

5. The Holy Spirit and the Church

It is in the book of Acts that the identity and the work of the Holy Spirit is revealed in and through the community of Jesus Christ's believers.⁹⁵ Through their baptism in the Holy Spirit and in fire (cf. Luke 3:16; cf. Acts 1:5; 11:16),⁹⁶ the disciples receive the divine power to become witnesses of Jesus Christ to the end of the world (Acts 1:8), as well as to transmit the gift of the Spirit to all those who will believe in Jesus Christ.⁹⁷

The Holy Spirit commands and guides the apostles and Christian missionaries in a way similar to how Jesus Christ guided his disciples during his earthly life.⁹⁸ The Holy Spirit communicates with Christian leaders by talking personally to them (Acts 11:12; 13:2; 20:23), while it also talks through them to other persons who do not have direct communication with it (Acts 4:8, 31; 6:5, 10; 11:28; 13:9–11; 16:18; 18:25; 21:11).⁹⁹ It guides or prevents them from heading to certain places (Acts 13:4; 16:6f; 20:22). The apostles and Christian missionaries submit themselves to the authority of the Spirit,¹⁰⁰ which quite characteristically uses the imperative when communicating with them (Acts 8:29; 13:2). The Holy Spirit chooses certain people for doing its work (Acts 13:2).¹⁰¹ It participates in the “apostolic council” and contributes to its final decision along with its participants (Acts 15:28). It prophetically reveals to Christian leaders the future (Acts 21:4, 11). It appoints bishops for shepherding the church of God (Acts 20:28). It even urges and inspires the Christian prophet Agabos to warn Paul about the life-

⁹⁵ As MARGUERAT, *Historian*, 112 (n. 10), rightly puts it, “The Spirit reaches only believers”; cf. also H. STEICHELE, “Geist und Amt als kirchenbildende Elemente in der Apostelgeschichte,” in *Kirche im Werden: Studien zum Thema Amt und Gemeinde im Neuen Testament* (ed. J. Hainz; München, 1976), esp. 203; BUTTICAZ, *L'identité*, 144 (n. 21); ISAACS, *Concept*, 92 (n. 9).

⁹⁶ It should be evident by now that the baptism of the faithful is radically different from the baptism of Jesus, contra DOBLE, *Paradox*, 242 (n. 77). Jesus is baptized by John the Baptist in plain water (Luke 3:21), while he already has the Spirit (Luke 1:35). On the other hand, the faithful are baptized in the Holy Spirit and in fire (Luke 3:16), and through their baptism they receive the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:38).

⁹⁷ Cf. MARGUERAT, *Historian*, 115 (n. 10); LARKIN, “Spirit,” 130f (n. 81).

⁹⁸ Cf. SHEPHERD, *Narrative Function*, 210 (n. 63); HUR, *Reading*, 142f (n. 18).

⁹⁹ This also applies to the prophets of the Old Testament (Acts 1:16; 4:25; 28:25).

¹⁰⁰ Cf. MARGUERAT, *Historian*, 124 (n. 10).

¹⁰¹ Cf. GUNKEL, *Geist*, 290 (n. 46).

threatening danger that he is about to face if he goes to Jerusalem (Acts 21:11).¹⁰²

Furthermore, the presence of the Holy Spirit has a very important impact upon the lives of all members of the Christian church. Thus, the gift of prophesying or speaking in tongues is attributed to the Spirit as an immediate consequence of its bestowal (Acts 2:4; 10:45f; 19:6). The church expands with the fear of the Lord and with the comforting of the Holy Spirit (Acts 9:31). Some members of the community are especially gifted by being full of the Holy Spirit, such as Stephen and Barnabas (Acts 6:5; 11:22–24; cf. 13:52).

The fact that the Holy Spirit is the bearer of various spiritual gifts to the community is not conclusive evidence in favour of its individuality as a narrative character in Luke-Acts. However, the fact that it communicates with Christians on a personal level by speaking with them and leading them to concrete decisions and actions is sufficient proof that the Spirit is indeed understood by the author of Luke-Acts as an individual character of the narrative.¹⁰³

6. General Conclusion

From the presentation above, it should have become obvious that in Luke-Acts the Spirit is understood and presented as a distinct narrative character. It interacts with other narrative characters, it makes decisions, it has special relations with several characters, it has concrete behavior patterns, and it belongs to a certain character hierarchy in the narrative.¹⁰⁴ The fact that the Holy Spirit is actually unveiled as a complete narrative character in the book of Acts, and not yet in the Third Gospel, corresponds with Luke's theological principle, according to which the Holy Spirit can only be adequately revealed in its fullness by its presence in the post-Easter community of believers – namely, within the Christian church.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰² Cf. ISAACS, *Concept*, 89 (n. 9).

¹⁰³ According to GUNKEL, *Geist*, 192–194 (n. 46), in Acts the personal character of the Holy Spirit becomes clear also by the presentation of its actions as being parallel to those of the angels (cf. esp. Acts 8:29; 23:8f); contra A. GEORGE, “L'Esprit Saint dans l'oeuvre de Luc,” *RB* 86 (1979), 532, who holds that even this kind of evidence is insufficient.

¹⁰⁴ Cf. HUR, *Reading*, 129 (n. 18). In this sense, it is hardly enough to characterize the Holy Spirit as a sign of Jesus who is present in the preaching and in the eucharist, or as a symbol of the anticipated eschatology of the Christian community, as P. POKORNÝ, *Theologie der lukanischen Schriften* (FRLANT 174; Göttingen, 1998), 74, puts it.

¹⁰⁵ Cf. ZMIJEWSKI, *Apostelgeschichte*, 61 (n. 14).

Provided that the above analysis is correct and that Luke indeed presents the Holy Spirit as a narrative character, we would have to suppose that Luke also understands and wants his readers to understand the Holy Spirit as a real, personal entity. The Holy Spirit has all basic characteristics that a real person should have.¹⁰⁶ From a theological (and not a narratological) point of view, the only remaining question is whether the attribution of such personal traits to the Holy Spirit on the part of Luke could actually be of a symbolic or even allegorical nature.¹⁰⁷ However, for such an assumption to be founded, we would have to find at least one clear case of a narrative character in Luke-Acts who would on the one hand have clear personal traits and on the other hand not be meant as a real person in the world outside of the narrative.¹⁰⁸ The fact that according to the above analysis no such character exists in Luke-Acts,¹⁰⁹ leads us to the conclusion that there is no sufficient reason whatsoever for suspecting that while Luke indeed presents the Holy Spirit as a narrative character, he does not understand it as a real person outside of the narrative world.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁶ HUR, *Reading*, 157f (n. 18), is right in pointing out that the Holy Spirit in Luke-Acts is a divine character of the narrative, but he does not see a clear answer to the question about its being a real person or not, due to some of the Spirit's enigmatic and impersonal traits. This seems to be due to his narrow definition of "person" within the limitations of human experience. On the basis of my broader interpretation of the concept of "person", however, it should be clear that the Spirit's personal traits outweigh by far its "impersonal" ones. The latter can be explained by the divine, and therefore also spiritual, existence of the Spirit, which both on the narrative and on the theological level is comparable with the existence of God himself.

¹⁰⁷ FITZMYER, "Role," 178 (n. 2), speaks of a "personification" of the Holy Spirit in Luke-Acts, which he bases on the Old Testament understanding of God's spirit.

¹⁰⁸ In antiquity, such an example would be talking animals in Aesop's fables, which are fully developed narrative characters within the world of the fables but are not meant as real persons within the real world (but only as resembling real persons); cf. H. NORTHWOOD, "Making Music with Aesop's Fables in the Phaedo," in *Plato's Animals: Gadflies, Horses, Swans and Other Philosophical Beasts* (eds. J. Bell and J. Naas; Bloomington, 2015), 20–22.

¹⁰⁹ See above on the exceptional case of God's wisdom (σοφία).

¹¹⁰ Contra SHEPHERD, *Narrative Function*, 66 (n. 63), who, while affirming that the Spirit in Luke-Acts is indeed a character of the narrative, leaves aside the theological question about its personhood in the real world.

7. Some Hermeneutical Afterthoughts

According to the Lukan narrative, while Jesus Christ lived *among* the people of his own historical time, the Holy Spirit lives continually *within* the people of the historical time of the church. The role of Jesus Christ had been to perform miracles, to preach the coming of the kingdom of God, and to sacrifice himself for the salvation of humankind. The Spirit is the divine person that actualizes Jesus's work by materializing it within and among the members of the church. This is the reason that Luke never says that someone is full of Christ, while he does clearly state that the members of the church are full of the Spirit.

Nevertheless, the Spirit is not fully merged and identified with the faithful. In other words, it is not transformed into a mere attribute of human beings. Rather, it always remains a distinct person, which talks with them, commands them, guides them, gives them power, joy, and especially the ability to become witnesses of Christ to the world.

Indeed, in Acts, the work of the Spirit is very much understood in close connection with the missionary work of the Christian community and with its witness of faith. Mission is planned and commanded by the Spirit itself. The Spirit connects the Old Testament prophecies with the charismatic witness to Christ. The speaking of tongues also belongs to a missionary context.¹¹¹

By being a distinct divine person and not some part of a subjective system of beliefs or ideas, the Spirit secures the objectivity of the content of faith and the experience of the church. At the same time, through the presence of the Spirit within each and every faithful, the transcendence of God is preserved. Thus, God the Father is able to fully communicate with his own people without at the same time ceasing to remain fully transcendent. Through the real presence of the Spirit in all eras of the history of salvation,¹¹² from the Old Testament through the period of the earthly life of Christ and up to the era of the church, the unity of this history is preserved, even if the Holy Spirit is only revealed as a true person in the final time-period of the church.

Orthodox Christian theologians often tend to perceive Orthodox Christianity in an ahistorical way as the only church that has preserved the faith of early Christi-

¹¹¹ Cf. LARKIN, "Spirit," 126f (n. 81); G. K. A. BONNAH, *The Holy Spirit: A Narrative Factor in the Acts of the Apostles* (SBB 58; Stuttgart, 2007), 270; FREY, "Spirit," 362f (n. 35).

¹¹² Cf. JERVELL, *Theology*, 46f, 79f (n. 2); MAINVILLE, *Esprit*, 337 (n. 75); FITZMYER, "Role," 171 (n. 2).

anity through the ages basically unaltered in content and form. Tradition, however, does not only entail preservation but also development and evolution. Scholarly study of the New Testament, as well as of other early Christian texts, in their own historical contexts and in their own right, will enable Orthodox theology to grasp more adequately the complexity of historical developments and eventually to proceed to a much-needed self-assessment on a local and ecumenical level in the light of the faith and life of the early Christians.

It is broadly acknowledged that the gradual institutionalization of the church, which started already in her early days, has often expelled the experience of the Holy Spirit from the lives of the faithful. Leaving aside a minority of “charismatic” communities or individuals, the faithful as a whole may well believe in the divine personhood of the Holy Spirit on a theoretical level, but they fail in practice to communicate with it and to let it guide their lives.¹¹³ From a meta-hermeneutical-transformative perspective,¹¹⁴ this is something that the Orthodox church and theology should be seriously concerned with.

¹¹³ GUNKEL, *Geist*, 361 (n. 46), speaks in this regard about a “Geistvergessenheit” that should not have occurred in the first place and that the church has to seriously deal with in the present.

¹¹⁴ According to the relevant analysis of T. STYLIANOPOULOS, *The New Testament: An Orthodox Perspective* (vol. 1; Brookline, 1997), 214–238; cf. also M. WENK, *Community-Forming Power: The Socio-Ethical Role of the Spirit in Luke-Acts* (London, 2004), 315–318.