

[at last] you are truly related to me because of the circumcision [of our son]!”.

The touching (*nag'a*) of the bloody foreskin to Moses feet, legs and/or groin may have been part of the eastern circumcision ceremony signifying the connection and succession of father and son, just as ‘putting the hand under the thigh’ intimately sealed a solemn oath of action (Gen. 24:2,9; 47:29). In any case, Zipporah was binding Moses closer to her through Abraham’s rite, and transferring the completed act to him in order to save his life. This scene also prepares the reader for the blood-smearing on the lintel and two doorposts, which repelled the angel of death from Israel’s first-born sons (Ex. 12:22).<sup>4</sup>

This was now the fifth time that Moses’ life had been saved by women, but, in sending Zipporah and her sons back to Midian, “the east country” (18:1-7), he unwittingly repeated the exclusion of Keturah and her sons (Gen. 25:6). This hurtful significance was probably not lost on Zipporah, so it is to her credit that she cooperated in the smooth and happy reunion arranged at Sinai by her father Jethro, who showed outstanding wisdom and statesmanship. The Kenite tribe was thereafter adopted into Judah and continued to provide examples of faith and loyalty.

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4. See “Ethnicity, exogamy and Zipporah”, Karen Strand Winslow, *Women in Judaism: A Multidisciplinary Journal*, Winter 2006, 4.1.

## The promise of the Holy Spirit in Acts 2

I found the recent exchange of views between Brother Harrison ([Aug. 2006, p. 291](#) and [Dec. 2006, p. 442](#)) and Brother Crawford ([Nov. 2006, p. 412](#)) to be interesting. I found myself agreeing with points made on each side. It seems to me that the scope of the bestowal of the Spirit and the range of its gifts is broader than Brother Harrison would allow, but, on the other hand, Brother Harrison’s argument on the bestowal of the Spirit at Pentecost and the beginning of Luke’s Gospel seems substantially correct. There are several other arguments which support this conclusion:

1 Luke’s distinctive use of *pimplēmi*, ‘to fill’,\* in relation to the Spirit is found in relation to

the apostles (for example, Acts 2:4) as well as John the Baptist, Elisabeth and Zacharias (Lk. 1:15,41,67).

2 John the Baptist and Jesus are presented as prophets in Luke’s story (Lk. 1:76; 4:24; 7:16,26; 13:33; 20:6; 24:19; Acts 3:22,23; 7:37), and as such their possession of the Spirit falls within the compass of Joel’s latter-day bestowal of the Spirit, which is couched in terms of prophesying. The principal term for their preaching is one employed in Joel’s prophecy, since Joel 3:5 in the Septuagint (which is Joel 2:32 in the AV) uses *euangelidzō* (“they that have the good news preached to them”) as the corresponding term for the Hebrew *sryd* (“the remnant”). The same verb *euangelidzō* is used by Gabriel to announce the birth of John the Baptist (Lk. 1:19), as well as the preaching of the gospel (for example, 4:18), and the apostolic mission (for example, Acts 5:42). This commonality ties the three ministries of Luke–Acts together as an activity directed to the same *generation* rather than separate actions belonging to different epochs.

3 Luke’s use of the concept of ‘power’ also suggests that he was writing the fulfilment of Joel’s prophecy into the terms of his story opening. The expression “power of the Highest” (Lk. 1:35) strikes an echo with Luke’s later expression, “power from on high” (24:49), which refers to the bestowal of the Spirit at Pentecost. Similarly, this language of ‘power’ is used in connection with Jesus (4:14; Acts 10:38), which suggests that Luke does not regard Jesus’ anointing with the Spirit as different *in kind* from that of other characters in his story, even if there is a difference of *degree* in the range of its effects through Jesus. Accordingly, Luke retains the same metaphor for the possession of the Spirit, *plērēs*, ‘full’ (Lk. 4:1), and *pimplēmi*, ‘to fill’ (1:15,41,67; Acts 2:4), throughout his account.

In addition to these three points, there are other arguments that can be made in support of Brother Harrison’s approach, but essentially they amount to the point of view that Luke narrates a

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\* Readers who investigate this for themselves in a concordance will note that *plēthō* not *pimplēmi* is given. The following comment by Vine (*Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words*) may help: “*Pimplēmi* and *plēthō*, lengthened forms of *plēō*, to fill (*plēthō* supplies certain tenses of *pimplēmi*) . . .”—T.B.

historical period which has a beginning with John the Baptist and is a story that concerns the "last days". The operation of the Spirit in this time period fulfils the terms of the Old Testament prophecies made by the eighth-century B.C. prophets Joel and Isaiah; and therefore from that perspective, however many bestowals of the Spirit on however many individuals, this is all part of

the same phenomenon predicted by Isaiah and Joel for the "last days".

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*The short article by Brother Perry which follows, "[The spirit of Elijah and Pentecost](#)", is complementary to Brother Harrison's approach.*