

THE PAULINE USAGE OF *PNEUMATI* AS A REFERENCE TO THE SPIRIT OF GOD

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Apart from the Christian experience of the Holy Spirit, there is no Christianity. In this the witness of the NT as well as the testimony of all succeeding generations of Christians is unanimous. This study probes a particular aspect of the NT witness to the experience of the Spirit: that experience designated *pneumati*, "in the Spirit."¹

Two factors suggest the need for attention to this subject. First, contemporary popular Christianity uses the terms "in the Spirit," "walking in the Spirit," "singing in the Spirit," "baptism in the Spirit" and even "slain in the Spirit." Such terminology seems often to be used carelessly and ambiguously. Second, although considerable attention has been given to specific aspects of the NT teaching about the Spirit, very little has been given to the category "in the Spirit."²

The fundamental issue is exegesis. Do the writers of the NT use *pneumati* as a technical term with one consistent meaning, or is the meaning of the term determined purely by contextual considerations? Or is the truth perhaps somewhere between?

Analysis of the 91 instances of *pneumati* in the Greek NT³ has been summarized in table 1.

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¹The five-case system of inflecting Greek nouns is assumed for this study. This system is ably presented in BDF (Chicago: University Press, 1961) 79-109. Pp. 100-109 describe the dative, the case that is the focus of this presentation.

²This stands in sharp contrast to the intensive investigation of the phrase "in Christ." The foundational work was G. Deissman, *Die neutestamentliche Formel "in Christo Jesu"* (Marburg, 1892). Among other important monographs may be mentioned A. Schweitzer, *The Mysticism of Paul the Apostle* (New York: Henry Holt, 1931); J. Stewart, *A Man in Christ: The Vital Elements of St. Paul's Religion* (New York: Harper, 1935); M. Bouttier, *En Christ: Etude d'Exégèse et de Théologie Pauliniennes* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1962).

³UBSGNT, 3d ed., 1975.

TABLE 1
SUMMARY OF EXEGESIS OF *PNEUMATI*

Reference	Preposition?	Article?	Metaphor?	Referent	Syntax	Modifies
Matt 3:11	x		x	Holy Spirit	locative (element)	<i>baptisei</i>
5:3		x		human spirit (general)	dative of reference	<i>ptôchoi</i>
12:28	x			Holy Spirit	instrumental (agent)	<i>ekballô</i>
22:43	x			Holy Spirit	instrumental (inspirer)	<i>kalei</i>
Mark 1:8	x		x	Holy Spirit	locative (element)	<i>baptisei</i>
1:23	x			demon	accompaniment	<i>anthrôpos</i>
2:8		x		human spirit (of Jesus)	dative of sphere	<i>epignous</i>
5:2	x			demon	accompaniment	<i>anthrôpos</i>
8:12		x		human spirit (of Jesus)	dative of manner	<i>anastenaxas</i>
9:25		x		demon	direct object	<i>epetimêsen</i>
12:36	x	x		Holy Spirit	instrumental (inspirer)	<i>eipen</i>
Luke 1:17	x		x	human spirit (of Elijah)	accompaniment	<i>proleusetai</i>
1:80				human spirit (of John)	dative of reference	<i>ekrataiouto</i>
2:27	x	x		Holy Spirit	instrumental (agent)	<i>êlthen</i>
3:16	x		x	Holy Spirit	locative (element)	<i>baptisei</i>
4:1	x	x		Holy Spirit	instrumental (agent)	<i>egeto</i>
8:29		x		demon	direct object	<i>parêngeilen</i>
9:42		x		demon	direct object	<i>epetimêsen</i>
10:21	x	x		Holy Spirit	instrumental (inspirer)	<i>egalliasato</i>
John 1:33	x		x	Holy Spirit	locative (element)	<i>baptizôn</i>
4:23	x			Holy Spirit	instrumental (agent)	<i>proskymêsousin</i>
4:24				Holy Spirit	instrumental (agent)	<i>proskymein</i>
11:33		x		human spirit (of Jesus)	dative of sphere	<i>enebrimêsato</i>
13:21		x		human spirit (of Jesus)	dative of sphere	<i>etarachthê</i>
Acts 1:5	x		x	Holy Spirit	locative (element)	<i>baptisthêsesthe</i>
6:10		x		Holy Spirit	direct object	<i>antistênai</i>
7:51		x		Holy Spirit	direct object	<i>antiptete</i>
10:38			x	Holy Spirit	instrumental (element)	<i>echrisen</i>
11:16	x		x	Holy Spirit	locative (element)	<i>baptisthêsesthe</i>
15:28		x		Holy Spirit	direct object	<i>edoxen</i>
16:18		x		demon	indirect object	<i>eipen</i>
18:25		x	x	human spirit (of Apollos)	dative of sphere	<i>zeôn</i>
19:21	x	x		Holy Spirit	instrumental (agent)	<i>etheto</i>
20:22		x	x	Holy Spirit	instrumental (agent)	<i>dedemenos</i>
Rom 1:9	x	x		human spirit (of Paul)	instrumental (agent)	<i>latreûs</i>
2:29	x		x	Holy Spirit	instrumental (agent)	<i>peritomê</i>
8:9	x			Holy Spirit	locative (sphere)	<i>hymeis</i>
8:13				Holy Spirit	instrumental (agent)	<i>thanatoute</i>
8:14				Holy Spirit	instrumental (agent)	<i>agontai</i>
8:16		x		human spirit	direct object	<i>summartyrei</i>
9:1	x			Holy Spirit	locative (sphere)	<i>summartyrouês</i>
12:11		x	x	human spirit (general)	dative of sphere	<i>zeontes</i>
14:17	x			Holy Spirit	instrumental (agent)	<i>dikaiosynê</i>
						<i>eirênê</i>
						<i>chara</i>
15:16	x			Holy Spirit	instrumental (agent)	<i>hêgiasmenê</i>
1 Cor 4:21				human spirit (of Paul)	dative of manner	<i>elthô</i>
5:3		x	x	human spirit (of Paul)	dative of manner	<i>parôn</i>

TABLE 1
(CONTINUED)

Reference	Preposition?	Article?	Metaphor?	Referent	Syntax	Modifies
6:11	x	x		Holy Spirit	instrumental (cause)	<i>apelousasthe hēgiasthēte edikaiōthēte</i>
7:34		x		human spirit (of woman)	dative of sphere	<i>hagia</i>
12:3	x			Holy Spirit	instrumental (inspirer)	<i>lalin</i>
12:3	x			Holy Spirit	instrumental (inspirer)	<i>eipein</i>
12:9	x	x		Holy Spirit	instrumental (agent)	<i>didotai</i>
12:9	x	x		Holy Spirit	instrumental (agent)	<i>didotai</i>
12:13	x		x	Holy Spirit	locative (element)	<i>ebaptisthēmen</i>
14:2				spiritual gift	instrumental (manner)	<i>lalei</i>
14:15		x		spiritual gift	instrumental (manner)	<i>proseuzomai</i>
14:15		x		spiritual gift	instrumental (manner)	<i>psalō</i>
14:16				spiritual gift	instrumental (manner)	<i>euloōs</i>
2 Cor 2:13		x		human spirit (of Paul)	dative of advantage	<i>heschēka</i>
3:3			x	Holy Spirit	instrumental (agent)	<i>engegrammēnē</i>
6:6	x			Holy Spirit	accompaniment	<i>synistanes</i>
12:18		x	x	human spirit (of Paul)	instrumental (manner)	<i>peripalēsamen</i>
Gal 3:3				Holy Spirit	instrumental (agent)	<i>enarzamenoi</i>
5:5				Holy Spirit	instrumental (agent)	<i>apekdechometha</i>
5:16			x	Holy Spirit	instrumental (agent)	<i>peripateite</i>
5:18				Holy Spirit	instrumental (agent)	<i>hagesthe</i>
5:25				Holy Spirit	instrumental (agent)	<i>zōmen</i>
5:25			x	Holy Spirit	instrumental (agent)	<i>stochōmen</i>
6:1	x			human spirit (general)	instrumental (manner)	<i>katartizeite</i>
Eph 1:13		x	x	Holy Spirit	instrumental (element)	<i>esphagisthēte</i>
2:18	x			Holy Spirit	locative (sphere)	<i>prosaogōen</i>
2:22	x			Holy Spirit	locative (sphere)	<i>katoikēlēriōn</i>
3:5	x			Holy Spirit	instrumental (inspirer)	<i>apekalyphthē</i>
4:23		x		human spirit (general)	dative of sphere	<i>ananeousthai</i>
5:18	x		x	Holy Spirit	instrumental (element)	<i>plerousthe</i>
6:18	x			Holy Spirit	instrumental (inspirer)	<i>proseuchomenoi</i>
Phil 1:27	x			human spirit (general)	instrumental (manner)	<i>stēkete</i>
3:3				Holy Spirit	instrumental (agent)	<i>latreuontes</i>
Col 1:8	x			Holy Spirit	instrumental (agent)	<i>agapēn</i>
2:5		x		human spirit (of Paul)	dative of manner	<i>syn hymin</i>
1 Thess 1:5	x			Holy Spirit	accompaniment	<i>egenēthē</i>
2 Thess 2:8		x		breath	instrumental (agent)	<i>anelei</i>
1 Tim 3:16	x			Holy Spirit	locative (sphere)	<i>edikaiōthē</i>
1 Pet 1:12	x			Holy Spirit	agent (inspirer)	<i>euangelisamenōn</i>
3:18				Holy Spirit	locative (sphere)	<i>zōpoiētheis</i>
4:6				Holy Spirit	locative (sphere)	<i>zōsi</i>
1 John 4:1				spirit-being (general)	direct object	<i>pisteuete</i>
Jude 20	x			Holy Spirit	instrumental (inspirer)	<i>proseuchomenoi</i>
Rev 1:10	x			trance	instrumental (agent)	<i>egenomēn</i>
4:20	x			trance	instrumental (agent)	<i>egenomēn</i>
17:3	x			trance	instrumental (agent)	<i>apēnengken</i>
21:10	x			trance	instrumental (agent)	<i>apēnengken</i>

The following observations may be made:

1. The construction *pneumati* is found in four primary forms: *pneumati*, *tō pneumati*, *en pneumati* and *en tō pneumati*. The presence of the article as well as the preposition has a decided effect on the meaning of the noun.
2. The syntax shows great variety: dative of reference, dative of sphere, dative of manner, dative of element, and dative of agent are to be found among other exegetical possibilities.
3. The term may be used in a sense that is clearly metaphorical (e.g. Matt 3:11; Acts 1:5; 20:22; Rom 2:29; 2 Cor 3:3).
4. *Pneumati* may refer to the human spirit as easily as to God's Spirit. Exegetical considerations suggest that 60 of the 91 NT occurrences have the Holy Spirit as the referent.⁴

These 60⁵ occurrences fall into two roughly equal categories: 35 are Pauline, 25 are non-Pauline. It is the Pauline references that provide the focus for this study. The concepts of the apostle Paul concerning the Holy Spirit have always been a favorite subject for theological reflection. Monographs, dissertations, articles and major portions of Pauline theologies are given over to "the Holy Spirit according to Paul."⁶ It is striking, however, that even Paul's meaning for the phrase "in the Spirit" is only rarely given individual consideration. By way of contrast, the parallel term "in Christ" has been given exhaustive consideration, as have such specific aspects of "in the Spirit" as "baptized in the Spirit" and "walking in the Spirit."⁷ But the meaning of *pneumati* itself is virtually never given independent attention.

This article, then, is a study of Paul's meaning when he uses the term *pneumati* as a reference to God. Throughout, the implications concerning both the nature of the Spirit of God and the activity of the Spirit of God are kept in

⁴In several instances it is not easy to decide which is meant (e.g. Acts 20:22).

⁵The actual count is 65. However, five of these (Acts 6:10; 7:51; 15:28; Rom 8:16; 1 John 4:1) are instances of the dative as verb complement—i.e., indirect object or dative of direct object.

⁶Although this is not the place to give extensive bibliography, several examples of each of the kinds of literature mentioned may be cited: monographs: N. Q. Hamilton, *The Holy Spirit and Eschatology in Paul* (SJT Occasional Papers 6; Edinburgh: Oliver & Boyd, 1957); R. B. Hoyle, *The Holy Spirit in St. Paul* (Garden City: Doubleday, Doran, 1929); K. Stalder, *Das Werk des Geistes in der Heiligung bei Paulus* (Zurich: Evs-Verlag, 1962); dissertations: G. F. Greenfield, "The Ethical Significance of the Holy Spirit in the Writings of Paul" (doctoral dissertation, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1961); C. H. Pinnock, "The Concept of the Spirit in the Epistles of Paul" (doctoral dissertation, University of Manchester, 1963); articles: J. W. Buckham, "Are Christ and the Spirit Identical in Paul's Teaching?", *Expositor*, 8th series 22 (1921) 154-160; H. B. Carré, "The Ethical Significance of Paul's Doctrine of the Spirit," *Biblical World* 48 (1916) 195-204; B. Schneider, "The Meaning of St. Paul's Antithesis 'The Letter and the Spirit,'" *CBQ* (1953) 163-207; theologies: G. E. Ladd, *A Theology of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974) 474-496; W. G. Kümmel, *The Theology of the New Testament According to Its Major Witnesses: Jesus—Paul—John* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1973) 206-223; D. E. H. Whiteley, *The Theology of St. Paul* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1964) 99-129.

⁷For example 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* (SBT second series 15; Naperville: Allenson, 1970); Bouttier, *En Christ*.

view.⁸ There is also an inquiry into patterns of meaning, which is demonstrated throughout the presentation. It is the thesis of this study that Paul uses *pneumati* not as a precise technical term but rather to refer generally to that effective agent of the power of God whereby certain Christian experiences come to pass and whereby believers are enabled to fulfill certain expectations.

In order to synthesize effectively the apostle's meaning for *pneumati*, the clue provided by grammar can serve efficiently as the organizing principle. Paul uses *en pneumati* 17 times, so this construction receives first attention. He uses the anarthrous *pneumati* 12 times, so it is given second consideration. Finally, he uses *tō pneumati* and *en tō pneumati* three times each, so these are considered last.⁹ Table 2 summarizes the distribution of Paul's usage.¹⁰

TABLE 2
DISTRIBUTION OF PAUL'S USAGE OF THE FORM *PNEUMATI*
AS A REFERENCE TO THE SPIRIT OF GOD

Chronological order	<i>pneumati</i>	<i>en pneumati</i>	<i>tō pneumati</i>	<i>en tō pneumati</i>	Total
Galatians	6				6
1 Thessalonians		1			1
1 Corinthians	2	3	2	3	10
Philippians	1				1
2 Corinthians	1	1			2
Romans	2	5			7
Colossians		1			1
Ephesians		5	1		6
1 Timothy		1			1
TOTAL	12	17	3	3	35

⁸These are of course the historic questions about the "Person" and "work" of the Holy Spirit. The literature on the Holy Spirit is vast, and a working knowledge of the material must be assumed here. The following represent a cross-section of some better works on the subject. Some represent a classical nineteenth-century approach, while others are more up to date. J. 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* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1975); S. Boulgakof, *Le Paraklet* (Aubier: Editions Montaigne); M. Green, *I Believe in the Holy Spirit* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1975); W. H. Griffith Thomas, *The Holy Spirit of God* (3d ed.; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1955 [1913]); D. Kirkpatrick, ed., *The Holy Spirit* (World Methodist Council, 1974); A. Kuyper, *The Work of the Holy Spirit* (New York: Funk & Wagnalls, 1900); H. Robinson, *The Christian Experience of the Holy Spirit* (New York: Harper, 1928); E. F. Scott, *The Spirit in the New Testament* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1923); G. Smeaton, *The Doctrine of the Holy Spirit* (2d ed.; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1889); H. B. Swete, *The Holy Spirit in the New Testament: A Study of Primitive Christian Teaching* (London: Macmillan, 1910).

⁹Although chronological order rather than grammatical order was possible, analysis indicates that little or no chronological development of Paul's usage of *pneumati* may be discerned. The fact that Galatians (early) prefers anarthrous *pneumati* (6 times in 6 references) seems to be due to difference of subject matter rather than to evolving doctrine. 1 Corinthians contains *pneumati* as a reference to God's Spirit more than any other NT book (10 times) and equally divides the references among the syntactical possibilities: *Pneumati* and *tō pneumati* are used twice each; *en pneumati* and *en tō pneumati* each appear 3 times. Even a cursory consideration of these data indicates that Paul's usage was so fluid that it is unlikely he considered "in the Spirit" to have a fixed or technical meaning.

¹⁰Questions concerning the authenticity of each of the letters of the Pauline corpus are not of primary significance to this study. The material from Ephesians (6 references) and 1 Timothy (1 reference) does

I. PAUL'S USE OF *EN PNEUMATI*

The 17 times in which Paul uses the phrase *en pneumati* as a reference to the Spirit of God cover greatly diverging contexts—so great, in fact, that these must be divided into four subcategories: six times *en pneumati* refers to a specific historical incident that was “motivated by the Spirit”; five times it is used in connection with theological points relevant to individual Christians; four times it is used regarding an aspect of Christian behavior assumed to be “motivated by the Spirit”; twice the phrase is used to command religious duties “by the Spirit.” These four subcategories reveal the great flexibility of the apostle’s thinking and his refusal to be bound even by his own previous manner of writing.

1. *En pneumati in historical notes.* In placing the phrase *en pneumati* in the context of a particular historical event, Paul uses the phrase in a manner foreign to the other writers of the NT. Since the phrase ranges chronologically from 1 Thessalonians to 1 Timothy, it is to be expected that the meaning varies from place to place.

In 1 Thess 1:5 the apostle writes that the good news came not by word only but “with power and with the Spirit.” Careful exposition demonstrates that “with the Spirit” indicates “accompanied by the Holy Spirit” here. The emphasis is on Spirit as divine energy, as the parallel to *dynamis* makes clear. The contrast is between human energy and divine. As Dunn has elaborated: “Their experience of the gospel was not simply that of hearing Paul speaking . . . but the experience was that of being addressed by God’s Spirit, of being grasped by divine power.”¹¹ There is no thought of a mystical “in the Spirit” but simply of the Spirit of God as the power accompanying the historical coming of the gospel to Thessalonica.

2 Cor 6:6 falls within a list of 18 personal factors that served to commend Paul’s ministry during his sojourn in Corinth. Some are historical happenings, some are character traits. To include the Holy Spirit as one accompanying factor of his ministry emphasizes that “it is not the person of the Spirit but the gift that is intended, and the gift with special reference to the holiness which it brings.”¹² This, then, is quite parallel to 1 Thess 1:5: The Holy Spirit was an accompanying factor in the historical ministry of the apostle.

Rom 9:1 marks a slight change from the previous references. Here Paul speaks of his truth-telling in the context of what he wrote about the people of Israel, in that his conscience bears witness *en pneumati hagiō*. Analysis indicates that this is an example of the “mystical Christian reference,” considered in detail below in the discussion of Rom 8:9. However, since this passage involves the locative idea the Spirit as person is not stressed but rather the Spirit as divine enfolding presence.

not materially affect the thrust of the study. Thus all 13 epistles said to have been written by Paul have been included. The chronological order used is that proposed by F. F. Bruce in *The Letters of Paul: An Expanded Paraphrase* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1965) 8.

¹¹Dunn, *Jesus* 226.

¹²Swete, *Holy Spirit* 196.

The significance of *en pneumati* in Rom 15:16 changes considerably from the meaning in 9:1. The apostle speaks of the offering collected for the Jerusalem church, that it might be "sanctified by the Holy Spirit." The Spirit is considered the agent who sets apart (sanctifies) this particular historical offering. As Murray notes: "The conditions of holiness are created by the Holy Spirit."¹³ Although the Holy Spirit as person might be in view, since the act of sanctifying is one that is often accomplished by a personal agent, this is not certain, since impersonal concepts are sometimes said to be the agent of sanctification through the use of an *en* phrase.¹⁴ The significant point, however, is that the Spirit—in whatever way conceived—is the effective agent setting the offering aside for a holy purpose.

The emphasis in Eph 3:5, again, is different from those previously treated. Here Paul writes of those apostles and prophets who, in the context of postresurrection history, received the revelation of the mystery of Christ *en pneumati*, clearly meaning "inspired by the Spirit,"¹⁵ precisely equivalent to the non-Pauline occurrences of the fuller articular phrase *en tō pneumati*, which outside Paul always means "inspired by the Spirit." Here, too, no emphasis on Spirit as person is discernible.

The final instance of Paul's use of *en pneumati* in an historical context is 1 Tim 3:16, which speaks of Christ's ultimate justification *en pneumati*. Exegesis clarifies that this means the "realm of spirit-reality."¹⁶ Therefore this is a different emphasis for the meaning of *en pneumati* in the Pauline material, and, again, Spirit as person is not the focus.

In summary, the exact meaning of *en pneumati* for Paul, when it refers to an historical incident, is determined entirely by the demands of the context. In these six instances it implies (1) "accompanied by the Spirit," (2) "in the sphere of the Spirit," (3) "by the agency of the Spirit," (4) "inspired by the Spirit," and (5) "in the realm of spirit-reality." No other category for any form of *pneumati* so sharply evidences this variety of meaning.

2. *En pneumati in theological reflections.* In five instances Paul uses the phrase *en pneumati* in the context of doctrinal teaching concerning the status of individual Christians before God. In each of these, he speaks of revealed truth that could not be known merely by experience. In none of these is the adjective *hagion* used.

Rom 8:9 is the central passage in which Paul defines "being in the Spirit." This has been called "mystical," although clearly "being in the Spirit" (*einai en pneumati*) is not, for Paul, something only for mature or advanced Christians. Rather, "being in the Spirit" is as elementary as to be synonymous with being a Christian. Hoyle argues as follows:

¹³J. Murray, *The Epistle to the Romans: The English Text with Introduction, Exposition, and Notes* (NICNT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1959-65), 2. 211.

¹⁴For example John 17:17: "Sanctify them by the truth."

¹⁵Thomas, *Holy Spirit* 275.

¹⁶Note that this is not the same as the "in the Spirit" of Rom 8:9. It is, however, quite like the "in the Spirit" of 1 Pet 3:18; 4:6.

[Paul's usage] shows affinity with the Stoic views widespread in the Roman Empire . . . But with St. Paul "in Spirit" is equivalent to "being in Christ" and it is not mere material substance, but the "atmosphere" which a person carries with him, the "personal influence," the active working of the personality of the risen Lord Jesus upon the minds and hearts of believers.¹⁷

The meaning of "being in the Spirit" is further delineated in two references in Ephesians: All believers have access to the Father *en heni pneumati* (Eph 2:18), and, reciprocally, every believer is a dwelling place of God *en pneumati* (2:22). These are theological truths applicable to all Christians. Thus although "being in the Spirit" may be a "mystical" concept it concerns elementary Christian truth: It means being Christian, having access to God and being the dwelling place of God.¹⁸ Following the observed pattern the emphasis is on the Spirit as the effective means of divine power in the lives of those who believe rather than on the Spirit as person.

The other two instances of Paul's use of *en pneumati* in theological reflection are in the metaphors "baptized in one Spirit" in 1 Cor 12:13 and "circumcision of heart by the Spirit" in Rom 2:29. Paul's conception of "baptism in the Spirit" is identical to that used elsewhere in the NT. Rather than allowing the interpretation of this concept to be a major barrier, one is referred to the impeccable scholarship of James Dunn in *The Baptism of the Spirit*. He concludes that

for the writers of the New Testament the baptism in or gift of the Spirit was part of the event (or process) of becoming a Christian, together with the effective proclamation of the Gospel, belief in (*eis*) Jesus as Lord, and water-baptism in the name of the Lord Jesus; that it was the chief element in conversion-initiation, so that only those who had thus received the Spirit could be called Christian . . . The high point in conversion-initiation is the gift of the Spirit, and the beginning of the Christian life is to be reckoned from the experience of Spirit baptism.¹⁹

The only special mention needed for Paul's usage in 1 Cor 12:13 is that his emphasis is on the unity of the one Spirit rather than on the action of baptizing.²⁰

The metaphor "circumcised by the Spirit" rather conveys the same meaning as "baptized in the Spirit" since both baptism and circumcision are physical rites of initiation. As Dunn has stated: "When we realize that Paul thinks of the circumcision of the heart in terms of the Spirit, it is only a small step to parallel circumcision of the flesh and circumcision of the heart with baptism in water and baptism in the Spirit."²¹ Thus both metaphors look to the time of initial faith and conversion, when the individual receives the gift of the Spirit.

Each of these five usages of *en pneumati* is concerned with Christian beginnings: Someone who is baptized in the Spirit/circumcised by the Spirit is "in the Spirit" and thus has access to God and is, indeed, a dwelling place of God.

¹⁷R. B. Hoyle, "Paul's Doctrine of the Spirit," *Biblical Review* 13 (1928) 61.

¹⁸See Swete, *Holy Spirit* 309-311. K. Barth describes "in Spirit" as the subjective counterpart of the objective "in Christ" (*Church Dogmatics* [Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1958], 4.2. 643).

¹⁹Dunn, *Baptism* 4.

²⁰*Ibid.*, pp. 127-131.

²¹*Ibid.* p. 146.

3. *En pneumati in behavioral assumptions.* For that person who is "in the Spirit" in accordance with Rom 8:9, specific behavioral patterns are assumed by Paul to follow—religious qualities that are not commanded but rather presumed to be part of Christian living. In each of these four references, *en pneumati* means "by means of the Holy Spirit."

In Rom 14:17 Paul assumes that the kingdom of God is characterized by "righteousness, peace, and joy *en pneumati hagiō*"; in Col 1:8 "love *en pneumati*" is assumed. These behavioral qualities are so closely related to the list in Gal 5:22-23 that the Romans and Colossians references may be described as part of the "fruit of the Spirit." It is always implied that these attributes of personal holiness are being developed in the lives of Christ's people by the Holy Spirit. Although such behavioral traits are certainly commanded throughout the NT, whenever they are used with *en pneumati* they are assumed to be present. Green has observed:

There is always an "already" and a "not yet" about the work of the Spirit. He is indeed given to us to actualise in us the character of Christ: but that process will not be complete until we see him as he is, either at death or the Parousia.²²

In 1 Cor 12:3 *en pneumati* is used twice, slightly differently from the two previous references, although they still fall under the rubric of "behavioral assumptions." Paul states that the ecstatic utterance "Jesus is Lord" is a sign of divine inspiration *en pneumati*, while the ecstatic utterance "Jesus be cursed" is a sign that such divine inspiration *en pneumati* is missing. Paul is "obviously not thinking of a mere statement of a proposition (for anyone could say the words), but of an inspired or ecstatic utterance which did not originate in the individual's own rational consciousness."²³ This is a case of "determining whether the utterance in question was from the Spirit of God or from other sources."²⁴ Here *en pneumati* bears the same meaning it does in Eph 3:5, although the latter reference has rational revelation in view.

To summarize, *en pneumati* is used by Paul in behavioral assumptions to imply that the specific, concrete qualities of love, righteousness, joy and peace are being produced in believers. Further, the Spirit may inspire the specific ecstatic utterance "Jesus is Lord" (but never "Jesus be cursed").

4. *En pneumati in religious instructions.* Only twice does Paul use the phrase *en pneumati* in conjunction with an exhortation to Christian duty. In Eph 5:18 the command "be filled *en pneumati*" is found, a metaphor meaning "to be completely possessed, permeated, and dominated by the power of the Spirit."²⁵ The present imperative verb emphasizes the continual need to be so filled.

In 6:18 "praying at all times *en pneumati*" draws attention to the continual need for prayer motivated by the Spirit, identical with the "prayer by the Spirit" of Jude 20. In both these Ephesians references the Spirit as the power of God is

²²Green, *I Believe* 88-91.

²³Dunn, *Baptism* 151.

²⁴Dunn, *Jesus* 235.

²⁵H. E. Dana, *The Holy Spirit in Acts* (2d ed. rev.; Kansas City: Central Seminary, 1943) 38.

in the foreground: He can overflow the life of the Christian with his power as well as provide the proper motivation for prayer. Although the apostle sees each of these as Christian duty, he recognizes that believers are not automatically "filled with the Spirit," nor do they always "pray by the Spirit." Therefore he gives strong exhortation concerning each one.

The following summary of the overall Pauline usage of the phrase *en pneumatī* may be made:

1. Paul uses *en pneumatī* as a reference to the Spirit 17 times.
2. Six times this phrasing refers to an historical event (Rom 9:1; 15:16; 2 Cor 6:6; Eph 3:5; 1 Thess 1:5; 1 Tim 3:16). The significance in these instances is determined purely by the needs of the context.
3. Five times it refers to a revealed truth of the Christian religion (Rom 2:29; 8:9; 1 Cor 12:13; Eph 2:18; 2:22). All Christians are, by definition, "in the Spirit." Therefore they have access to God, they are temples of God, they are "baptized in the Spirit," and they have been "circumcised by the Spirit."
4. Four times *en pneumatī* refers to specific characteristics assumed to be true of believers: love, righteousness, peace, joy, the confession "Jesus is Lord" (Rom 14:17; 1 Cor 12:3 [twice]; Col 1:8).
5. Twice it is used by Paul to exhort Christians: to "be filled with the Spirit" (Eph 5:18) or to "pray by the Spirit" (6:18).
6. The Holy Spirit throughout these references is generally considered in the role of the power/agency of God.

II. PAUL'S USE OF *PNEUMATI* (ANARTHROUS)

Paul uses the simple anarthrous form *pneumatī* twelve times, whenever he wishes to speak of general aspects of Christian behavior, never using the adjective *hagion* with this simple form. He is particularly fond of this expression in Galatians (six occurrences). The meaning is the same for all of these references:²⁶ *Pneumatī* for Paul regularly means "motivated by the power (= Spirit) of God." These may be divided into two groups: those references that make an assumption about the Spirit's activity, and those that speak of general commands to be carried out by the power of the Spirit.

1. *Pneumatī in Christian experience.* Seven times Paul uses the anarthrous form *pneumatī* in reference to general truth of Christian experience. These passages do not deal with specifics, such as "love" or "gifts of the Spirit," but rather with overarching patterns for Christian living that the Spirit produces.

First, the Christian life is "begun by the Spirit" (Gal 3:3), a general way of indicating the "baptism in the Spirit."²⁷ Second, the entire Christian life is called

²⁶Except 1 Cor 14:2, 16; 2 Cor 3:3, which are accounted for in later discussion.

²⁷Swete, *Holy Spirit* 202. E. Schweizer has a remarkable discussion of Gal 3:2-5 on p. 81 of *The Holy Spirit* (London: SCM, 1981).

a "waiting for the hope of righteousness by faith by the Spirit" (5:5), a clear statement of the "already/not yet" tension that characterizes all of Christian living.²⁸ The ability to wait is produced by the Spirit. Third, the life of Christians is characterized as "being led by the Spirit" (5:18; Rom 8:14). In the Galatians passage, the term is part of the (indicative) protasis of a conditional sentence, an example of "*ei* with the indicative of reality";²⁹ in the Romans passage it is equally plain that all Christians are led by the Spirit.³⁰ Fourth, another general description of the Christian life is that it is a "living by the Spirit's power" (Gal 5:25), again the conditional of reality and thus assumed to be true.³¹

The two final instances, falling outside Galatians, reflect a similar emphasis on the continuing nature of the Spirit's activity in the Christian life. In Rom 8:13 the apostle speaks of "putting to death the deeds of the body by the Spirit."³² The final general characteristic of the Christian life characterized as *pneumati* is worship: Phil 3:3 mentions "those who worship by the Spirit of God." It was greatly liberating for Paul that "worship was no longer a matter of obligation and requirement, but a spontaneous urge to praise God."³³

These, then, are the aspects of Christian living that Paul considers to be carried out by the Spirit: After the Spirit begins the life, the believer waits, lives, worships, is led, and puts to death fleshly deeds—all by the power of the Spirit. The Spirit is preeminently God's power at work in the life of the individual.

2. *Pneumati in exhortations.* Only twice does the apostle use anarthrous *pneumati* in commands to believers, found in Galatians 5 in nearly synonymous metaphors. In these instances Paul exhorts the Galatian believers to "be what they are." The "already/not yet" is particularly evident here, since although it is assumed that the entire Christian life is a life motivated by the Spirit, yet the believers are exhorted to do that very thing.

In Gal 5:16 believers are commanded to "walk by the Spirit"; in 5:25 they are told to "be ordered by the Spirit."³⁴ So for Paul it is never to be doubted that "Christian conduct is conduct determined by the Spirit . . . That day to day conduct is in mind here can scarcely be doubted; it is explicit in the choice of the metaphor 'walk' and by its use elsewhere in Paul."³⁵

²⁸Dunn, *Jesus* 309.

²⁹BDF 189.

³⁰This "being led" is a general term for guidance (BAG [2d ed.; Chicago: University Press 1979] 14), which recalls Jesus' experience in the wilderness (Luke 4:1).

³¹It is striking that the verb related to the *beginning* of the Christian life is aorist (*enarxamenoī*), while the verbs for the continuing of that life (*apekdechometha*, *agesthe*, *agontai*, *zōmen*) are present.

³²Kuyper, *Work* 261.

³³Dunn, *Jesus* 223. This spontaneity of worship was announced by Jesus in John 4:23-24. Although in John the verb is *proskyneō* and in Philippians it is *latreuō*, the concepts are the same: Worship is now motivated by the Spirit, not by legal duty.

³⁴The verb *stoicheō* implies "being in line with, following, agreeing with" (BAG 769).

³⁵Dunn, *Jesus* 222; cf. V. P. Furnish, *Theology and Ethics in Paul* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1968) 238-239.

The presentation of the Spirit as the effective agent of God is maintained here, as is the continuing use of *pneumati* in conjunction with general aspects of Christian living.

3. *Pneumati in other contexts.* Three other instances of Paul's usage of the anarthrous *pneumati* remain for consideration. Each is to be accounted for strictly by the needs of its context.

In 1 Cor 14:2 Paul mentions "speaking mysteries *pneumati*" and in v 16 of "blessing *pneumati*." Exegesis of these verses indicates that *pneumati* here refers to a particular spiritual gift of utterance provided by the Spirit: The person speaks mysteries (or blesses), using the spiritual gift of glossolalia.

The situation in 2 Cor 3:3 is somewhat distinct. Here the simple *pneumati* is used to limit the verb *engraphō*. Since the *graphō* verbs customarily use a simple dative to indicate the means by which something is written,³⁶ Paul follows the demands of the language. That *pneumati* is anarthrous here is to be accounted for by its being in parallel antithesis to *melani*, "ink," which is always anarthrous when used as a substantive in the NT.³⁷

The following summary of the Pauline usage of the anarthrous *pneumati* may be made.

1. Paul uses *pneumati* to refer to the Spirit 12 times.
2. Never does he use the adjective *hagion* with this form.
3. Seven times the apostle uses *pneumati* to refer to a general aspect of the Christian life that is stated to be motivated by the Spirit of God (Gal 3:3; 5:5; 5:18; 5:25; Rom 8:13; 8:14; Phil 3:3). The Spirit is seen as the effective power of God.
4. Twice Paul uses *pneumati* in metaphors giving spiritual instructions. Believers are to "walk by the Spirit" (Gal 5:16) and to be "ordered by the Spirit" (v 25).
5. In three other references the apostle breaks his pattern due to contextual demands. Twice (1 Cor 14:2; 14:16) he uses *pneumati* to mean "by the gift of glossolalia"; once (2 Cor 3:3) he uses it because of grammatical necessities.

III. PAUL'S USE OF *TŌ PNEUMATI*

Paul uses the articular form *tō pneumati* as a reference to the Holy Spirit only three times, and then only because of a grammatical necessity to use the article. In 1 Cor 14:15 he uses *tō pneumati* twice, each time in contrast to *tō noi*. The references in v 15 quite certainly would have been anarthrous if Paul had not been emphasizing the contrast between *pneuma* and *nous*. Thus Paul writes, "I will pray using 'the spiritual gift [= glossolalia]' but I will also pray using 'the understanding'; I will sing using 'the spiritual gift,' but I will also sing using 'the understanding . . .'" Dunn's elaboration helps sort out the contrast Paul is making:

³⁶For example John 8:6, *tō daktylō katēgraphen*, "he wrote with his finger"; Phlm 19, *egrapsa tē emē cheiri*, "I wrote with my own hand."

³⁷2 Cor 3:3; 2 John 12; 3 John 13.

It is clear from I Cor. 14:15 that Paul recognizes a kind of *charismatic hymnody*—both a singing in tongues (here = “with the Spirit”) and a singing with intelligible words (“with the mind”). Since Paul in this context seems to be thinking solely of inspired utterance, whether edifying the mind (prophecy) or leaving it unfruitful (glossolalia), we must presume that both types of singing envisaged in 14:15 were spontaneous.³⁸

In Eph 1:13 Paul uses another metaphor for the receipt of the Holy Spirit at the time of conversion/initiation. He speaks of “being sealed by the Holy Spirit of promise.” That this is a reference to the initial work of the Spirit cannot be doubted.³⁹ Since Paul never uses the anarthrous *pneumati* with modifiers, the use of modifiers here (*tēs epangelias tō hagiō*) requires the articular form. Because of the nature of the metaphor, the Spirit is here viewed more as divine sign than as divine Person.⁴⁰

Thus Paul uses the phrase *tō pneumati* because of the demands of Greek grammar. In 1 Cor 14:2; 14:16, the article is present to emphasize contrast; in Eph 1:13 the article is used because of the modifiers. The concept implied by *tō pneumati* is therefore much the same as that implied by *pneumati*.

IV. PAUL'S USE OF *EN TŌ PNEUMATI*

Paul writes the full phrase *en tō pneumati* as a reference to God's Spirit only three times, which may all be accounted for by the needs of Greek syntax. He uses the fuller form only when he cannot correctly use the preferred (anarthrous) expression.

In 1 Cor 6:11 Paul writes of being washed, sanctified and justified *en tō onomati tou kyriou Iēsou Christou kai en tō pneumati tou theou hēmōn*. This follows the pattern established for the use of *en pneumati* in that it makes a doctrinal revelation about all Christians concerning their original receipt of the Spirit at the time of conversion.⁴¹ The article is used to maintain the grammatical parallel to *en tō onomati*. The grammatical relationships of the verse may be illustrated like this:

you were washed you were sanctified you were justified	}	{	by the name of the Lord Jesus Christ by the Spirit of God
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³⁸Dunn, *Jesus* 238.

³⁹See Smeaton, *Doctrine* 84: “It may suffice to say that the impress of a seal implies a relation to the owner of the seal and is a sure token of something belonging to him. From the three passages where the term SEAL [*sic*] is expressly used, we gather that believers are God's inviolable property, and known to be so by the Spirit dwelling in them. The three passages are Eph 1:13, 4:30, 2 Cor 1:22.”

⁴⁰Green, *I Believe* 81.

⁴¹That a metaphor (“washing”) should be used here is highly significant. In every other passage in which Paul uses *pneumati* to refer to the initial work of the Spirit of God in the believer's life he uses a metaphor: “baptism,” “circumcision,” “sealing,” “washing.” All these figures of speech are subsumed into Paul's statement in 1 Cor 6:11: “You were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified by the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.”

In 1 Cor 12:9 the apostle speaks of the spiritual gift of faith *en tō autō pneumati* and of the gifts of healing *en tō heni pneumati*. In both instances the article may be accounted for as a means of emphasizing the adjectival element: An article before a form of *autos* is one Greek way to say "the same [noun]";⁴² an article before a numeral calls attention to an item of known quantity,⁴³ thus emphasizing the unity of the Spirit. The use of *autos* and *heis* requires Paul to write the fuller phrase *en tō pneumati* rather than the preferred anarthrous *en pneumati*.

Thus Paul uses the phrase *en tō pneumati* only for syntactical reasons. In 1 Cor 6:11 the phrase is used to ensure exact grammatical parallel; in 12:9 the phrase is used twice to emphasize certain adjectival concepts. The meaning of *en tō pneumati* is therefore the same as that of *en pneumati*.

V. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The following summation can be made of the significance of *pneumati* as a reference to God's Spirit in its various syntactical forms as it appears in the Pauline epistles.

1. The Spirit of God is conceived of as the effective agent of the power of God. There is little interest in emphasizing the personality of the Spirit in the usage of *pneumati*. This is all the more striking in that the dative is often thought to emphasize personal interest.
2. Paul has no set formula in using the word *pneumati*. All four possible combinations appear, although 1 Corinthians is his only epistle to utilize all four forms.
3. The anarthrous *pneumati* is definitely preferred to *tō pneumati*, the latter being used to mean the same thing when syntax demands the article. These forms are for the most part used of general truths of Christian experience. There are a few exceptions to this in which *pneumati* means "glossolalia" or else is used in a metaphor of the Spirit's activity (e.g. sealing or writing).
4. Although *en pneumati* and *en tō pneumati* are used to mean the same thing, the latter is used by the apostle only when grammar requires such a construction. Paul uses these forms variously when speaking of historical incidents, when making specific doctrinal revelations, or when making special points concerning Christian conduct.
5. Only in four instances (each using the form *en pneumati*) is the "mystical Christian concept"—that is, "being in the Spirit"—used. These are Rom 8:9; 9:1; Eph 2:18; 2:22.
6. Only four actual commands are contained in this material: In general, believers are to walk by the Spirit and to follow after the Spirit; in particular, they are urged to be filled with the Spirit and to pray by the Spirit.

⁴²C. K. Barrett, *A Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians* (HNTC; New York: Harper, 1968) 143.

⁴³BDF 150.

Thus it would seem to be substantiated that Paul uses *pneumati* not as a precise technical term but rather to refer generally to that effective agent of the power of God whereby certain Christian experiences come to pass and whereby believers are enabled to fulfill certain expectations.

One can do no better than to end with the helpful observation of Moule:

The use of the word "spirit" is thus often conditioned by what is contrasted with it; but the contrast is seldom that simply of the immaterial over against the material. The subtle nuances of the context and of the writer's intentions have to be taken into account when we try to interpret it.⁴⁴

⁴⁴C. F. D. Moule, *The Holy Spirit* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1978) 42.