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A table of contents for *The Evangelical Quarterly* can be found here:

[https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles\\_evangelical\\_quarterly.php](https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_evangelical_quarterly.php)

# **A critical evaluation of Youngmo Cho: *Spirit and Kingdom in the Writings of Luke and Paul: An Attempt to Reconcile these Concepts***

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## **Introduction**

In his 1970 article 'Spirit and Kingdom' Professor James Dunn writes, 'In all the research which has gone into Jesus and the kingdom in recent years, too little attention has been given to the relation between the *Spirit* and the kingdom....'<sup>1</sup> More than 35 years later Dunn's words still ring true. Dunn's subsequent research, coupled with the world-wide growth of the Pentecostal and Charismatic movements, sparked a renaissance in New Testament research on the Holy Spirit. One of the exciting outcomes of this renewed interest in the Holy Spirit has been the emergence of a 'trialogue' between three world-class scholars Drs. James Dunn, Max Turner, and Robert P. Menzies. The inevitable result of this 'trialogue' has been a slow but steady formation and clarification of the positions and parameters of the debate.

One of the key areas of disagreement pivots around the level of unity between the two writers in the New Testament who use Spirit-language most frequently, Paul and Luke. Menzies, Turner, and Dunn subsequently formed three conflicting positions regarding the theological relationship between the two authors' concept of the Spirit: unity (Dunn), disunity (Menzies), and unity amidst diversity (Turner). Interestingly, the topic of Dunn's original article, 'Spirit and Kingdom', continues to provide a promising arena for further clarification of this important question concerning the unity, or disunity, between Luke and Paul's concept of the Spirit.

Recently, Youngmo Cho, a student of Menzies, has revisited Dunn's article and questioned the validity of his conclusions. The opening line of his Aberdeen PhD dissertation clearly states the aim of his study, 'To shed light on the differences between Luke and Paul with regard to their understanding of the Spirit.'<sup>2</sup> In order to demonstrate the pneumatological differences between Luke and

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1 J. D. G. Dunn, 'Spirit and Kingdom', reprinted in *The Christ and The Spirit: Volume 2 Pneumatology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998) 133.

2 Youngmo Cho, *Spirit and Kingdom in the Writings of Luke and Paul: An Attempt to Reconcile these Concepts* (Milton Keynes: Paternoster, 2005) 1.

Paul Cho conducts a comparative study, examining the conceptual relationship between each writer's concept of the Spirit's *function* and its *relationship* to the kingdom of God.

Cho's thesis offers a challenge to what he regards as the 'generally argued' position, which tends to assert the similarity between Paul and the early church's (particularly Luke's) pneumatology. Dunn and Turner, with whom Cho will significantly engage, are the most recent proponents of this position. By way of contrast Cho will assert, 'Paul as an innovator adds something new and important to the theology of the early church.'<sup>3</sup> According to Cho, Paul's unique innovation is to speak of the kingdom of God in terms of life in the Spirit so that for Paul 'life in the Spirit' and 'life in the kingdom' become synonymous concepts.

In support of this thesis Cho suggests that Paul innovatively presents the Spirit as the mediator of the kingdom blessings. Luke on the other hand limits the Spirit's work to be primarily the source of prophetic inspiration, which in turn inspires the proclamation of the kingdom of God, enabling people to enter therein.<sup>4</sup> In short, Paul presents the Spirit as the means by which the Christian experiences the true essence of the kingdom of God, while for Luke the Spirit primarily inspires the proclamation of the kingdom of God. Thus, by this distinctive presentation of the Spirit's relationship to the kingdom of God in each authors' work, Cho ultimately hopes to show that the two authors have characteristically different pneumatologies.

## A chapter-by-chapter summary of Cho's study

### *Chapter two: the Spirit and life-giving wisdom in the intertestamental literature*

Absolutely crucial to Cho's overall thesis will be to establish the exact nature of the Jewish concept of the Spirit during the Intertestamental Period (ITP). Establishing this is foundational for his argument as Cho will eventually propose that Luke draws on the contemporary Jewish concept of the Spirit for his understanding of the Spirit, as the 'Spirit of prophecy' (chapter 5), while on the other hand Paul abandons traditional and contemporary Jewish thinking about the Spirit (chapter 3). According to Cho, Paul pioneers new frontiers in Pneumatology, envisaging the Spirit to be a 'life-giving' force with soteriological functions; something Cho contends is foreign to the Jewish concept of the Spirit. Herein one can see the inherent dissimilarity between the two author's concepts of the Spirit: Luke remains faithful to the Jewish concept of the 'Spirit of prophecy' and Paul ventures forth into new horizons of pneumatological thinking.

The only problem for Cho in establishing this, the crux of his argument, is to demonstrate the absence of a 'life-giving' aspect to the 'Spirit of Prophecy' in the

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3 Cho, *Spirit and Kingdom*, 11.

4 Cho, *Spirit and Kingdom*, 197.

ITP. Max Turner's 1996, monograph *Power from on High* establishes, quite convincingly, the existence of a diverse, multi-faceted, conceptual milieu concerning the Spirit in the ITP. Turner recognizes the occurrence of various phenomena attributed to the Spirit in the ITP primarily: charismatic revelation, charismatic wisdom and invasive charismatic speech. Thus far Cho can agree, but the point of departure is when Turner asserts the ITP literature, the Targumim, and the LXX also consistently, though not as often, attribute acts of power (often miraculous) and transformative ethical renewal to the Spirit, which consequently had soteriological implications.<sup>5</sup> Naturally, if Cho's thesis should proceed, this final aspect in Turner's thesis, the Spirit as soteriological agent, must be put into question.

To set the scene for the discussion, and indeed his entire thesis, Cho describes Turner's position in this way: 'Turner maintains that one of the main features of the Spirit in this literature is a "life-giving function" as a soteriological agent'.<sup>6</sup> In response Cho poses what will become the central question of chapter 2, 'Is the Spirit of prophecy, the generally accepted concept of the Spirit, to be reasonably understood in the literature as the dispenser of life-giving wisdom?'<sup>7</sup> In order to do this, Cho will reexamine Turner's arguments by looking at his supporting texts. In response Cho will give counter evidence in order to attempt to undermine Turner's exegesis and therefore his conclusion as well.

Cho begins his argument against Turner by looking at the Spirit in the Messianic traditions. In his examination of *1 Enoch* and the *Psalms of Solomon*, Cho makes what will be an important distinction for his overall argument. The Spirit anoints the Messiah not with a 'life-giving wisdom', rather the Messiah is given, what Cho calls, '*extraordinary wisdom*'. This '*extraordinary wisdom*' given to the Messiah is to effectively complete his task, which on the basis of Isaiah 11 is to rule and judge the people of God. Cho believes the Messiah in these passages is 'already righteous' apart from the Spirit and for this reason he is worthy to receive the Spirit for empowerment.<sup>8</sup> In his concluding analysis, with this distinction between 'life-giving wisdom' and '*extraordinary wisdom*' in mind, Cho maintains, 'the wisdom upon the Messiah derived from the Spirit is not a fundamental level of wisdom, "life-giving wisdom" as Turner argues, but is a distinct and elevated form of wisdom.'<sup>9</sup> To this conclusion Cho will repeatedly return throughout this chapter.

As Cho moves through a sampling of Turner's supporting body of texts, he predictably arrives at the aforementioned conclusion throughout his analysis:

5 Max Turner, *The Holy Spirit and Spiritual Gifts: Then and Now* (Carlisle: Paternoster, 1996), 20.

6 Cho, *Spirit and Kingdom*, 14. Later we will note this is a misrepresentation of Turner's position: Turner believes the main functions of the Spirit are the 'Spirit of Prophecy' functions – he thinks that the soteriological work of the Spirit in ITP Judaism is relatively rare, but that it exists.

7 Cho, *Spirit and Kingdom*, 17.

8 Cho, *Spirit and Kingdom*, 19.

9 Cho, *Spirit and Kingdom*, 20.

the Spirit is the source of 'extraordinary wisdom', not 'life-giving wisdom'. When Cho does encounter material exhibiting an indisputable connection between the Spirit and 'life-giving wisdom', he relegates that material to either: (a) A sectarian and sapiential group within Judaism (as he does with 1 Enoch and Qumran); or (b) the material is too late to be considered influential (as he does with much of the Rabbinic material). In the end, Cho asserts the source of 'life-giving wisdom' in the ITP is, 'not connected to the prophetic activity of the Spirit, but rather can be achieved by studying and keeping the law.'<sup>10</sup>

The end result of Cho's analysis presents an Intertestamental Judaism with a remarkably unified, coherent, and homogenous concept of the 'Spirit of prophecy'. Cho believes the 'Spirit of prophecy' during this period would be recognized primarily as the source of 'extraordinary' and charismatic wisdom of a particularly prophetic nature. 'Life-giving wisdom', on the other hand, would be achievable only through study of the law and obedience to the law. Thus the Messiah was already righteous and *therefore* deemed worthy to receive the 'Spirit of prophecy'. Fidelity to the law would precede the reception of the Spirit. Any intimation linking the Spirit and 'life-giving wisdom', such as Qumran or 1 Enoch, represents 'one minor strand among a much larger and more dominant tradition, which presents the Spirit in a non-soteriological way'.<sup>11</sup> Assuming Cho is correct in his conclusions, one of the immediate implications is that Turner's thesis, suggesting the Jewish concept of the Spirit as the source of 'life-giving wisdom' unites the pneumatologies of Paul and Luke, must be reconsidered.<sup>12</sup>

### *Chapter three: the relationship between the Spirit in Paul and the Kingdom of God in the Synoptic Gospels*

Having dissociated soteriological functions from the contemporary Jewish notion of the 'Spirit of prophecy', Cho reframes the discussion by bringing the central focus away from Judaism towards the apostle Paul; particularly his unique portrayal of the Spirit. Cho concentrates his efforts in chapter 3 on an apparent inconsistency between Paul's letters and the Gospels. He claims particularly that there exists a noticeable absence of kingdom language in Paul's writings and Spirit language in the Gospels, while conversely there is an obvious superfluity of kingdom language in the Gospels and Spirit language in Paul's writings. What is the cause of this great epistemological divide? Cho suggests this exhibits, '... a development in Paul's theological understanding by reformulating the concept of the kingdom of God by a new term, the Spirit, in a new and more comprehensive way.'<sup>13</sup>

To demonstrate this thesis, Cho gives a brief summary of Paul's sparse use of the particular term 'kingdom of God'. Cho notes that in each of Paul's 7 uses of

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10 Cho, *Spirit and Kingdom*, 27.

11 Cho, *Spirit and Kingdom*, 51.

12 Cho, *Spirit and Kingdom*, 51.

13 Cho, *Spirit and Kingdom*, 108.

the term 'kingdom of God' there exists a 'two-fold' time element (already, but not yet), thus portraying an eschatological framework for how Paul understands the term. This will provide a bridge for us to understand Paul's innovative blending of kingdom language into Spirit language. According to Cho, Paul believes the Spirit is evident in the present as some sort of 'eschatological instrument of eternal inheritance', just as the Synoptists presented the manifestation of the kingdom as a present reality through Jesus and his ministry. So there is an eschatological tension which unites Paul's concept of the Spirit and the Synoptists' concept of the kingdom: the in-breaking of the future into the present.<sup>14</sup> In demonstrating this mutual eschatological tension, Cho turns what appears to be a significant inconsistency (kingdom language vs. Spirit language) into a singular hermeneutic uniting these two separate corpus' use of kingdom language and Spirit language: the already but not yet eschatological tension.

What is the conclusion of this comparative study? '... for Paul, life in the Spirit becomes his way of speaking about life in the kingdom. The Spirit mediates the entirety of the blessings of the kingdom in Paul and becomes the source of its life.'<sup>15</sup> Cho believes the major implication of the above conclusion is that here we have positive proof Paul is an innovator of Spirit language precisely *because* this type (soteriological/life-giving) of pneumatology is 'generally unparalleled in Intertestamental literature'.<sup>16</sup>

#### *Chapter four: the Spirit and the blessings of the Kingdom of God in Luke-Acts*

In order to demonstrate Paul's innovative use of Spirit language, in Chapter 4 Cho turns to examine Luke's use of Spirit and kingdom language in Luke-Acts; the eventual hope, of course, is to reveal the characteristically different pneumatologies between the two authors. At this point, it is absolutely essential for Cho to show that Luke *dissociates* the work of the Spirit from mediating the blessings of the kingdom. This is important not only to establish the ground for his immediate thesis (Paul as innovator), but also for his argument as a whole (Paul and Luke have divergent concepts of the Spirit); because if Luke does not associate the Spirit with the kingdom as Paul does and if Paul is indeed an innovator of Spirit language, what then is the source of Luke's concept of the Spirit (ch. 5)?

Cho's leading question paves the way for the following discussion, '... whilst it is true that the Spirit functions as the source of the blessings of the kingdom according to Paul, is it also true that Luke associates the Spirit with these blessings?'<sup>17</sup> What follows is an examination of virtually the entire body of passages relating to the Spirit in Luke-Acts, which have dictated the last thirty years of Lukan pneumatological research (just as Chapter 3 summarized the results of

14 Cho, *Spirit and Kingdom*, 67.

15 Cho, *Spirit and Kingdom*, 108.

16 Cho, *Spirit and Kingdom*, 109.

17 Cho, *Spirit and Kingdom*, 111.

Pauline pneumatological studies over the past 30 years). Given the existence of a much traversed path through these passages, Cho does not break any new ground, as much as he rehearses the contemporary debate, only periodically adding his own observations. *Without exception, he sides with the standard Pentecostal position: the Spirit does not mediate sonship, ethical transformation, resurrection, or conversational experience.*

In the end, Cho concludes; (1) Luke dissociates the Spirit from the kingdom blessings; and (2) the Spirit is not portrayed as the 'kingdom in its totality' as in Paul. Based on these two conclusions Cho further asserts, 'Paul developed the role of the Spirit more fully than Luke's Pneumatology in terms of the blessings and life of the kingdom: so there is a considerable difference between Paul's Pneumatology and that of Luke.'<sup>18</sup>

#### *Chapter five: the primary role of the Spirit in relation to the Kingdom of God in Luke-Acts: proclamation*

In this final chapter Cho brings his conclusions from the previous chapter to their logical end. If Luke dissociates the Spirit from the kingdom blessings and the Spirit is also not portrayed as the 'kingdom in its totality', then how does the Spirit function in relation to the kingdom of God in Luke-Acts?

This is a particularly provocative question because while it is almost universally assumed that Luke intimately relates the Spirit to the kingdom, few have set out to examine the exact nature of this relationship. James Dunn and Stephen Smalley have attempted to broach the subject in two separate articles;<sup>19</sup> both asserting the Spirit as the manifestation of the kingdom, 'where the Spirit is, there is the kingdom.'<sup>20</sup>

Against these two authors Cho argues that it is an 'oversimplification' to equate the Spirit with the kingdom, 'rather, the Spirit should be seen as the divine agent that lies behind the proclamation of the kingdom of God.'<sup>21</sup> To prove this Cho formulates a two-fold argument. First, Cho argues against Dunn's thesis (the Spirit mediates the presence of the kingdom) by demonstrating the weakness of Dunn's evidence. In turn, Cho maintains that Dunn's thesis: (a) is an oversimplification of the relationship between Spirit and kingdom; and (b) reads Luke through Pauline spectacles.<sup>22</sup>

Secondly, turning from Dunn to Smalley, Cho admits there is a close relationship between the Spirit and the kingdom, but it is specific and restricted in the sense that it is limited to empowerment for the proclamation of the kingdom. Cho demonstrates this by tracing the activity of the Spirit in both Christ's proclamation of the kingdom and the Church's subsequent proclamation. Cho fo-

18 Cho, *Spirit and Kingdom*, 161.

19 J. D. G. Dunn, 'Spirit and Kingdom' 133-141; S.S. Smalley, *Spirit, Kingdom, and prayer in Luke-Acts*, *NovT* 15 (1973), 59-71.

20 Dunn, 'Spirit and Kingdom', 140.

21 Cho, *Spirit and Kingdom*, 195.

22 Cho, *Spirit and Kingdom*, 171.

cuses on Luke 4:16-30 and 42-44 as evidence that the core of Jesus' ministry, as the 'herald-prophet' from Isaiah 61 was 'primarily verbal proclamation of the kingdom of God'.<sup>23</sup> Therefore in Luke-Acts the Spirit becomes the means through which the kingdom of God is proclaimed.

Similarly, Acts 1:3-8 becomes the *modus operandi* for understanding the disciples' proclamation of the kingdom, giving evidence that the Spirit is the agent through which the disciples will proclaim the kingdom of God. Cho believes Isaiah 49:6 is the basis for a correct understanding of Acts 1:8; as Israel was to be light to the nations, so now the disciples will fulfill this same servant-vocation. Jesus' Spirit inspired proclamation of the kingdom of God now becomes the mission/ministry of the Church.

To conclude: Cho maintains (against Dunn and Smalley) that to describe the function of the Spirit as the means to experiencing the kingdom leads to a gross oversimplification of the Spirit's function in Luke-Acts. The Spirit upon Jesus is linked to the fulfillment of his messianic commission: proclaiming the kingdom. Likewise, the Spirit is the main source of power for the disciples' and the early church's proclamation of the kingdom. Therefore, Cho believes the function of the Spirit in relation to the kingdom of God is one limited to empowerment, 'the former is characterized as the cause by which the latter is proclaimed'.<sup>24</sup>

### *Chapter six: conclusion*

In sum, Cho begins his argument by stating his aim: to show the differences between Luke and Paul's concept of the Spirit. In his opening chapter he makes a concerted effort to show the ITP conceives the Spirit to be the source of 'extraordinary wisdom' of a prophetic nature and NOT as the source of 'life-giving wisdom'. This, he maintains, puts into doubt the validity of Max Turner's thesis, which suggests the Jewish concept of the Spirit, as the source of 'life-giving' wisdom, unites the pneumatologies of Luke and Paul.

As a result, Cho turns attention away from the ITP and focuses on Paul's unique use of Spirit-language. Given that Paul's use of Spirit language is so different than the 'much larger and dominant strand of Jewish thinking'<sup>25</sup> found in the ITP coupled with Paul's sparse use of kingdom language all lead Cho to conclude Paul, as an innovator, uses Spirit-language as an alternative expression for the kingdom of God in the Synoptics.

Alternatively as Cho turns to examine Luke's use of Spirit-language he finds the third Gospel and Acts produce a characteristically different picture of the Spirit. In sharp contrast to Paul, Luke dissociates the Spirit from (a) mediating the kingdom blessings; (b) being the source of life-giving wisdom; or (c) representing the totality of life in the kingdom. Instead Luke appears to follow the 'dominant Jewish perception' of the Spirit; seen as the source of empowerment

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23 Cho, *Spirit and Kingdom*, 175.

24 Cho, *Spirit and Kingdom*, 196.

25 Cho, *Spirit and Kingdom*, 196.



for proclamation. Luke's unique contribution to the Christian understanding of the Spirit is therefore to see the Spirit as the source of empowerment for Jesus, the disciples' and the early church's proclamation of the kingdom of God, 'For Luke, where the Spirit is at work there the kingdom is being proclaimed'.<sup>26</sup>

If valid, the immediate implications of Cho's study are far reaching. His overarching conclusion runs like this: If Paul innovatively reformulates the kingdom of God by using Spirit-language, then Paul and Luke's concept of the Spirit cannot be analogous because Luke connects the Spirit and the kingdom in a limited way, as the source by which the kingdom is proclaimed; Paul on the other hand connects the two more fully, the Spirit is the vehicle by which the benefits of the kingdom-life comes to the believer. Thus, Cho concludes, the two authors have characteristically different concepts of the Spirit.

### A critical evaluation of Cho's argument

Before we turn to our critique of Cho's argument, it is appropriate to mention the strengths of Cho's work. Firstly, Cho should be credited for raising the initial question regarding the specific function of the Spirit within the kingdom of God. It has been over 35 years since Dunn specifically asked this question in his article '*Spirit and Kingdom*' and even until today the relationship is often assumed, but rarely is it clearly defined. Secondly and allied with this first point, Cho convincingly demonstrates Dunn's argument in the aforementioned article fails to adequately address the nuances and details raised by the last 35 years of research; Dunn's position stands in need of either correction, expansion, or both. Thirdly, by using the Jewish Intertestamental Literature as a gauge of first century Judaism's conceptual world-view, Cho demonstrates the importance this period has for the question of unity and diversity within the New Testament concerning the conceptual basis for understanding the Spirit. Fourthly, Cho does demonstrate the inseparable bond between the Spirit and the kingdom of God in both Paul and Luke's thinking about the Spirit; it is only in the 'how' the current debate must now answer. Finally, Cho should be praised for his clear format, providing the reader easy access to the nuances of his argument.

But questions remain. Do Cho's conclusions *necessarily* follow from his own research? Does he accurately represent those with whom he engages? What role does the question of 'unity and diversity' play in Cho's discussion? How did the ITP view the concept of the kingdom of God and what function was the Spirit to accomplish therein? How do Luke and Paul's eschatology factor into their concept of the Spirit and the kingdom of God? To these questions (and others) we will now turn.

#### 1. *The role of unity and diversity*

Ultimately, the aim of Cho's thesis (to what extent do Luke and Paul exhibit disu-

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26 Cho, *Spirit and Kingdom*, 197.

nity in regard to their concept of the Spirit?) places this study under a broader category attempting to answer the question of unity and diversity within the New Testament. Ironically, Cho uses the unity of the literature from the ITP to create a chasm of disunity between Luke and Paul; Luke reflects the 'dominant Jewish perspective' and Paul is an innovator going far beyond the limits allowed by his contemporary Judaism. The irony of using the Intertestamental literature in such a fashion should be apparent. *In arguing for a unified, coherent, and homogenous concept of the 'Spirit of prophecy' in the ITP, Cho affords more unity to the literature of the ITP than to that of Luke and Paul.*

This would be an almost inconceivable scenario when you consider the ITP spans over 400 years and represents various languages, geographical origins and ideologies, in addition to the many *diverse* cultural, historical, political and sociological contexts in which the authors lived, moved and wrote. While it is not impossible to have conceptual unity in such circumstances, it is highly unlikely that it would achieve greater heights of unanimity than two authors writing 30-50 years apart in the same language, who are rumored to have traveled and worked together, both write voluminously over the Spirit, both reference each other's names in their separate works, and in the end one ultimately writes a virtual hagiography about the other. All these facts hardly give evidence suggesting Paul and Luke were antagonists, much less ignorant of each other's theological positions. Moreover, with all the contemporary research regarding the 'Jewishness' of Paul since E. P. Sanders, it becomes even more difficult to believe that Luke would have dogmatically defended the Jewish concept of the Spirit with more veracity than Paul!

Needless to say, Cho's thesis suggesting the ITP provides a more harmoniously unified concept of the Spirit than do Luke and Paul, leaves one questioning the validity of this position; thus also the intended effect of using the unity of the ITP to place a chasm of diversity between Luke and Paul. The principles of unity and diversity within the New Testament should dictate the priority one gives to the unity of the ITP over and against that of the New Testament. Perhaps, the source of Cho's confusion originates in his failure to grasp the general idea of Turner's argument regarding the Spirit of prophecy's mediation of 'life-giving wisdom' within the ITP. This leads us to our next critique.

## *2. Cho's engagement with Turner, Dunn, and the historical exegetes*

Cho's primary dialogue partners are Max Turner and James Dunn. While he does quote a variety of authors, one would like to see a broader engagement with their particular ideas; especially those historical exegetes who have spoken specifically about Spirit and kingdom. One thinks of G. W. H. Lampe and Hans von Baer, both of whom have interesting points to contribute to Cho's topic. In addition, one can hardly speak about Luke's concept of the kingdom of God or the Holy Spirit and not discuss the work of Conzelmann and others who have advanced much nuanced accounts of Luke's concept of the eschaton.

However, because Cho does concentrate almost exclusively on these two au-

thors, it is appropriate to ask how well he grasps their arguments.<sup>27</sup> To begin, Cho lays the foundation to his entire argument by questioning Max Turner's conclusions regarding Intertestamental Judaism's concept of the 'Spirit of prophecy'. As Cho summarizes Turner's position, one will immediately notice a slight misrepresentation on Cho's part, "Turner maintains that one of the *main* features of the Spirit in this literature is a "life-giving function" as a soteriological agent."<sup>28</sup> This is not Turner's position. Turner gives secondary, or derivative, import to this 'life-giving function' of the Spirit in the ITP. It is not a '*main*' feature of the 'Spirit of prophecy' at all; rather the seeds are present for the eventual Christian appropriation of what some sectors of Judaism expected at the time of the outpouring of the Spirit at the eschaton.<sup>29</sup>

This initial misrepresentation of Turner's position establishes an easy target for Cho to shoot down; a straw man if you will. Since the 'Spirit of prophecy' is primarily of a charismatic nature (wisdom, revelation, and invasive speech), it becomes quite easy to show that these are indeed the primary functions of the Spirit in the ITP, as even Turner would admit!<sup>30</sup> Where Cho's argument begins to breakdown is when he tries to demonstrate the complete absence of the Spirit as the source of 'life-giving wisdom' in the ITP.

This becomes particularly evident in his exegesis of the relevant primary material. *Cho frames his argument by creating an artificial, and quite frankly, false antithesis between 'life-giving wisdom' and 'extraordinary wisdom', suggesting an 'either/or' scenario.* For example in his exegesis of *Jubilees* 40:5ff, Cho maintains the work of the Spirit in this passage, as the source of Joseph's extraordinary ability to interpret dreams and visions, demonstrates the singular function of the Spirit (i.e. the source of 'extraordinary wisdom').<sup>31</sup> This conclusion does not afford a complete picture.

Firstly, *Jubilees* 1:20-25 presents the function of the Spirit as the source of Israel's ability to be faithful to the law and purification, 'And I shall create for them a holy spirit, and I shall purify them *so that they will not turn away* from following me from that day and forever. *And their souls will cleave to me and to all of my commandments.*'<sup>32</sup> Therefore it is inaccurate to assert that the Spirit in *Jubilees* is solely the source of 'extraordinary wisdom'; as one can see from *Jubilees* 1:20-5 the Spirit is also the vehicle of moral purification and faithfulness.

Secondly, within the passage Cho cites (*Jub.*40:5ff) it becomes difficult to distinguish the work of the Spirit, as the source of 'extraordinary wisdom', from the

27 In the interest to be concise, this section will focus particularly on Cho's examination of Max Turner's argument and in a subsequent section, *Heilsgeschichte and Realized Eschatology* we will explore Cho's interaction with Dunn more fully.

28 Cho, *Spirit and Kingdom*, 14 (italics added).

29 Turner, *HSSG*, 20.

30 Max Turner, *Power from on High: The Spirit in Israel's Restoration and Witness in Luke-Acts* (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 2000), 92-104.

31 Cho, *Spirit and Kingdom*, 30-1.

32 Charlesworth, J. (ed.), *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha Vol. 2* (New York: Doubleday, 1985), 54 (italics added).

effect of the ongoing presence of Spirit on Joseph's moral actions and the kingdom as a whole. The pharaoh recognizes the ongoing presence of God's Spirit within Joseph (vs.5), therefore he gives him power to rule (vs.6); and Joseph does so with, 'no pompousness or arrogance or partiality (vs.8)'.<sup>33</sup> Clearly, Joseph's ability to rule righteously is a product of the Spirit's ongoing presence, as the Pharaoh himself notices in verse 5. Moreover, not only does Joseph experience these moral consequences of the Spirit's presence, but Egypt does as well, as we see in verse 9, 'there was no bribery because he ruled all the people of the land uprightly. And the land of Egypt was at peace before the Pharaoh on account of Joseph... And there was no Satan and there was no evil'.<sup>34</sup> This raises a key question, *where does one draw the line between the work of the Spirit and the ongoing effect of the continual presence of the Spirit?*

Cho's creation of a false antithesis, between 'extraordinary wisdom' and 'life-giving wisdom', therefore clouds the issue. His exegesis of *Jubilees* 40:5ff is just one of many examples where Cho uses this antithesis to exclude the soteriological effects of the work and ongoing presence of the Spirit in the ITP.

This brings us back to Cho's misrepresentation of Turner. It is not difficult to argue in the ITP the primary function of the Spirit was as the source of charismatic inspiration and empowerment, but it is extremely difficult to prove the absence of a distinct, soteriological, life-giving *consequence* of the ongoing presence of the 'Spirit of prophecy'. And this is Turner's main point in regards to the 'life-giving' function of the 'Spirit of prophecy': when the Spirit is consistently present there will also inevitably be soteriological effects.<sup>35</sup> That is why Turner ties the Spirit's functions so closely to the eschatological expectations of Israel's restoration when the Spirit will be poured out according to Joel 2:28-32. This is where Cho ultimately fails to engage the core of Turner's argument; and in so doing Cho misrepresents Turner's actual argument and ends up twisting Turner's thesis into something quite other than what Turner intends; this leads into our next critique.

### 3. Defining terms: 'life-giving wisdom', 'extraordinary wisdom', 'Kingdom of God'

Perhaps the most frustrating aspect of Cho's work is his failure to define his terms. This becomes particularly conspicuous as he makes the distinction between 'life-giving wisdom' and 'extraordinary wisdom'. He seems to define 'life-giving wisdom' on the basis of Menzies' definition, 'wisdom necessary for authentic existence before God';<sup>36</sup> vague as this is, never does he clarify what he means by 'extraordinary wisdom'. Only through his use of the term can one eventually deduce that he means charismatic/prophetic insight.

This vagueness becomes even more problematic as Cho seems to suggest

33 Charlesworth, 130.

34 Charlesworth, 130 (italics added).

35 Turner, *Power*, 133.

36 Cho, *Spirit and Kingdom*, 3.

Turner believes the Spirit to be necessary for salvation, in the same sense that forgiveness of sins or justification before God precedes salvation. Cho summarizes Turner's position this way, "Turner maintains that the Spirit in Intertestamental literature grants life-giving wisdom so that he mediates the wisdom of God at a *fundamental level as necessary for true life* (or fellowship) with God in the covenant community'.<sup>37</sup> This again is a gross distortion of Turner's understanding of 'life-giving' wisdom. Turner believes the Spirit, in the ITP, *accompanies* salvation but does not necessarily precede or even mediate salvation, so that he can say the Spirit in the ITP was "soteriologically necessary", but not necessary for salvation. The Spirit was expected to work in tandem with the Messiah and the people of God in a purifying and restorative manner to realize and perfect the salvation already established by God through his messiah.<sup>38</sup> This will have major effects in regard to Cho's latter development of Luke's Pneumatology, as it becomes more and more necessary for him to define exactly what he means by kingdom of God.

Cho introduces the concept of the kingdom in chapter Three, in his analysis of the Gospels and Paul's use of kingdom language. His basic contention is that Paul subsumes all kingdom-language under the guise of Spirit-language, so that life in the kingdom as the Synoptists understood it becomes synonymous with life in the Spirit for Paul.<sup>39</sup>

By making such a sweeping generalization and by failing to define Paul's concept of the kingdom, Cho oversimplifies the relationship between Spirit and kingdom in Paul. One clear piece of evidence proving this is an oversimplification (to assert Paul simply exchanged kingdom language for Spirit language) is to observe how Paul relates the two terms when he uses them in conjunction with each other.<sup>40</sup> Out of the seven times Paul uses the term 'kingdom of God' in the universally accepted letters, three of those times (Rom. 14:17; 1Cor 6:9-20; Gal 5:16-26) Paul uses the term 'Spirit' to characterize how life in the kingdom should look.

Let us take Romans 14:7 as an example, 'For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking, but of righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.' Here the 'joy in the Holy Spirit' characterizes one aspect of life in the kingdom, but this does not mean life in the kingdom is synonymous with life in the Spirit for Paul. *The Spirit composes one part of the entirety of the kingdom*, as Fee notes, '... Spirit people will inherit the kingdom.'<sup>41</sup> If Paul meant to use these terms synonymously then why does he make a distinction between the 'presentness' of

37 Cho, *Spirit and Kingdom*, 10 (italics added).

38 Turner, *Power*, 137

39 Cho, *Spirit and Kingdom*, 108.

40 Just this fact alone (that Paul uses these two terms in conjunction with each other) should speak against Cho's contention that Paul deliberately exchanged "kingdom language" for "Spirit-language".

41 Fee, G. D., *God's Empowering Presence: The Holy Spirit in the Letters of Paul* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1994), 453.

the Spirit and the future reality of the kingdom as he does in all three instances? Clearly Paul imagines the future kingdom to be characterized by the fullness of God's Spirit of which we only have the first installment (Eph 1:14). In sum, a lack of a clear definition of the term 'kingdom of God' leads Cho to assert that Paul subsumes all kingdom language under the guise of Spirit language. But on closer examination one can see Paul does not use the terms 'kingdom of God' and 'Spirit' synonymously, rather he subsumes one (the Spirit) under the whole of the other (the kingdom), which is exactly opposite to what Cho asserts. Cho is right to see the eschatological tension in Paul's use of kingdom language.<sup>42</sup> But it is also necessary to stress that the Spirit is the author of this tension.<sup>43</sup> For Paul the kingdom is a future reality, but this future reality is *partially* (not wholly or fully) realized in the present through the Spirit.

To briefly summarize the above argument, Cho fails to properly define his terms, which leads him to misconstrue both Turner and Paul. In other words, just as Cho's failure to define 'life-giving wisdom' led him to misconstrue Turner, his failure to define the term 'kingdom of God' leads him to misconstrue Paul as well. What would have been a helpful study, giving clarity to both terms ('kingdom of God' and 'life-giving wisdom'), would have been to analyze the ITP's expectation of the Spirit's function within God's eschatological rule. This brings us to our next critique.

#### *4. Heilsgeschichte and realized eschatology: a new age and a new proclamation: from 'Kingdom of God' to 'Jesus as lord of the kingdom'*

Luke's writings are unique in the fact that they are a two-volume work; one giving an account of the life, death and resurrection of the Messiah; the other describing the origins of the early church and her mission. The life, death, and ministry of Jesus has ushered the people of God into a new age, 'the last days' of Joel 2:28, where the Spirit will be 'poured out' on the people. Something has happened such that Luke recognizes the content of the Gospel proclamation has changed in the process: Jesus came preaching the kingdom, but the disciples and the early church came preaching Jesus as Lord of that kingdom (Acts 28:31).

Cho asserts the kingdom remains the central content of both Jesus and the disciples' proclamation,<sup>44</sup> but Paul has somehow uniquely altered this, the core content, of Jesus' message.<sup>45</sup> He demonstrates this mainly on statistical analysis of Paul's use of the term 'kingdom of God' in proportion to the Synoptists' use of Spirit. It is worth quoting him at length:

... it is striking to note the inverse ratio between the term kingdom in the Synoptics and the Spirit in Pauline corpus. While the term "kingdom of

42 Cho, *Spirit and Kingdom*, 67.

43 Turner, *HSSP*, 127-30; Dunn, 'Spirit and Kingdom', 138.

44 Cho, *Spirit and Kingdom*, 171.

45 Cho, *Spirit and Kingdom*, 61.

God” is referred to 92 times in the Synoptics and only 7 times in the Pauline corpus, the word “Spirit” occurs only 13 times in the former and 110+ times in the latter. *This proportionate distribution of data warrants investigation whether it may be inferred that Jesus' emphasis on the kingdom may have been expressed by Paul's doctrine of the Spirit.*<sup>46</sup>

There are two problems with this assertion. Firstly, Cho does not seem to take into account Luke's own portrait, which clearly denotes the development of the Gospel message before and after Pentecost. Similar to Paul's writings, Luke's exhibit the *same inverted ratio* of Spirit to kingdom references with the Gospel referring to the Kingdom 31 times and Acts only 6,<sup>47</sup> and inversely the Gospel refers to the Spirit 16 times and the book of Acts 54! *Clearly, based on statistical analysis alone, Luke displays the same transference in emphasis from kingdom language to Spirit language as does Paul.* This leads into our second but closely related point.

The reason for the change in emphasis (from kingdom to Spirit) in both Luke and Paul does not stem from an epistemological inversion of the terms ‘Spirit’ and ‘kingdom’ (as Cho asserts), rather it is the natural result of Pentecost. Cho does not seem to grasp the significant modification in the disciples’ proclamation of the kingdom after Pentecost from that of Jesus’ proclamation before Pentecost: *the content of the Gospel message has changed from Jesus announcing the ‘kingdom of God’, to the early church proclaiming ‘Jesus is Lord’ (Acts 1:21, 2:36, 10:36, etc).* This means that the central content of the early church’s proclamation was primarily ‘Jesus is Lord’ and secondarily the kingdom of God.<sup>48</sup> Dunn articulates this change clearest when he writes, ‘Where the Spirit had been so little bestowed (before Pentecost), the message of the kingdom was more appropriate. Where the Spirit had been bestowed in richer measure (after Pentecost), there was no need to speak in such veiled terms.’<sup>49</sup>

The significance for God's people being that the central focus has now changed: from one of *expectation*: ‘when is God going to decisively act in history to vindicate his people?’ to *realization*: ‘God has acted decisively in and through the person of Jesus Christ... our Lord’.<sup>50</sup> Jesus has now ushered in a new age, the ‘last days’, which will be characterized by the outpouring of the Spirit on all who call upon the name of the *Lord* (Acts 2:28-39). So there was an inevitable shift in emphasis from kingdom to Spirit because the Spirit now becomes the means through which the fullness of the future kingdom is partially realized in the present (*a là* Dunn and Turner). At this crucial point Cho fails to engage the core of Dunn's argument, emphasizing the eschatological significance of the

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46 Cho, *Spirit and Kingdom*, 61-2 (italics added).

47 I. H. Marshall, *Luke: Historian and Theologian*, (Exeter: Paternoster Press, 1970), 89.

48 R. Bultmann, *Theology of the New Testament* (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2007), 33, 71, 250, 307.

49 Dunn, ‘Spirit and Kingdom’, 140.

50 See Wright, N. T., *The New Testament and the People of God*, (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1992), 446.



events surrounding Pentecost and the coming of the messiah. Dunn most succinctly argues his position when discussing the significance of the Jordan event, 'Where the Pentecostal thesis breaks down is in its failure to grasp the fact that we are dealing here with events whose significance, at least for those who record them, lies almost totally in the part they play in salvation-history'.<sup>51</sup> Dunn has been accused of overemphasizing this point along with his division of distinct epochs; and perhaps these critiques have some legitimacy, but it is just as dangerous, if not more so, to completely disregard the eschatological significance and subsequent realization these events had for Luke and the early church. *It appears Cho would have Luke present the early church as not realizing the presence of the kingdom except as an exclusively future event.*<sup>52</sup>

So to conclude, Cho's assumption that Paul is a unique innovator of Spirit language, because he replaces kingdom language with Spirit language, is a somewhat untenable position. We can see this because *both* Paul and Luke, living in the 'last days', reflect this change in emphasis from 'kingdom language' to 'Spirit language'. This is evidenced not only in the inverse proportion of the use of these terms in *each* writer's work, but more importantly the modification of the central content of the disciples message ('Jesus is Lord') in Acts compared to that of Jesus in Luke's Gospel (the kingdom of God). 'Jesus is Lord' becomes the central content of the early church's proclamation and He is Lord precisely because he has ushered in these 'last days'; characterized by the pouring out of the Spirit (Acts 2:38-9). *The end result is that the Spirit becomes a central focus in both Paul and Luke because the Spirit is the means through which the kingdom is realized in the present (Turner and Dunn).*

##### 5. Does Cho's primary conclusion necessarily follow from his own research?

At a key point in Cho's argument he concludes, 'Paul makes a key and original contribution with his understanding that the Spirit becomes the source of life in the kingdom....'<sup>53</sup> The term 'original contribution' seems to imply that Paul was a pioneer in this type of thinking about the Spirit. Indeed Cho says as much in his introduction, 'Paul reformulates the Christian message... in *new terms, primarily by speaking of the Spirit in a new and more comprehensive way...*'<sup>54</sup> This assertion becomes extremely important for Cho's entire argument because from this point he will go on to argue that Luke is *not* an original thinker in regards to the Spirit and is dependent on the 'dominate Jewish pneumatological perception';<sup>55</sup> therefore, ultimately leading to his main conclusion: based on these differences one can assert Luke and Paul have divergent concepts of the Spirit.<sup>56</sup>

51 Dunn, *Baptism in the Holy Spirit*, 24.

52 Cho, *Spirit and Kingdom*, 182-5.

53 Cho, *Spirit and Kingdom*, 197.

54 Cho, *Spirit and Kingdom*, 11 (italics added).

55 Cho, *Spirit and Kingdom*, 196.

56 Cho, *Spirit and Kingdom*, 197.



So at some point it becomes very appropriate, and indeed necessary, to ask if it is reasonable to assume, as Cho does, that Paul was such an independent thinker and innovator of Spirit language. Is this necessarily true? On a superficial level this seems to be the only conclusion based on Cho's analysis of the ITP's concept of the 'Spirit of prophecy'. However, upon closer examination it seems Cho's own research contradicts this very important assertion regarding Paul's innovativeness. In his analysis of the ITP, Cho quickly dismisses an entire family of writings, who happen to also give the Spirit soteriological and indeed 'life-giving' characteristics. Cho eliminates their influence by claiming they represent, 'minor sapiential traditional sectarian groups in the midst of much larger Jewish groups.'<sup>57</sup> While this may be a true statement, it does not necessarily preclude the influence of the ideas circulating within these groups may have had on the early church; particularly when one realizes that they are especially close in date and geography! More to the point, here in these writings we see the foundation for the organic possibility for Judaism to give the Spirit life-giving and soteriological functions.

Clearly, this should put a dark cloud over Cho's claim that 'Paul makes a key and original contribution with his understanding that the Spirit becomes the source of life in the kingdom....'<sup>58</sup> It is just as plausible, if not more so, to assume if *the ideas* concerning the function of the Spirit, as a soteriological agent, within these 'sectarian' Jewish groups can also be detected in the writings of Paul, then perhaps *the ideas* within these 'sectarian' Jewish groups may have exerted more influence within broader Judaism and/or the early church than Cho and Menzies would like to affirm.<sup>59</sup> Moreover, clearly Paul was not such an independent thinker regarding the Spirit as one might assume.

## Conclusion

In the final analysis, we have seen five major difficulties with Cho's argument. Firstly, Cho gives disproportionate weight to the unity of the ITP's concept of the 'Spirit of prophecy' over and against that of the early church and Paul. This raises concerns regarding Cho's view of a homogenous, coherent view of the 'Spirit of prophecy' in the ITP, which will ultimately provide Cho with the basis for the rest of his subsequent assertions.

Secondly, it is pointed out that Cho does not engage with the historical exegetes, such as Lampe and Von Baer. But more importantly Cho misrepresents

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57 Cho, *Spirit and Kingdom*, 23.

58 Cho, *Spirit and Kingdom*, 197.

59 Contra to Menzies' assertion in *The Development of Early Christian Pneumatology*, (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1991), chps 11-14. Here, I merely wish to highlight the counterclaim. It is more reasonable to assert that *the ideas* articulated by the *Qumran* and *Wisdom* communities exerted more influence on broader Judaism and Christianity than Menzies allows, rather than assuming these groups' actual writings influenced specific NT authors (Paul) such as Menzies claims.

the core of his main dialogue partner's argument by misconstruing the emphasis Turner places on the 'life-giving' aspect of the 'Spirit of prophecy' in the ITP, setting up a 'straw man' argument, which becomes relatively easy to prove, but not necessarily accurate in its critiques. This naturally raises concern as to how well Cho has answered his leading question in chapter Two: is there the existence of a life-giving function associated with the Spirit in the ITP?

Thirdly, by not defining his terms, Cho further misconstrues Turner's concept of the 'life-giving' function of the Spirit by giving it salvific qualities on par with justification or forgiveness of sins; not something Turner intends at all. Then by not having a clear definition of the term 'kingdom of God', Cho misconstrues Paul as well, by oversimplifying the relationship between kingdom and Spirit in Paul's writings. These points raise concern on two fronts: (1) It casts more shadow on how well Cho has grasped the nuances of Turner's argument regarding 'life-giving wisdom'; (2) It gives us reason to question Cho's contention that Paul appropriates Spirit language as a synonym for kingdom language. It has been suggested that a better, more objective question, giving clarity to both 'life-giving wisdom' and the term 'kingdom of God' would be to ask, 'What was the contemporary Jewish expectation regarding the function of the Spirit within God's eschatological rule?'

Fourthly, Cho fails to appreciate the eschatological nuances within Luke's distinctive portrayal of the ministry of Jesus in contrast to the ministry of the disciples. By associating the disciples' proclamation too closely to Jesus' proclamation, Cho oversimplifies the unity of the content of the disciples' proclamation. The early Church's realized eschatology affected their proclamation in two distinctive ways: (1) The same shift in emphasis from kingdom-language to Spirit-language exists between Luke's Gospel and the Acts of the Apostles as exists between the Synoptists and Paul; (2) The actual content of the disciples' message changed from Jesus' 'kingdom of God', to the early church's proclamation of 'Jesus is Lord'. The above points should cast doubt on Cho's main assertion that Paul and Luke held divergent views of the Spirit's function in relation to the kingdom of God.

Fifthly, Cho's primary conclusion, Paul as unique innovator of Spirit-language, does not necessarily follow from his own research. Cho quickly dismisses the influence of the ideas within Wisdom literature and Qumran's thinking about the Spirit had on the broader Jewish milieu. In doing this, Cho does not take into account the presence of just such thinking within Paul! Rather than assuming Paul was an 'original contributor' to Christianity's use of Spirit-language, it seems more plausible to assume the broader influence these *ideas regarding the Spirit* had on early Christianity and first century Judaism's thinking about the Spirit. Or at the very least, Cho should acknowledge that there exists the organic possibility within Judaism to think about the Spirit soteriologically. This places further doubt on Cho's primary conclusion regarding the innovativeness of Paul's use of Spirit language.

These five points should raise concerns leading one to feel as if the final word regarding the relationship between the Spirit and the kingdom of God has yet to

be determined. What was the contemporary Jewish expectation regarding the function of the Spirit within God's eschatological rule? How do both Luke and Paul reflect this expectation in their eschatology and pneumatology? Did first century Judaism really have such a homogenous, unified concept of the 'Spirit of prophecy'? How did Luke imagine the kingdom of God to be present in and amongst the post-ascension community; if not through the Holy Spirit, then how? In the end, Cho's conclusions fail to convince; questions remain and concerns persist.

### Abstract

This article gives a critical response to Youngmo Cho, *'Spirit and Kingdom' in the Writings of Luke and Paul*. The article consists of four parts beginning with an 'introduction' in which the author gives a brief summary of the scholarly discussion within which Cho's work resides. This is followed by a detailed chapter-by-chapter summary of Cho's thesis. The author then raises five critical concerns in an effort to critically engage Cho's main argument. These concerns are then summarised in a concluding section.

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Youngmo Cho

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