

Abstract

In this thesis, I elucidate the description of the Spirit as gift in Acts (Acts 2:38, 8:20, 10:45, 11:17). I establish that gifts have an inherent sociability, or ability to initiate or sustain personal relations, developing this insight from sociological literature and the primary sources of the Greco-Roman world. This insight into the sociability of gifts leads to consider the sociability implicit in the description of the Spirit as gift in Acts. In this thesis, I argue that the sociability implicit in the description of the Spirit as gift is manifested in the Spirit influence on the community life described in the three summary statements (Acts 2:42-47, 4:32-35, 5:12-16). The Spirit empowers the witness, teaching, joy, and the signs and wonders of the early believers. Moreover, the early Jesus community receives the gift of the Spirit with gratitude, expressed through prayer and praise. The community share meals with Spirit-empowered great joy, while the communal sharing of the early Jesus community imitates the gift of the Spirit. The gift of the Spirit can be understood as a pre-emptive eschatological reward for generous gift-giving, which is promised by the Lukan Jesus. Finally, Luke portrays the gift of the Spirit as the status transcending attribute that enables a remarkable unity and the “sharing of all things.” Luke then describes the Spirit as gift to describe the Spirit initiating and sustaining the early Jesus community.