



Divine Empowerment: An Intertexture Analysis of Acts 2

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The purpose of this article is to conduct an intertexture analysis of Acts 2, to understand the passage as it relates to divine empowerment and leadership theory. Using socio-rhetorical criticism analysis, and more specifically, oral-scribal, historical, social, and cultural intertexture, we are able to identify unique layers within the text. This aids in developing a richer meaning to aspects of the text that individuals often overlook when reading. God, through the Holy Spirit, gives divine empowerment to help individuals develop specific leadership styles. This article builds the case for (a) where divine empowerment comes from, (b) how it manifests in authentic Christ-centered leaders, and (c) how it applies to transformational leadership. Transformational leadership involves leaders who use idealized influence, intellectual stimulation, individual consideration and inspirational motivation with the sole intent of developing the follower to accomplish what they once believed was impossible. The result is a follower who develops through (a) vision, (b) empowerment, (c) motivation, (d) morality, and (e) individual growth. When a follower is fully developed they begin to change others through the same process.

The Books

The process of conducting an intertexture analysis of Scripture involves not only looking at the current text, but also analyzing additional literature woven into and throughout the text. The researcher must be cognizant of historical, social, and cultural meanings and identify those aspects of the text as it represents layers of additional meaning; through this process, a richer, fuller, and deeper understanding of the discourse will begin to emerge (Robbins, 1994). There are three specific books used in an analysis of Acts 2: (a) Psalms, (b) Joel, and (c) Acts.

Psalms

The book of Psalms and other Old Testament books are woven throughout the New Testament (Luke 24:44, Matthew 22:43-44; Matthew 27:46; Acts 2:24-36; 13:29-39) and have influenced early Christian writings (DeSilva, 2004). These books have enhanced “New Testament scholars’ appreciation of the role the Psalms play in the creation of the literary ‘character’ of Jesus and in the self-definition of the early Christian movement”

(Daly-Denton, 2008, p. 181). When the Apostles were preaching and witnessing, they frequently quoted from the book of Psalms as undeniable proof that Jesus was the Messiah written about in the Old Testament. For example, in the book of Acts, Peter refers to Psalms 16:8-11 as proof that Jesus had to be raised from the dead (Deffinbaugh, 2011).

Joel

Biblical scholars believe that the book of Joel was written during 830s B.C. as words of encouragement for the hope of divine deliverance and restoration (Savelle, 2006) where the prophet ministered to king Joash in his godly (2 Kings 12:2) and ungodly years (2 Chronicles 24: 17-19; 24:21-22). The contribution that Joel makes to the New Testament is the concept of the Day of the Lord and provides several eschatological statements (Joel 2:1; 1 Corinthians 15:52), words (Joel 1:15; 2:1; 3:14; Matthew 24:32, Mark 13:29; James 5:8), and imagery (Joel 2:30-31; 3:15; Luke 21:25; Revelation 8:12) (Savelle, 2006). In the context of Acts 2, Peter refers to the book of Joel as proof that the Day of the Lord has come in his sermon at Pentecost (Acts 2:14-41; Joel 2:28-32).

Acts

Acts of the Apostles provides an account of the formation of the early church (Acts 2:42-47; 4:23-36, NIV), the empowerment of believers (Acts 7; 9:1-17) and the establishment of leadership (Acts 1:12-26; 6:1-7) to fulfill the Great Commission (Matthew 28:16-20). It is through the empowerment of individuals in which effective leadership begins to take hold (Jung & Sosik, 2002; Fuller, Morrison, Jones, Bridger, and Brown, 1999) and meaningful change occurs (Mawardi, 2003; Kotter, 1990). By conducting an intertexture analysis of Acts 2, which examines the establishment of the church on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2:1-47), which took place fifty days after Passover (Alexander, 1986), the layers of the discourse within the text can be examined in a manner that will reveal new insights and dynamics that normally would be overlooked (Robbins, 1994). By researching and observing how the various textures are woven together, we can use that information to develop a Christ-centered approach toward global leadership issues and theories that have a kingdom impact.

Method

Intertexture analysis is one aspect of a broader method called socio-rhetorical criticism. This type of analysis involves a researcher looking at a specific section of text and identifying key aspects between the author's written words and the other texts, historical events, social structure and culture nuances that have been woven into the work being studied (Robbins, 1994). As a result, this analysis provides a much deeper and richer interpretation of what is being revealed in the discourse. As an intertexture analysis is conducted on Acts 2, we will look at multiple textures within the writing: (a)

oral-scribal, (b) historical intertexture, (c) social intertexture, and (d) cultural intertexture.

Analysis and Findings

Oral-Scribal

Oral-scribal intertexture analysis involves looking at other texts that were available to the author and study the manner in which they were used (Robbins, 1994). Within this type of analysis there are three different approaches by studying the texts through comparing and contrasting their use. The approaches (see Table 1) involve: (a) recitation, (b) recontextualization, and (c) reconfiguration.

Recitation. Recitation focuses on how the discourse presents the text, either oral or written, within the discourse. This method involves the words being identical to the original text being woven into the current discourse. In essence, the author is simply reciting other texts word for word or leaving out some words that do not alter the meaning (Robbins, 1994). Within Acts 2, there are three instances of recitation: (a) Acts 2:17-21, (b) Acts 2:25-28, and (c) Acts 2:34-35.

Acts 2:17-21. As Peter is speaking to the crowd gathered in Jerusalem, he called for their attention (Acts 2:14) so he could explain the phenomenon of why people were speaking in tongues (Dummelow, 1936; Herrick, 2000; DeSilva, 2004). He claimed to have the answer and began to describe that the prophets (Dummelow, 1936; Herrick, 2000, DeSilva, 2004) had foretold the outpouring of the Spirit (Joel 2:28-32). Then immediately he recited Scripture that described the events the crowd was experiencing at that very moment (Acts 2:1-4).

Acts 2:25-28. As the crowd listened to what Peter was saying, he continued to offer even more evidence for the truth, through Scripture, that the events the crowd were experiencing was linked directly to identifying Christ as the Messiah (Dummelow, 1936). He recited passages from the book of Psalms that even King David knew of the events to come (Psalm 16:8-11) and that it was the resurrection of Christ, not David, that the Scriptures were referencing (Herrick, 2000; DeSilva, 2004).

Acts 2:34-35. Peter continues, after showing the validity of the Scriptures (Joel 2:28-32, Psalm 16:8-11), along with his personal account of seeing the resurrected Christ (Acts 2:32; Luke 24:12) that there is still additional proof that the Scriptures were referencing Christ. He mentions the ascension of Christ into Heaven and then recited Psalm 110:1, ending with the statement that Jesus is the Messianic King that the Jews have long been waiting for (Dummelow, 1936; Herrick, 2000; DeSilva, 2004).

Recontextualization. Recontextualization is a type of discourse that uses text from other areas of Scripture without telling the audience that these words are elsewhere in Scripture. This includes using texts verbatim, with replication, or even using the text (word, phrase or clause) in a new context (Robbins, 1994). There is very little use of recontextualization with Acts 2, as the Apostles were primarily using recitation to prove the validity as Christ being the Messiah (Acts 2:17-21; 2:25-28, 2:34-35). The closest example of recontextualization is in Acts 2:32-33. Upon reciting Scripture (Joel 2:28-33; Psalm 16:8-11), Peter then provides discourse on knowing that Christ is the Messiah. The audience has just heard the Scripture and now Peter is recontextualizing it, as it relates to the resurrected Christ (Acts 2:32-33).

Reconfiguration. Reconfiguration focuses on “restructuring of an antecedent tradition” (Robbins, 1994). Within Acts 2:29-31 and 2:33-34, the antecedent tradition is the concept of the Messianic King (Psalm 110). Peter refers to Psalm 110:1 to prove, once again, the divinity and Lordship of Christ as the Messianic King. Psalm 110:1 states “The LORD says to my lord; ‘Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet.’” The Psalmist is speaking about hearing God addressing a king who will be invited to sit next to Him in a place of honor. The meaning is Messianic in nature and it is in this context that people would have understood the Scripture (Dummelow, 1936).

Observations. Within the recitation for Scripture from Acts 2 compared to Joel 2:28-33 and Psalms 16:1-11, there are slight changes within the way the text is presented to the crowd; however, it does not alter the meaning. For example, Acts 2:17 reads, “In the last days, God says, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your young men will see visions, your old men will dream dreams.” Joel 2:28 reads, “And afterward, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your old men will dream dreams, your young men will see visions.” Acts 2:17 adds “In the last days, God says” and reverses the order in which old and young are mentioned. According to Gills Exposition of the Entire Bible (n.d.), Peter added the words “In the last days” as it has the same meaning as “afterwards.”

David Kimchi, a celebrated commentator with the Jews, observes wherever the last days are mentioned, the days of the Messiah are intended...This clause is added by Peter, and is not in Joel; and very rightly, since what follows are the words of God speaking in his own person (Acts 2:17, n.d.).

Another example of a minor addition in Acts 2:18 are the words “and they will prophesy.” Acts 2:18 states, “Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days, and they will prophesy.” Whereas, Joel 2:29 reads, “Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days.” Gills Bible Commentary (n.d.) states the reason for the addition is to show the effect of the Spirit being poured out upon the crowd.

Table 1

Oral-Scribal Analysis of Acts 2

New Testament	Old Testament	Approach	Identifying Statement
Acts 2:17-21	Joel 2:28-32	<i>Recitation</i>	"No, this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel" (Acts 2:16)
Acts 2:25-28	Psalms 16:8-11	<i>Recitation</i>	"David said about him..." (Acts 2:25)
Acts 2:34-35	Psalms 110:1	<i>Recitation</i>	"For David did not ascend to heaven, and yet he said..." (Acts 2:34)
Acts 2:32-33	Psalms 16:8-11 Joel 2:28-32	<i>Rcontextualization</i>	"God has raised this Jesus to life, and we are all witnesses of it. Exalted to the right hand of God, he has received from the Father the promised Holy Spirit and has poured out what you now see and hear" (Acts 2:32-33)
Acts 2:29-31 Acts 2:34-35	Psalms 16:8-11 Psalms 110:1	<i>Reconfiguration</i>	"Fellow Israelites, I can tell you confidently that the patriarch David died and was buried, and his tomb is here to this day. But he was a prophet and knew that God had promised him on oath that he would place one of his descendants on his throne. Seeing what was to come, he spoke of the resurrection of the Messiah, that he was not abandoned to the realm of the dead, nor did his body see decay" (Acts 2:29-31)
			"For David did not ascend to heaven, and yet he said, 'The

Lord said to my Lord: 'Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet' (Acts 2:34-35)

Historical Intertexture

The purpose of a historical intertexture analysis is to identify experiences, events, and even periods from the past that the author is referring to within the text (Robbins, 1994). Within Acts 2, there are four references (see Table 2) to historical events: (a) Feast of Weeks, (b) specific mention of Parthians, Medes, and Elamites, and (c) the foretold prophetic language of Joel and of David.

Feast of Weeks. The festival is known by a number of names like (a) Shavuot (DeSilva, 2004), (b) the feast of Unleavened Bread, (c) The Feast of Weeks, (d) the feast of Harvest, and (e) Pentecost (Burton, 2009). The festival does not fall on the same day of the week each year; however, Jews celebrate it seven weeks after the Feast of First Fruits. It is during this time which the Jews would remember the connection with Passover because Shavuot takes place exactly 50 days later. It is a time of giving rather than receiving. They are thankful for physical and spiritual freedom (Shavuot, 2011).

Parthians, Medes & Elamites. Dummelow (1936) states that these areas are countries that are well outside of the reach of the Roman Empire. This is the area where the Ten Tribes settled after the first captivity (2 Kings 17:6). These people might be descendents from Ezra, Daniel, and Nehemiah, or possibly Persians who converted to Judaism who have made the pilgrimage to Jerusalem to celebrate Pentecost with other Jews. The area that they came from is modern day Iran (Iran, n.d.), "The chief Jewish center here was Babylon, which, ever since the captivity of Judah, was famed for its rabbinical schools, and was for that reason regarded as part of the Holy Land" (Dummelow, 1936, p. 821).

Prophetic Language. The crowd at Pentecost would have been somewhat familiar with the prophetic words of Joel and David as the texts would have been read in Temple worship (Page, 2002). The belief of the Jews, at that time, was that David wrote Psalm 110 through divine inspiration. David could not have intended the text to be about him because he failed to literally ascend up to heaven; but rather, he was speaking of the Messianic King (Daly-Daly-Denton, 2008). Through the use of familiar historical events and figures, Peter was able to compile the first-ever sermon (DeSilva, 2004; Barclay, 1976) through the use of the texts of his time.

Table 2

Historical Analysis of Acts 2

New Testament	Old Testament	Reference	Meaning
Acts 2:1	Leviticus 25:15-20	Pentecost	Feast of Weeks
Acts 2:9	2 Kings 17:6	Parthians, Medes and Elamites	Empire out of the influence of Rome
Acts 2:17	Joel 2:28	Outpouring of the Spirit	Foretold prophecy of Joel
Acts 2:29-36	Psalms 16:8-11; Psalms 110:1	Resurrection & Ascension	Foretold prophecy of David

Social Intertexture

In social intertexture analysis, the researcher focuses on (a) concepts, (b) words, (c) phrases, and (d) practices that are relevant to individuals within a society. This can involve references to (a) status, (b) phrases, (c) roles, (d) where people are from, and (e) religious preferences (Robbins, 1994). In Acts 2, there are 16 references to social nuances that individuals of that time would have been familiar with (see Table 3).

Table 3

Social Analysis of Acts 2

Verse	Item
Acts 2:2	Blowing violent wind
Acts 2:3	Tongues of fire
Acts 2:4	Speaking in other tongues
Acts 2:5	God-fearing Jews
Acts 2:7	Are not these Galileans?

Acts 2:4	Fellow Jews, and all in Jerusalem
Acts 2:19	Signs and billows of smoke
Acts 2:20	Day of the Lord
Acts 2:22	Fellow Israelites
Acts 2:23	Wicked men
Acts 2:31	Realm of the dead
Acts 2:34	Heaven
Acts 2:35	Footstool for your feet
Acts 2:36	Ruler of all
Acts 2:40	Corrupt generation
Acts 2:42	Breaking bread

Cultural Intertexture

Cultural intertexture is mainly interested in the use of “symbolic words” (Robbins, 1994, p. 145) that groups of individuals would have completely understood without additional clarification. In Acts 2, there are two specific aspects (see Table 4) of culture that are mentioned within the text (a) Jewish culture, and (b) Roman culture.

Jewish culture. Jews at the time were aware of the significance of Pentecost and the implications it had in their relationship with God. The festival itself represents two very important events in Jewish culture: (a) hanking God for the spring harvest, and (b) the receipt of the Torah on Mount Sinai. There is a connection between the Passover (physical freedom and escape from Egypt) and Shavuot or Pentecost (Spiritual freedom through the receipt of the Torah). It is through this spiritual freedom that Jews understand how to relate to their Creator (Shavuot, n.d.). When the Spirit came upon the crowd in Acts 2, there was a significant spiritual meaning for the reader who was very familiar of the historical significance of Pentecost (DeSilva, 2004).

Roman culture. According to Martin (2010), in Roman society, drinking was used everywhere from medicine to religion; wine was the beverage of choice (p. 2). On special occasions, Romans were known for having festivals where they would engage in

excessive drinking (p 3). Likewise, the Roman dinner party was a means in which individuals would try to improve their social status (p. 7). There are four main reasons why it would be impossible for Jews to be accused of being drunk (Acts 2:13): (a) the event was taking place during the time most Jews worshiped, (b) people are not normally drunk during the day (1 Thessalonians 5:7), (c) large amounts of weak wine would have to be consumed to have the effects the onlookers were suggesting, and (d) it was Jewish tradition not to eat or drink anything until the third hour of the day – even during festivals (Acts 2:14, n.d.).

Table 4

Cultural Analysis of Acts 2

Verse	Culture	Meaning	Reference
Acts 2:1	Jewish	Pentecost	Come together in one place
Acts 2:5	Jewish	Pentecost	God-fearing Jews staying in Jerusalem
Acts 2:13	Roman	Effects of celebrating	Drinking wine
Acts 2:46	Jewish	Worship	Meeting at the temple courts

Leadership Empowerment in Acts 2

Within Acts 2, there are a number of principles that can be formulated based on the intertexture analysis of the passage. First, the ability for leaders within the early church to present the Gospel was a promise or covenant between Christ and the Apostles (Acts 1:8). Jesus would equip and provide for them through the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:4-5) with the tools that they could use to accomplish his vision (Matthew 28:16-20). Secondly, just as Pentecost was a celebration of spiritual freedom (Leviticus 23:15-20), all individuals from every nation (Acts 2:5-11) were able to experience the same freedom which could not of happened without divine empowerment (Shauff, 2006). Thirdly, when an individual has divine empowerment, they experience wisdom from God (Joel 2:28-33; Psalm 16:1-11; 110:1) to know when and how to use inductive and deductive reasoning (Damer, 2005; Acts 2:14-40). Most importantly, the Apostles never lost sight that the reason they were given a leadership role was to develop the follower to a point where they can experience a personal relationship with Christ (Acts 2:41-47).

Empowerment and Leadership Theory

Empowerment and active engagement involves a leader investing “in the follower role as expressed by high levels of activity, initiative, and responsibility” (Dvir, Avolio, & Shamir, 2002, p.737; Acts 2: 1- 47). Bass and Avolio (1990) believe that the role of a leader is to improve the followers’ abilities to develop critical thinking skills so they can become innovative and question the status quo. When a leader engages a follower in a manner that is just, right, and true, the follower begins to feel empowered and wants to turn the leader’s vision into reality (Bass & Steidlmeier, 1999; Acts 1:8; Acts 2:1-47). Empowerment is motivational and enabling in nature where a follower obtains a new understanding and begins a unique transformation process (Bass & Steidlmeier, 1999; Acts 2:41). When employees become empowered through social interaction (Acts 2:42-47), there is a significant correlation to inspirational motivation (Fuller, et al, 1999; Kark, Shamir, & Chen, 2003). It is from seeing the vision (Matthew 28:16-20) and how an individual fits within it (Bass & Riggio, 2006; Acts 2:1-47) that a follower truly begins to develop (Acts 2:14-40) in the manner that Christ has empowered through the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:1-12).

Transformational Leadership Theory

Hickman (2010) described transformational leadership as being not just a simple dyadic exchange, but rather a means of obtaining superior outcomes by using one or more of the four elements of the theory. Transformational leadership theory focuses specifically on how leaders motivate followers to go beyond current expectations (Bass & Riggio, 2006; Howell & Avolio, 1993; Acts 1:8), by focusing on challenging an individual to attain higher performance (Jung & Sosik, 2002; Acts 2:14-47). According to Yukl (2010), the goal of transformational leadership is “the followers feel trust, admiration, loyalty, and respect to the leader, and they are motivated to do more than they originally expected to do” (p. 275). The emphasis that a leader places on the follower is based on developing the individual in a manner that will cause the follower to grow personally (Dvir, et al., 2002; Acts 2:14-47) and, over time, be able to exhibit transformational leadership traits (Murphy & Drodge, 2004; Acts 3:1-9; 7:1-59; 8:26-40; 9:20-31). Transformational leadership also creates an environment where followers become inspired by a leader’s vision and goals for an organization (Whittington, Goodwin, & Murray, 2004). It is through the visioning process that followers are able to identify their role and how the work they perform fits within larger structure (Murphy & Drodge, 2004; Acts 2:41-47; 4:23-36). When a follower is fully developed, an organization will begin to experience dramatic changes ranging from improved financial (Barling, Webber & Kelloway, 1996) to organizational performance (Jandaghi, Matin, & Farjani, 2009). Follower development and performance are the primary outcomes of transformational leadership (Bass & Avolio, 1990, Avolio & Gibbons, 1988; Acts 1:8; 2:14-47; 3:1-9; 4:23-36; 7:1-59; 8:26-40; 9:20-31).

Conclusions

Authentic Christian Leadership is a gift given from God (Acts 1:8) with a purpose to equip individuals to focus on fulfilling the will of God and carrying out His vision (Matthew 28:16-20). In Acts 2, an account is given of the actions of Peter and the Apostles on the day of Pentecost who were bestowed with divine empowerment by God. As a result they were able to use inductive (Acts 2:16-21) and deductive (Acts 2:29-33) reasoning based on wisdom and knowledge given to them through the Holy Spirit. As the crowd became convicted (Acts 2:41), the reason for Christ's death and resurrection began taking root. The Apostles began to develop followers (Acts 2:42-47) in a similar manner as Christ developed them through transformational leadership. Divine empowerment and transformational leadership can have a significant impact on follower development in a number of ways: vision (Banerji & Krishnan, 2000; Matthew 28:16-20; Acts 2:14-47), motivation (Kirkpatrick & Locke, 1996; Acts 7:1-52), empowerment (Fuller, et al., 1999; Acts 2:14-47; 7:1-52; 9:20-31), performance (Jung & Sosik, 2002; Acts 2:14-40), and morality and ethics (Burns, 1978; Kohlberg, 1973; Acts 2:41-47). When individuals are equipped through divine empowerment (Acts 1:8) and begin to transform the lives of others (Acts 1:8; 2:14-47; 3:1-9; 4:23-36; 7:1-59; 8:26-40; 9:20-31), there is an opportunity to have a kingdom impact that will last for generations to come.

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