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## FROM SINAI TO JERUSALEM: Shema Yisrael and the Outpouring of the Holy Spirit in a Pentecostal Perspective

Henky Johansja

Ecumenical Theological Seminary, Jakarta, Indonesia

Email: johansjahenky@gmail.com

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### Abstract

This article explores the theological trajectory from *Shema Yisrael*—the foundational confession of Israel’s monotheism—to the outpouring of the Holy Spirit in Jerusalem as interpreted within the Pentecostal tradition. The background lies in the tension between Israel’s strict declaration of God’s oneness (שְׁמָא יִשְׂרָאֵל) at Sinai and the Pentecostal experience of the Spirit (πνεῦμα ἅγιον) that shaped the global church. The purpose of this study is to demonstrate that Israel’s monotheism is not rejected but fulfilled in the Pentecostal encounter, where Shema is reinterpreted through Christ and the Spirit into a relational and living confession. Methodologically, the research employs a qualitative theological approach using biblical analysis, patristic interpretations, and contemporary Pentecostal pneumatology to examine Shema in its historical, liturgical, and theological dimensions. The findings reveal that Pentecostal theology sees a continuity: Sinai’s written law transforms into the Spirit’s living law, affirming the Shema in a Christocentric and pneumatological way. The contribution of this study is to show that Pentecostal faith and practice offer a unique perspective in bridging Jewish monotheism and Christian Trinitarianism, presenting Shema as the foundation for global mission, transformative spirituality, and ecclesial identity empowered by the Holy Spirit.

**Keywords:** shema Yisrael; Pentecost; Holy Spirit; Israelite monotheism, Pentecostal pneumatology

### INTRODUCTION

The *Shema Yisrael* (“Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one”) from Deuteronomy 6:4 has long stood as the foundational declaration of Israel’s faith. It emphasizes the uncompromising oneness of God, shaping Jewish worship and ethical life across centuries.<sup>1</sup> Within Christian theology, the Shema becomes a significant dialogue point, especially when read alongside the doctrine of the Trinity. Pentecostalism, which emphasizes direct experience of the Holy Spirit, often engages this ancient confession within its pneumatological framework.<sup>2</sup> Thus, this article situates the Shema within the

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<sup>1</sup> Grace Aguilar, *Shema Yisrael. The Spirit of Judaism* (Legare Street Press, 2022), 14.

<sup>2</sup> Kenneth J. Archer, “Pentecostal Theology as Story: Participating in God’s Mission,” in *The Routledge Handbook of Pentecostal Theology*, ed. Wolfgang Vondey (New York, NY: Routledge, 2020), 45.

broader conversation of Pentecostal theology, focusing on its connection with the outpouring of the Holy Spirit.

Theological tension arises when the Shema's strong emphasis on divine unity encounters Christian Trinitarian confession. Some critics suggest that affirming Father, Son, and Holy Spirit undermines biblical monotheism,<sup>3</sup> while Pentecostal theologians argue for unity-in-diversity consistent with the Shema.<sup>4</sup> The Pentecostal emphasis on the Spirit does not deny God's oneness but highlights divine presence in transformative experience.<sup>5</sup> This tension requires a theological framework that honors both the Shema's integrity and the Pentecostal vision of Spirit-empowered life. Consequently, the debate over oneness and Trinity is not merely doctrinal but central to the identity of Pentecostal faith.

Scholars have long studied the Shema's role in both Jewish and Christian traditions. Hidalgo traces its interpretation through pre-modern history, demonstrating its central role in shaping monotheistic identity.<sup>6</sup> Brury Eko Saputra, however, argues that the Shema provides a hermeneutical framework for understanding Johannine oneness language, especially in John 10.<sup>7</sup> Lori A. Baron also examines how John's Gospel re-appropriates the Shema in light of Christological confession.<sup>8</sup> These studies suggest that the Shema's theological resonance extends beyond Judaism into Christian interpretation.

In Pentecostal theology, pneumatology plays a vital role in interpreting the Shema. Archer views Pentecostal theology as a participatory story in God's mission, shaped by Spirit-filled experiences.<sup>9</sup> Conradie further shows that ecumenical perspectives on Pentecostal pneumatology enrich understanding of the Spirit's role across traditions.<sup>10</sup> Marius Nel highlights the distinctives of Pentecostal hermeneutics, which stress

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<sup>3</sup> Marvin R. Wilson, *Our Father Abraham: Jewish Roots of the Christian Faith* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1989), 123.

<sup>4</sup> Gerald O'Collins, *The Tripersonal God: Understanding and Interpreting the Trinity* (New York, NY: Paulist Press, 1999), 88.

<sup>5</sup> Lee Roy Martin, "The Role of the Holy Spirit in Pentecostal Worship in the Light of John 4:20-26 and Ephesians 5:18-20," *Dunamis* 8, no. 1 (2023): 490.

<sup>6</sup> Esteban J. Hidalgo, "The Shema through the Ages: A Pre-Modern History of Its Interpretation," *Andrews University Seminary Student Journal* 2, no. 2 (2016): 18.

<sup>7</sup> Brury Eko Saputra, *The Shema and John 10: The Importance of the Shema Framework in Understanding the Oneness Language in John 10* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2019), 27.

<sup>8</sup> Lori A. Baron, *The Shema in John's Gospel* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2022), 54.

<sup>9</sup> Kenneth J. Archer, "Pentecostal Theology as Story," 47.

<sup>10</sup> Ernst M. Conradie, "Ecumenical Perspectives on Pentecostal Pneumatology," *Missionalia* 43, no. 1 (2015): 65.

experiential dimensions of the Spirit in engaging Scripture.<sup>11</sup> These contributions reveal how Pentecostals integrate classical confessions like the Shema with Spirit-centered worship and theology. Together, they provide the background for exploring Shema and Pentecostal pneumatology in dialogue.

This study seeks to answer how the Shema Yisrael can be faithfully interpreted within a Pentecostal perspective on the Holy Spirit. Specifically, it asks whether the confession of divine oneness can harmonize with Pentecostal experiences of the Spirit. The goal is to demonstrate that Pentecostal theology does not dismiss but rather reaffirms the Shema in the light of the Spirit's outpouring. In doing so, the article aims to bridge the theological tension between monotheistic confession and Trinitarian-Pentecostal experience. Ultimately, this inquiry contributes to a deeper understanding of Pentecostal identity within the wider Christian tradition.

This study employs a theological-literary method, focusing on textual analysis of the *Shema Yisrael* in dialogue with Pentecostal pneumatology. The approach combines historical-theological interpretation with contemporary Pentecostal hermeneutics, allowing Scripture and doctrine to inform each other.<sup>12</sup> The research also uses a pneumatological lens, emphasizing the role of the Holy Spirit in shaping interpretation and ecclesial identity within Pentecostal thought.<sup>13</sup> Finally, by engaging both classical sources and modern Pentecostal scholarship, the method aims to construct a contextual and integrative theological perspective.

## DISCUSSION

### The Shema Yisrael: Foundation of Israel's Faith

*Shema Yisrael* (שְׁמַע יִשְׂרָאֵל, "Hear, O Israel") first appears in Deuteronomy 6:4–5 as part of the Sinai covenant. The clause "יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ יְהוָה אֶחָד" affirms the exclusivity of YHWH as Israel's only God. Aguilar emphasizes that this text is not merely a theological declaration but a bond of identity rooted in Israel's covenantal history.<sup>14</sup> Hidalgo notes that the practice of reciting the Shema is attested in the pre-rabbinic period before 70 CE,

<sup>11</sup> Marius Nel, "Vital Distinctives of Charismatic and Pentecostal Churches' Hermeneutics," *Stellenbosch Theological Journal* 9, no. 1 (2023): 6.

<sup>12</sup> Esteban J. Hidalgo, "The Shema through the Ages: A Pre-Modern History of Its Interpretation": 15; Brury Eko Saputra, *The Shema and John 10: The Importance of the Shema Framework in Understanding the Oneness Language in John 10*, 33.

<sup>13</sup> Marius Nel, "Vital Distinctives of Charismatic and Pentecostal Churches' Hermeneutics": 8.

<sup>14</sup> Grace Aguilar, *Shema Yisrael: The Spirit of Judaism*, 22.

indicating its historical continuity.<sup>15</sup> Thus, the Shema functions as a foundational text that unites Israel's history and faith.

The Shema is also understood as *qabbalat 'ol malkhut shamayim* (קבלת עול מלכות שמים), that is, the acceptance of the yoke of the kingdom of heaven. Kim Huat Tan underscores that its twice-daily recitation signifies total commitment to God's authority over the life of the people.<sup>16</sup> Brury Eko Saputra shows how the Shema's framework is used in the Gospel of John to articulate Jesus' oneness with the Father.<sup>17</sup> This demonstrates that, from early on, the Shema's historical role transformed as it moved from Israel's liturgical life into Christian theological reflection. In this way, the Shema binds Jewish tradition while also serving as a bridge toward Christian faith.

Debate persists over the Shema's historical function within early communities. Hidalgo reads the Shema as an identity-forming prayer that differentiates Israel from the nations.<sup>18</sup> Wilson regards it as an expression of radical monotheism amid the polytheism of the ancient world.<sup>19</sup> Meanwhile, Rich stresses that the Shema shapes a community loyal to God alone.<sup>20</sup> The fact that Jewish children memorized the Shema from an early age highlights its role in forming historical identity.<sup>21</sup> Thus, the Shema emerges as a symbol of Israel's covenantal commitment in salvation history.

Theologically, the phrase “יְהוָה אֶחָד” is debated between metaphysical and practical meanings. Wilson stresses the ontological dimension: God is truly one, negating the real existence of other deities.<sup>22</sup> By contrast, Hidalgo argues the emphasis lies on exclusive worship—only YHWH is to be worshiped, irrespective of others' claims.<sup>23</sup> This debate exposes a tension between philosophical and liturgical readings. For Israel, the two converge in the concrete practice of worship.

Rich maintains that the Shema challenges the church to affirm undivided fidelity to the one God.<sup>24</sup> Kanitz reads the Shema as a literary motif that travels across traditions,

<sup>15</sup> Esteban J. Hidalgo, “The Shema through the Ages: A Pre-Modern History of Its Interpretation”: 15.

<sup>16</sup> Kim Huat Tan, “The Shema and Early Christianity,” *Tyndale Bulletin* 59, no. 2 (2008): 182.

<sup>17</sup> Brury Eko Saputra, *The Shema and John 10*, 27.

<sup>18</sup> Esteban J. Hidalgo, “The Shema through the Ages,” 18.

<sup>19</sup> Marvin R. Wilson, *Our Father Abraham*, 123.

<sup>20</sup> Cynthia Rich, *Shema (Hear) O Israel and the Church* (Xlibris, 2017), 41.

<sup>21</sup> Lori A. Kanitz, *A Literary Shema* (Eugene: Pickwick Publications, 2020), 33.

<sup>22</sup> Marvin R. Wilson, *Our Father Abraham*, 124.

<sup>23</sup> Esteban J. Hidalgo, “The Shema through the Ages,” 20.

<sup>24</sup> Cynthia Rich, *Shema (Hear) O Israel*, 55.

showing its reach beyond a narrowly Jewish context.<sup>25</sup> Chaza stresses the Shema's kingdom dimension, namely uncompromising loyalty to YHWH.<sup>26</sup> Thus, the Shema is not only dogma but a vision of faithful life. It unites theological confession with practical commitment.

In early Christianity, the Shema generated theological tension with the confession of Christ. Baron shows that the Gospel of John reinterprets the Shema christologically, emphasizing Jesus' unity with God.<sup>27</sup> Saputra adds that John 10 adopts the Shema's framework to explain the Father–Son relationship.<sup>28</sup> This debate marks a transformation: from Israel's monotheistic confession to a basis for Christological reflection. Consequently, the Shema becomes a central locus in Jewish–Christian dialogue.

The Shema is recited morning and evening as Judaism's principal prayer. Zlotowitz highlights the Shema as the core of daily liturgy that sets the rhythm of devotional life.<sup>29</sup> Hidalgo shows that the recitation functions in forming collective piety.<sup>30</sup> The Shema is therefore not merely a text but a living practice of faith. It establishes a consistent pattern of prayer within Israel's daily life.

The Shema also appears as a protective symbol, as seen in ancient amulets inscribed with its text.<sup>31</sup> This apotropaic use shows the Shema extending beyond liturgy to become a sign of personal faith and protection. Wiener notes that the Shema is embedded in everyday life as a communal symbol.<sup>32</sup> This confirms that the Shema is both prayer and an ethical identity marker. Fidelity to God is not only recited but guarded in lived practice.

The Shema commands love for God with the whole heart (*levav* לֵבָב), soul (*nefesh* נֶפֶשׁ), and strength (*me'od* מְאֹד). Jesus cites the Shema in Mark 12:29–30 and adds love of neighbor, linking faith to ethics.<sup>33</sup> Thus, the Shema is not only liturgy but moral law. Saputra argues that this love-dimension is a hermeneutical key for understanding the

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<sup>25</sup> Lori A. Kanitz, *A Literary Shema*, 36.

<sup>26</sup> Rufaro Chaza, *Shema O' Ekklesia: The Revival of Kingdom Culture*, (Independently, 2021), 19.

<sup>27</sup> Lori A. Baron, *The Shema in John's Gospel*, 54.

<sup>28</sup> Brury Eko Saputra, *The Shema and John 10*, 28.

<sup>29</sup> Meir Zlotowitz, *Shema Yisroel: The Three Portions of the Shema Including the Bedtime Shema* (New York, NY: Mesorah Publications, 1982), 11.

<sup>30</sup> Esteban J. Hidalgo, "The Shema through the Ages," 21.

<sup>31</sup> Noah Wiener, "The Shema' Yisrael: Monotheistic Jewish Amulet Discovered near Carnuntum," *Biblical Archaeology Review*, September 6, 2017.

<sup>32</sup> Noah Wiener, "The Shema' Yisrael," 3.

<sup>33</sup> Kim Huat Tan, "The Shema and Early Christianity," 187.

Father–Son relationship in John.<sup>34</sup> Likewise, Baron shows the Shema’s ethical relevance within a christological frame.<sup>35</sup>

The church fathers received the Shema as the basis of divine unity, integrating it into Trinitarian doctrine. Boaheng and Asibu-Dadzie note that patristic interpretation read Deuteronomy 6:4–5 as grounding unity within the plurality of divine persons.<sup>36</sup> O’Collins argues that the tripersonal God does not contradict the Shema’s monotheistic confession.<sup>37</sup> Udnes adds that contemporary Pentecostal practice honors the Shema while living it out in Trinitarian worship.<sup>38</sup> Thus, the Shema serves as a cross-tradition meeting point.

Volf interprets the Shema ecclesialogically, envisioning the church as the relational image of the Triune God.<sup>39</sup> Shay Morad underscores its relevance as a call to remain faithful amid adversity.<sup>40</sup> Rich emphasizes total fidelity as the Shema’s chief summons for the contemporary church.<sup>41</sup> Therefore, the Shema remains a source of reflection across eras. It ties monotheistic confession to relational practice.

The Shema is a text continuously reinterpreted by both Jews and Christians. Encyclopaedia Britannica identifies it as Judaism’s core prayer throughout history.<sup>42</sup> In Pentecostal contexts, the Shema is received as the confession that the one God is present in the fullness of the Holy Spirit. The confession “ה' יהוה אחד” continues to ground an irreplaceable faith stance. Thus, the Shema stands as a universal credo, uniting Israel’s faith with the church’s reflection across time.

### The Outpouring of the Holy Spirit in Jerusalem

The narrative of Acts 2 describes the dramatic outpouring of the *πνεῦμα ἅγιον* (*pneuma hagion*, Holy Spirit) in Jerusalem. Luke depicts the Spirit descending like a rushing wind (*ἤχος ὡσπερ φερομένης πνοῆς βιαίας*), filling the house where the disciples

<sup>34</sup> Brury Eko Saputra, *The Shema and John 10*, 30.

<sup>35</sup> Lori A. Baron, *The Shema in John’s Gospel*, 56.

<sup>36</sup> Isaac Boaheng and Ebenezer Asibu-Dadzie Jr., “Analysis of Patristic Interpretation,” *EHASS* 5, no. 11 (2024): 1822.

<sup>37</sup> Gerald O’Collins, *The Tripersonal God*, 91.

<sup>38</sup> Øystein Udnes, “Trinitarianism and Pentecostal Ecclesial Practices: A Review of a Hierarchical Model of the Trinity,” *Scandinavian Journal for Leadership & Theology* 10 (2023): 70.

<sup>39</sup> Miroslav Volf, *After Our Likeness: The Church as the Image of the Trinity* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 47.

<sup>40</sup> Shay Morad, *SHEMA: Always Keep the Faith* (Independentl, 2023), 27.

<sup>41</sup> Cynthia Rich, *Shema (Hear) O Israel*, 60.

<sup>42</sup> *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, “Shema,” March 6, 2025.

gathered. Kenneth interprets this event as God's missional story becoming embodied in the community's experience.<sup>43</sup> Simon Chan stresses that Pentecost functions as the ecclesial moment—where the Spirit constitutes the church.<sup>44</sup> Thus, the Pentecost event marks both a historical experience and a theological turning point.

The festival of Pentecost (*Shavuot* in Hebrew, שבועות) already carried covenantal significance as the commemoration of Sinai. Grace Aguilar emphasizes that Jewish devotion to Torah culminated in covenant renewal during this feast.<sup>45</sup> Marvin Wilson highlights that the roots of Christian Pentecost are inseparable from Israel's covenantal memory.<sup>46</sup> Meir Zlotowitz notes that reciting the Shema during Shavuot reinforced Israel's monotheistic confession.<sup>47</sup> Within this setting, Luke frames the Spirit's coming as the new covenant act of God.

The crowds in Jerusalem heard the disciples speaking in various tongues (γλωσσαι). Ernst Conradie suggests that the multilingual dimension of Pentecost represents the Spirit's inclusive and ecumenical impulse.<sup>48</sup> Isaac Boaheng emphasizes that the Pentecostal experience is a culmination of Wesleyan holiness traditions reinterpreted for a global church.<sup>49</sup> This indicates that Pentecost was never meant to be confined to one nation but to expand to all peoples. The *πνεῦμα ἅγιον* thus transforms Israel's feast into a universal mission. Accordingly, the Jerusalem event anticipates the worldwide spread of the gospel.

The Pentecost narrative deliberately echoes Sinai, where Israel first received the Torah. At Sinai, God's presence was manifested in fire, smoke, and voice (קול גדול), while in Jerusalem the Spirit descends as tongues of fire (γλωσσαι ὡσεὶ πυρός). Kim Huat Tan observes that this shift marks a transformation from written law to living Spirit.<sup>50</sup> Lori Kanitz interprets the Shema tradition as bridging Sinai's law with Jerusalem's Spirit, integrating continuity and transformation.<sup>51</sup> This symbolism underscores that Pentecost is the renewal, not rejection, of God's covenant.

<sup>43</sup> Kenneth J. Archer, "Pentecostal Theology as Story: Participating in God's Mission", 42.

<sup>44</sup> Simon K. H. Chan, *Pentecostal Ecclesiology: An Essay on the Development of Doctrine* (Deo Publishing, 2011), 17.

<sup>45</sup> Grace Aguilar, *Shema Yisrael: The Spirit of Judaism*, 25.

<sup>46</sup> Marvin R. Wilson, *Our Father Abraham*, 124.

<sup>47</sup> Meir Zlotowitz, *Shema Yisroel: The Three Portions of the Shema Including the Bedtime Shema*, 12.

<sup>48</sup> Ernst M. Conradie, "Ecumenical Perspectives on Pentecostal Pneumatology": 66.

<sup>49</sup> Isaac Boaheng, "From Wesleyanism to Pentecostalism," *PECANEP Journal* 1, no. 3 (2020): 54.

<sup>50</sup> Kim Huat Tan, "The Shema and Early Christianity": 186.

<sup>51</sup> Lori A. Kanitz, *A Literary Shema: Annie Dillard's Judeo-Christian Vision and Voice*, 39.

Aidan Davison frames Pentecost within the larger theme of *participation in God*. He argues that the Spirit's descent enables believers to share in divine life rather than merely obey external commands.<sup>52</sup> Gerald O'Collins likewise emphasizes that the Spirit reveals the tripersonal God in relational fellowship rather than abstract monotheism.<sup>53</sup> The Sinai law inscribed on stone is now internalized by the Spirit in the hearts of believers. This transition captures the prophetic promise of Jeremiah 31:33. The Jerusalem outpouring thus fulfills Israel's covenant trajectory.

Marius Nel notes that Pentecostal hermeneutics often read Acts 2 as the continuation of Israel's story rather than a rupture.<sup>54</sup> Shay Morad reflects on the Shema as a call to fidelity, now deepened through the Spirit's empowering presence.<sup>55</sup> Rufaro Chaza similarly interprets the Shema as a kingdom culture revived in the Spirit's renewal. This shows that Sinai and Jerusalem are not opposed but dynamically connected. In Pentecostal theology, Pentecost is the Spirit's Sinai for the church.

A key characteristic of Pentecost is glossolalia (*λαλεῖν ἑτέραις γλώσσαις*). Archer interprets tongues as narrative markers that Pentecostal communities continue to embody in worship and mission.<sup>56</sup> Stephenson classifies glossolalia as part of Pentecostal theology's experiential method that resists reduction to rational categories.<sup>57</sup> Lee Roy Martin highlights that tongues in worship serve as Spirit-enabled doxology fulfilling John 4:24's call to worship in spirit and truth.<sup>58</sup> Thus, glossolalia is both a sign and a practice of Spirit-filled life. It exemplifies God's empowerment of the weak through unexpected means.

Prophecy (*προφητεία*) also emerges as central in Acts 2, fulfilling Joel 2:28–29. Conradie argues that prophecy democratizes the Spirit's work across gender, age, and class.<sup>59</sup> Studebaker stresses that prophecy signifies participation in the fellowship of the

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<sup>52</sup> Aidan Davison, *Participation in God: A Study in Christian Doctrine and Metaphysics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019), 77.

<sup>53</sup> Gerald O'Collins, *The Tripersonal God*, 93.

<sup>54</sup> Marius Nel, "Vital Distinctives of Charismatic and Pentecostal Churches' Hermeneutics": 7.

<sup>55</sup> Shay Morad, *SHEMA: Always Keep the Faith*, 27.

<sup>56</sup> Kenneth J. Archer, "Pentecostal Theology as Story," 47.

<sup>57</sup> Christopher A. Stephenson, *Types of Pentecostal Theology: Method, System, Spirit* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 84.

<sup>58</sup> Lee Roy Martin, "The Role of the Holy Spirit in Pentecostal Worship": 489.

<sup>59</sup> Ernst M. Conradie, "Ecumenical Perspectives on Pentecostal Pneumatology": 72.

Triune God, revealing divine speech within the community.<sup>60</sup> This breaks hierarchical limitations and affirms the Spirit's distributive nature. In this way, Pentecost establishes prophecy as normative for Spirit-filled communities. The Jerusalem outpouring thus creates a prophetic people.

Pentecost also manifests divine power (*δύναμις, dunamis*). Johnny Loye King notes that Oneness Pentecostals in the Philippines emphasized Spirit power as proof of God's presence and authority.<sup>61</sup> Talmadge Leon French documents how early Pentecostal leaders interpreted Acts 2 as empowering interracial unity through the Spirit's work.<sup>62</sup> Øystein Udnes adds that Trinitarian Pentecostals see the Spirit's power as structured within relational practices of the church.<sup>63</sup> Power in Pentecost is therefore not domination but service. It redefines authority through Spirit-enabled mission.

Pentecost as ecclesiological: the Spirit constitutes the church as a worshiping and witnessing community.<sup>64</sup> Stephenson highlights that Pentecostal theology is shaped more by Spirit-experience than by systematic abstractions.<sup>65</sup> Volf argues that the Spirit enables the church to mirror the relational image of the Trinity in its communal life.<sup>66</sup> This means Pentecostal identity is grounded not in mere doctrine but lived experience. The Jerusalem event is thus paradigmatic for Pentecostal ecclesiology.

Isaac Boaheng argues that Pentecostalism's roots in Wesleyan holiness emphasize sanctification as integral to Spirit baptism.<sup>67</sup> Archer concurs, framing Pentecostal theology as a story that continues God's mission through Spirit-empowered witness.<sup>68</sup> Conradie stresses that Pentecostal pneumatology challenges ecumenical traditions to reconsider the Spirit's active role across denominations.<sup>69</sup> In this sense, Pentecost

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<sup>60</sup> Steven M. Studebaker, "Trinitarian Theology: The Spirit and the Fellowship of the Triune God," *Trinitarian Theology: The Spirit and the Fellowship of the Triune God*, in Wolfgang Vondey (Ed.), *The Routledge Handbook of Pentecostal Theology* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2020), 312.

<sup>61</sup> Johnny Loye King, *Spirit and Schism: A History of Oneness Pentecostalism in the Philippines* (PhD diss., University of Birmingham, 2016), 155.

<sup>62</sup> Talmadge Leon French, "Early Oneness Pentecostalism, Garfield Thomas Haywood, and the Interracial Pentecostal Assemblies of the World (1906–1931)" (PhD diss., University of Birmingham, 2011), 202.

<sup>63</sup> Øystein Udnes, "Trinitarianism and Pentecostal Ecclesial Practices: A Review of a Hierarchical Model of the Trinity": 71.

<sup>64</sup> Simon K. H. Chan, *Pentecostal Ecclesiology*, 28.

<sup>65</sup> Christopher A. Stephenson, *Types of Pentecostal Theology: Method, System, Spirit*, 101.

<sup>66</sup> Miroslav Volf, *After Our Likeness: The Church as the Image of the Trinity*, 52.

<sup>67</sup> Isaac Boaheng, "From Wesleyanism to Pentecostalism," 57.

<sup>68</sup> Kenneth J. Archer, "Pentecostal Theology as Story," 49.

<sup>69</sup> Ernst M. Conradie, "Ecumenical Perspectives on Pentecostal Pneumatology": 74.

expands theological horizons beyond sectarian boundaries. The Spirit's outpouring is both renewal and ecumenical gift.

Pentecost affirms that the Spirit experience is indispensable to Christian life. Davison insists that participation in God through the Spirit transforms metaphysics into lived communion.<sup>70</sup> Studebaker and O'Collins together emphasize that Trinitarian theology grounds Pentecostal spirituality in the fellowship of the three persons.<sup>71</sup> This situates glossolalia, prophecy, and power not as anomalies but as natural expressions of God's life shared with humanity. Thus, רוּחַ קֹדֶשׁ (Ruach ha-Qodesh, Holy Spirit) embodies divine intimacy. The Jerusalem outpouring therefore remains the heartbeat of Pentecostal faith and theology.

### Pentecostal Pneumatology and the Shema

The Pentecostal tradition reads *Shema Yisrael* (שְׁמַע יִשְׂרָאֵל) as an acknowledgment of "Esa" (יְהוָה) that does not exclude the relational reality of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The term *πνεῦμα ἅγιον* in the Acts of the Apostles is read not as a counterpoint to oneness, but as the living participation of the people in the one but relational God. Archer asserts that Pentecostal theology is the "story" of the community's participation in God's mission, brought to life by the Spirit.<sup>72</sup> Chan adds that the church is produced by the Spirit (*ecclesia per Spiritum*), so that the unity of the church reflects divine unity without erasing personal distinctions.<sup>73</sup> Davison articulates this as "participation in God," in which the Spirit brings the community into God's communicative life.<sup>74</sup>

Conradie shows that Pentecostal pneumatology is rich for ecumenical dialogue because it emphasizes the work of the Spirit that transcends denominational boundaries. This reinforces the reading of the Shema as a confession that invites shared faithfulness to the one God, rather than narrow exclusivism.<sup>75</sup> Zlotowitz recalls the liturgical roots of the Shema in the prayer life of Israel—framing a faithfulness that the church then re-

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<sup>70</sup> Aidan Davison, *Participation in God: A Study in Christian Doctrine and Metaphysics*, 95; Talmadge Leon French, "Early Oneness Pentecostalism, Garfield Thomas Haywood, and the Interracial Pentecostal Assemblies of the World (1906–1931).

<sup>71</sup> Steven M. Studebaker, "Trinitarian Theology," 314; O'Collins, *The Tripersonal God*, 95.

<sup>72</sup> Kenneth J. Archer, "Pentecostal Theology as Story: Participating in God's Mission", 40–50.

<sup>73</sup> Simon K. H. Chan, *Pentecostal Ecclesiology: An Essay on the Development of Doctrine*, 30.

<sup>74</sup> Aidan Davison, *Participation in God: A Study in Christian Doctrine and Metaphysics*, 97–104.

<sup>75</sup> Ernst M. Conradie, "Ecumenical Perspectives on Pentecostal Pneumatology": 66.

reads.<sup>76</sup> In the Hebrew Christian faith, the Shema becomes a constructive "bridge" of monotheism for Trinitarian relationships. The Shema as a pattern of faithful living—a perspective that is in harmony with Pentecostal spirituality based on obedience to the Spirit.<sup>77</sup>

"Triune God" as a *tripersonal God* who does not negate the unity of Shema, but explains it relationally. Pentecost borrows this intuition:  $\text{יהוה אחד}$  (Echad) is not arithmetic singularity, but perfect and communicative unity. Udnes reviews Pentecostal ecclesial practices that liturgically embody the Trinitarian relationship without losing focus on unity.<sup>78</sup> Shema with relational ecclesiology: the church as the "image" of divine relations—a practical implication of Shema in a Spirit-filled community. Stephenson then emphasizes Pentecostal methodology: the experience of the Spirit informs the theological system, not the other way around.<sup>79</sup>

Within the framework of the Shema, the Holy Spirit (  $\text{רוח קדוש}$  ) is understood as the presence of the one living God, not a separate entity from the divine unity. Martin shows that worship in the Spirit (John 4:24; Eph 5:18–20) affirms the Shema at the level of experience—faithfulness manifested in Spirit-driven liturgy.<sup>80</sup> Fellowship (*koinonia*) with the Triune God as the horizon of pneumatology; the experience of the Spirit confirms that unity is communicative. Pneumatology that shapes the church:  $\text{πνεῦμα ἅγιον}$  composes the body of Christ as a witness to the presence of the one God.<sup>81</sup> Archer calls it the participation of the people in God's mission—the "living proof" of the Shema in history.<sup>82</sup>

Historically, the Shema emphasizes the exclusivity of worship, not merely abstract metaphysics; this is consistent with the Pentecostal commitment to worship centered on YHWH. The Shema functions as a cross-traditional motif, thus open to being reinterpreted

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<sup>76</sup> Meir Zlotowitz, *Shema Yisroel: The Three Portions of the Shema Including the Bedtime Shema*, 27-30.

<sup>77</sup> Marvin R. Wilson, *Our Father Abraham: Jewish Roots of the Christian Faith*, 122–125; Grace Aguilar, *Shema Yisrael. The Spirit of Judaism*, 27.

<sup>78</sup> Øystein Udnes, "Trinitarianism and Pentecostal Ecclesial Practices: A Review of a Hierarchical Model of the Trinity": 65–81, at 70–71.

<sup>79</sup> Miroslav Volf, *After Our Likeness: The Church as the Image of the Trinity*, 58-59 Christopher A. Stephenson, *Types of Pentecostal Theology: Method, System, Spirit*, 104-109.

<sup>80</sup> Lee Roy Martin, "The Role of the Holy Spirit in Pentecostal Worship in the Light of John 4:20–26 and Ephesians 5:18–20": 489.

<sup>81</sup> Steven M. Studebaker, "Trinitarian Theology: The Spirit and the Fellowship of the Triune God", 96-97; Chan, *Pentecostal Ecclesiology*, 32.

<sup>82</sup> Kenneth J. Archer, "Pentecostal Theology as Story," 47–49.

in Christological and pneumatological terms. The call for total fidelity resonates strongly with Pentecostal spirituality, which demands obedience to the leading of the Spirit.<sup>83</sup> Boaheng (and Asibu-Dadzie) review patristic readings of the Shema as a sufficient basis for articulating the Trinity.<sup>84</sup> Davison helps to stitch this dialectic together through the category of “participation,” restoring unity as a relationship of sharing in divine life.<sup>85</sup>

Saputra shows how the Shema framework helps us understand the language of “oneness” in John 10 (ἐγὼ καὶ ὁ πατήρ ἓν ἔσμεν / “I and the Father are one”).<sup>86</sup> The Gospel of John weaves the Shema into its Christological confession—the oneness of God is understood through the work and identity of the Son. The early tradition read the Shema without negating Christology; this was not a rejection of monotheism, but its fulfillment.<sup>87</sup> Thus, the Spirit (πνεῦμα) reveals Christ in a Shema-consistent way: unity is not weakened, but illuminated by the Father–Son relationship. In this regard, Wright offers a useful devotional reflection that binds the Shema and Christ's followers in the practice of faith.<sup>88</sup>

Distinctive Pentecostal hermeneutics: Scripture is read in light of the experience of the Spirit and community life, not merely as a propositional framework. This is relevant to Shema: the confession of “Oneness” is proven in the obedience of a Spirit-filled community in the real world. The Oneness tradition emphasizes “oneness” sharply; internal dialogue within the Pentecostal family demands biblical and historical sensitivity so that Shema is not narrowly reduced.<sup>89</sup> The early dynamics of Pentecostalism emphasized the power of the Spirit for cross-racial reconciliation—the ethical fruit of divine oneness. Conradie assesses the Pentecostal accent on the Spirit as an ecumenical contribution that enriches the conversation among churches.<sup>90</sup>

“Theology of the Name,” which in the Pentecostal tradition is often understood as the locus of divine presence; this can be placed alongside the Shema as an exclusive

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<sup>83</sup> Lori A. Kanitz, *A Literary Shema: Annie Dillard's Judeo-Christian Vision and Voice*, 54-61; Esteban J. Hidalgo, “The Shema through the Ages: A Pre-Modern History of Its Interpretation”: 13–34, at 18; Cynthia Rich, *Shema (Hear) O Israel and the Church*, 37-39.

<sup>84</sup> Isaac Boaheng and Ebenezer Asibu-Dadzie Jnr., “Analysis of Patristic Interpretation of the ‘Shema’ in Deuteronomy 6:4–5”: 1822.

<sup>85</sup> Aidan Davison, *Participation in God*, n.p.

<sup>86</sup> Brury Eko Saputra, *The Shema and John 10: The Importance of the Shema Framework in Understanding the Oneness Language in John 10*, n.p.

<sup>87</sup> Lori A. Baron, *The Shema in John's Gospel*, n.p.; Kim Huat Tan, “The Shema and Early Christianity”: 186–187.

<sup>88</sup> Matthew Wright, *Christian Thoughts on the Hebrew Shema* (Independently, 2019), n.p.

<sup>89</sup> Marius Nel, “Vital Distinctives of Charismatic and Pentecostal Churches’ Hermeneutics”: 10-11; Johnny Loye King, “Spirit and Schism: A History of Oneness Pentecostalism in The Philippines”.

<sup>90</sup> Ernst M. Conradie, “Ecumenical Perspectives on Pentecostal Pneumatology”: 74.

confession to YHWH. Amulet artifacts inscribed with the Shema mark the Shema as a sign of identity and protection—a historical witness to the faithfulness of the people.<sup>91</sup> The liturgical rhythm of the Shema (morning–evening) shapes the habitus of faithfulness. This invites us to maintain faith (Shema) in the struggles of life—its resonance is evident in the Pentecostal spirituality of based on testimony.<sup>92</sup> Chaza interprets "Kingdom culture" as the ethos of the Shema brought to life by the Spirit in community.<sup>93</sup>

Encyclopaedia Britannica places the Shema as the core prayer of Judaism—the foundation of historical monotheism that continues to live on.<sup>94</sup> In the Pentecostal horizon, the confession of *יהוה יהוה* is understood in line with participation in the life of God through the Spirit, binding the church to relational fidelity. O'Collins and Studebaker help ensure that the articulation of the Trinity preserves unity as a mystery of shared love, not destroyed.<sup>95</sup> Archer and Chan close the circle by affirming the church as a community of mission—the Shema that "walks," moved by the Spirit in the world.<sup>96</sup> Thus, the Shema is not the antithesis of the Trinity, but the nadir of relational monotheism lived out by *the πνεῦμα ἅγιον*.

### From Sinai to Jerusalem: A Theological Trajectory

Mount Sinai became the center of God's covenant with Israel, the place where the written law (*תורה*) was given to the people. The law bound Israel in loyalty and became the basis for the formation of national identity. The Shema was born from this context as an exclusive acknowledgment of the one God. God's presence was marked by fire, clouds, and a shaking voice. All of this reinforced the strict monotheism that characterized the faith of Israel.<sup>97</sup> Sinai not only presented the law, but also the experience of God's powerful presence. Israel was commanded to love God with all their heart, soul, and strength. This command affirms a total and comprehensive covenant relationship. However, the written

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<sup>91</sup> David Reed, "Theology of the Name", 233–235; Noah Wiener, "The Shema' Yisrael: Monotheistic Jewish Amulet Discovered near Carnuntum".

<sup>92</sup> Meir Zlotowitz, *Shema Yisroel: The Three Portions of the Shema Including the Bedtime Shema*; Shay Morad, *SHEMA: Always Keep the Faith*, 41-44.

<sup>93</sup> Rufaro Chaza, *Shema O' Ekklesia: The Revival of Kingdom Culture*.

<sup>94</sup> The Editors of *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, "Shema".

<sup>95</sup> Steven M. Studebaker, "Trinitarian Theology: The Spirit and the Fellowship of the Triune God," 102-105; O'Collins, *The Tripersonal God*.

<sup>96</sup> Kenneth J. Archer, "Pentecostal Theology as Story," 40–50; Simon K. H. Chan, *Pentecostal Ecclesiology: An Essay on the Development of Doctrine*, 34-45.

<sup>97</sup> Grace Aguilar, *Shema Yisrael. The Spirit of Judaism*, 22; Marvin R. Wilson, *Our Father Abraham*, 123.

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law remained external and was often broken by the people. This created a longing for a deeper transformation.<sup>98</sup>

From a Pentecostal perspective, Sinai is seen as the initial stage in the plan of salvation. The law served to prepare the way for the coming work of the Spirit. The experience of the law taught the importance of faithfulness, but at the same time revealed the limitations of humanity. Therefore, Sinai is seen as the beginning of a trajectory toward Jerusalem. From the written law, the people were prepared to receive the living law in the Spirit.<sup>99</sup> Jerusalem became the center of transformation through the events of Pentecost in Acts 2. The disciples were filled with *πνεῦμα ἅγιον* and spoke in languages they did not know. This event marked the transition from the written law to a direct experience of God. The power of the Holy Spirit formed a new community that lived and testified. Jerusalem became the place where God was present in His power.

Pentecost also demonstrates the universal inclusivity of God's work. The languages heard indicate that the good news applies to all nations. The Holy Spirit extends the scope of Israel's Shema to the whole world. The unity of God remains intact, but is now lived out in cultural diversity. This event reveals the one God in a global mission.<sup>100</sup> For the early Pentecostal community, the outpouring of the Holy Spirit was a sign of God's power that unites humanity. That unity is realized through faith in Christ as well as through the work of the Spirit. The Gospel of John understands the Shema in the light of the Holy Spirit, affirming the relationship between the Father and the Son. The Shema framework is used to explain Christological unity in the experience of the Spirit. Thus, Jerusalem reinterprets the Shema in a pneumatological dimension.<sup>101</sup>

Pentecost is understood as a continuation of the Shema confession. God remains one, but that oneness is now experienced in the fullness of the Spirit. The Trinity does not negate monotheism, but rather reveals it relationally. The people no longer simply read the law, but experience God personally. This confirms the continuity between Sinai and Jerusalem. The Shema emphasizes total loyalty to God, and Pentecost fulfills this through

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<sup>98</sup> Esteban J. Hidalgo, "The Shema through the Ages": 15; Meir Zlotowitz, *Shema Yisroel: The Three Portions of the Shema Including the Bedtime Shema*, 11; Kenneth J. Archer, "Pentecostal Theology as Story", 43.

<sup>99</sup> Isaac Boaheng, "From Wesleyanism to Pentecostalism": 55; Christopher A. Stephenson, *Types of Pentecostal Theology: Method, System, Spirit*, 84.

<sup>100</sup> Kenneth J. Archer, "Pentecostal Theology as Story," 43; Simon K. H. Chan, *Pentecostal Ecclesiology: An Essay on the Development of Doctrine*, 28.

<sup>101</sup> Lori A. Baron, *The Shema in John's Gospel*, 54; Brury Eko Saputra, *The Shema and John 10*, 27.

participation in the life of the Spirit. Worship and witness become new ways of living out the Shema. The one God is no longer merely acknowledged cognitively, but experienced in liturgy and mission. This transformation expands the meaning of monotheism into spiritual practice. Thus, the Holy Spirit becomes the proof of living oneness.<sup>102</sup>

This transformation also fulfills the Old Testament prophecy about the law being written on the heart. The Shema remains the foundation, but is now internalized through the Holy Spirit. Faithfulness to God is manifested in real experience, not just external rules. Pentecost reinterprets Sinai through the lens of participation in the Spirit. The one God is present in the fullness of His power. Pentecost is understood as the fulfillment of God's promise prophesied by the prophet Joel. The Holy Spirit is poured out on all people without distinction. This shows God's faithfulness to Israel as well as openness to all nations. The promise rooted in Sinai now reaches its peak in Jerusalem. Thus, Pentecost realizes the one God in a universal horizon.<sup>103</sup>

The church is understood as the fulfillment of that promise. A new community is formed as a reflection of the living divine relationship. In the church, God's promise is not only understood theoretically, but experienced in fellowship. Pentecost shows that God's covenant continues in a new form. The church is the concrete manifestation of God's faithfulness.<sup>104</sup> The Shema remains the core of faith, but is now read in the light of the Holy Spirit. The identity of Israel is expanded to become the identity of God's new people. God's promise is confirmed through the experience of the Spirit in daily life. From Sinai to Jerusalem, God proves His faithfulness to His people. Pentecost is the culmination of this theological trajectory.

### **Implications for Pentecostal Faith and Practice**

Pentecostal worship reinterprets *the Shema Yisrael* as an acknowledgment of the one God, present in the relationship between the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. In worship, the congregation does not merely repeat a declaration of monotheism, but experiences the real presence of God. Martin emphasizes that worship in the Spirit confirms the unity

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<sup>102</sup> Kenneth J. Archer, "Pentecostal Theology as Story," 47; Simon K.H. Chan, *Pentecostal Ecclesiology: An Essay on the Development of Doctrine*, 30.

<sup>103</sup> Ernst M. Conradie, "Ecumenical Perspectives on Pentecostal Pneumatology": 74; Shay Morad, *SHEMA: Always Keep the Faith*, 30.

<sup>104</sup> Miroslav Volf, *After Our Likeness*, 52; Øystein Udnes, "Trinitarianism and Pentecostal Ecclesial Practices: A Review of a Hierarchical Model of the Trinity": 72; *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, "Shema".

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of faith with a transformative dimension of experience. The Shema demands complete loyalty, and Pentecostal worship responds to this through expressions of the power of the Spirit. Thus, the Shema is lived out as a relational reality in community worship.<sup>105</sup> Saputra and Baron assert that the framework of the Shema helps explain the Christological unity in John 10, which then resonates in Pentecostal worship. Baron adds that the Gospel of John reinterprets the Shema to emphasize the real communion of the Father and the Son in the work of the Spirit. In this context, Pentecostal worship does not separate unity and relationship, but combines them. Archer also mentions that the experience of worship is participation in the mission of the one God. Therefore, the reinterpretation of the unity of God strengthens the pneumatological dimension of worship.<sup>106</sup>

The Shema begins with the command "Hear" (שמעו), but Pentecostalism expands it into the command "Tell" to all nations. Conradie refers to the outpouring of the Spirit as an ecumenical movement that transcends ethnic and cultural boundaries. Pentecostal hermeneutics views mission as a continuation of the Shema, not a break from it. Kanitz sees the Shema as a cross-traditional motif that opens space for global witness. Thus, Pentecostal mission becomes the actualization of the Shema in the world.<sup>107</sup> The Wesleyan-Pentecostal tradition links the Shema with the universal call to mission. Volf adds that the church, as the image of the Triune God, is called to live in open relationship with the world. Therefore, faithfulness to the Shema is translated into contextual global witness.<sup>108</sup> The Pentecostal church is defined by Spirit-led mission, not merely structure. From hearing the word at Sinai, the people are now called to preach the gospel to the whole earth.

Pentecostalism emphasizes the Holy Spirit as a transformative power that changes the lives of believers. Stephenson says that Pentecostal theology is rooted in experience, not just a propositional system. Participation in God enables profound change in human beings. Boaheng adds that baptism in the Holy Spirit is closely related to the call to holy

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<sup>105</sup> Lee Roy Martin, "The Role of the Holy Spirit in Pentecostal Worship in the Light of John 4:20–26 and Ephesians 5:18–20": 489; Cynthia Rich, *Shema (Hear) O Israel and the Church*, 41.

<sup>106</sup> Brury Eko Saputra, *The Shema and John 10*, 27; Lori A. Baron, *The Shema in John's Gospel*, 54.

<sup>107</sup> Ernst M. Conradie, "Ecumenical Perspectives on Pentecostal Pneumatology": 67; Marius Nel, "Vital Distinctives of Charismatic and Pentecostal Churches' Hermeneutics": 11-13.

<sup>108</sup> Isaac Boaheng, "From Wesleyanism to Pentecostalism": 55; Miroslav Volf, *After Our Likeness: The Church as the Image of the Trinity*, 52.

living. Thus, the Shema, which is , demands that faithfulness be manifested through a holy life led by the Spirit.<sup>109</sup> The power of the Holy Spirit in early Pentecost also shaped the ethical dimension, including cross-racial reconciliation. King points out that in the Oneness tradition, the Holy Spirit is seen as the absolute sign of faithfulness to the name of God. The Holy Spirit as an expression of God's oneness in human life. Fellowship with the Triune God is the basis for ethical change in the people.<sup>110</sup> Thus, the Holy Spirit is present not only as a supernatural power, but also as a renewer of daily life.

In the context of the modern church, Shema reminds us of unity in faith amid diversity. Udnes emphasizes that Pentecostal liturgy brings the Trinity to life in a practical way. Wright adds that Shema remains the devotional foundation for the Christian community. Through prayer led by the Holy Spirit, the church finds unity that transcends institutional boundaries. This unity of faith becomes a tangible witness before the world.<sup>111</sup> The Shema also confirms the importance of the power of prayer and witness in the life of the modern church. Pentecostal worship channels the faithfulness of the Shema through Spirit-filled prayer and prophetic witness.<sup>112</sup> In this case, faithfulness to the one God is practiced through global mission. The Holy Spirit moves the church to witness, pray, and build unity. From Sinai to the modern era, Shema remains alive in the practice of Pentecostal faith.

## CONCLUSION

The relationship between *Shema Yisrael* and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit reveals a theological continuity from Sinai to Jerusalem. Israel's strict monotheism is not rejected, but rather fulfilled through the Pentecostal experience that brings God into personal presence. In Christ and the Holy Spirit, the unity of God appears as a living and relational unity. The Church reinterprets the Shema not only as a doctrinal confession, but also as a real experience of God.

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<sup>109</sup> Christopher A. Stephenson, *Types of Pentecostal Theology: Method, System, Spirit*, 84; Aidan Davison, *Participation in God: A Study in Christian Doctrine and Metaphysics*, 77.

<sup>110</sup> Talmadge Leon French, "Early Oneness Pentecostalism, Garfield Thomas Haywood, and the Interracial Pentecostal Assemblies of The World (1906–1931)", 202; Johnny Loye King, "Spirit and Schism: A History of Oneness Pentecostalism in The Philippines", 155.

<sup>111</sup> Matthew Wright, *Christian Thoughts on the Hebrew Shema*; Øystein Udnes, "Trinitarianism and Pentecostal Ecclesial Practices: A Review of a Hierarchical Model of the Trinity": 70.

<sup>112</sup> Kenneth J. Archer, "Pentecostal Theology as Story: Participating in God's Mission", 47; Simon K. H. Chan, *Pentecostal Ecclesiology: An Essay on the Development of Doctrine*, 30.

Shema discovered that the Pentecostal perspective affirms a trajectory of faith: from Shema to Christ, from Christ to the Holy Spirit, and from the Holy Spirit to the global church. Pentecost affirms that the one God continues to work in the world through the power of the Spirit. The church is called to live out this faith in worship, witness, and cross-cultural mission. This reflective invitation confirms that faithfulness to the one God is realized in the power of the Holy Spirit. From Sinai to today, the people are called to live faithfully to the same God, who reveals himself in the fullness of his love.

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