

ENGAGE

- This is the third and final week on the topic of healing. It will include the Work of the Holy Spirit and the Prayer and Practice of Faith
- The below reading addresses thoughts and aspects of the Holy Spirit and faith as shown throughout Luke as well as in Acts, which was written by the same author.

EXAMINE**The Holy Spirit in Luke's Gospel**

In the Old Testament there is much to learn of the activities of the Holy Spirit, even from as early as the second verse of Genesis, where "The Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters," as God's work was about to commence to prepare the earth for man's habitation. The Spirit of Jehovah came upon men like Samson and David for the accomplishment of His will, and even upon a wicked man like Balaam to compel him to speak the words of God. Then there are prophecies concerning Messiah, such as that read by the Lord in the synagogue of Nazareth, and that of [Isaiah 11](#), "The Spirit of Jehovah shall rest upon Him, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of Jehovah."

The Holy Spirit and the Remnant

At the beginning of Luke's Gospel there is brought into evidence the godly remnant of Israel, among whom were the parents of John the Baptist. It is of no passing interest to observe that both parents and son of that devout family are spoken of as being filled with the Holy Spirit. The promise as to John was probably unique, "He shall be filled with the Holy Ghost, even from his mother's womb" ([Luke 1:15](#)). Elizabeth, filled with the Holy Spirit, speaks of the blessing of Mary ([Luke 1:41-45](#)); and Zacharias, filled with the Holy Spirit prophecies of John's mission, and of the coming visit of "the Day-spring from on high" ([Luke 1:67-80](#)).

To Simeon, just and devout, and waiting for the consolation of Israel, the Holy Spirit had revealed that he should not see death until he had seen the Lord's Christ. The remnant was not without God's mind and God's care. The Holy Spirit who was upon Simeon gave to him this remarkable revelation about the coming of the long expected Messiah. But Simeon was also directed in his movements by the Holy Spirit, for it was by the Spirit he came into the temple when Jesus had been brought there by His parents, and his prophetic words, and his expression of holy delight, evince the Spirit by which he spoke.

Here then we have the Holy Spirit filling God's people, resting upon them, revealing God's mind to them, directing their movements, and speaking through them; yet all this is clearly what marked God's ways with His people in the Old Testament times; the Holy Spirit did not as yet indwell any, for this was reserved for the time when the work of the cross would be completed, and the Holy Spirit would come as the promise of the Father to indwell, seal and anoint His

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saints, and be the earnest to them of His promises and inheritance; and form the one body, and dwell in God's House.

"The Holy Spirit shall come upon thee"

Mary was one of the godly remnant of Israel in whom the Spirit of God was acting, but in what was unique. The Holy Spirit was upon Simeon as it had been upon David and others before him, but the coming of the Spirit on Mary was for the coming into the world of the Son of God. The words of the angel to Mary are sublime, "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall over-shadow thee: therefore also that Holy Thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God" ([Luke 1:35](#)).

The Holy Spirit was giving effect to many of the prophetic Scriptures, such as "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given" ([Isa. 9:6](#)), but especially to that of [Isaiah 7:14](#), "Behold a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call His Name Immanuel." It was the fulfilling of the type of the Meat Offering of [Leviticus 2](#), the unleavened cakes of fine flour mingled with oil.

"He shall baptize you with the Holy Spirit"

These words were uttered by John Baptist to proclaim the greatness of Jesus ([Luke 3:16](#)). John's ministry made a great impression on the minds of those who heard him, even if they did not all heed his words; and many were wondering if John was the promised Messiah. The faithful servant of the Lord left the people in no doubt as to this. His mission was to baptize with water, but the One to whom he witnessed, and who soon would be presenting the testimony of God to them, was mightier than John, and he was unworthy to unloose the latchet of His shoes.

Only a divine Person could baptize with the Holy Spirit, so that John not only spoke of the might of Jesus, but of His deity. While giving this bright testimony to Jesus, the Baptist could not know all that lay before Jesus before He would baptize men with His Spirit. It would not be on earth that the Lord would do this, but from His place of exaltation at the Father's right hand, after He had accomplished the great work of redemption on the cross.

"The Holy Spirit descended . . . as a dove upon Him"

This action of the Holy Spirit, in [Luke 3:22](#), reminds us of the dove that found no place for the sole of her foot, and returned to the ark, when the flood of waters covered the face of the earth. All around was death and devastation, and the only place the dove could find to rest was the ark that sheltered Noah and his house. The Son of God had come into a scene of death, where man lay under the judgment of a righteous and holy God, and upon none of Adam's race could the Spirit of God rest. True, the Holy Spirit came upon those through whom God was acting, but there never had been such a manifest token of God's delight and favour, for the Spirit "descended in a bodily shape like a dove upon Him." God was giving visible evidence as to His delight in the Man of His pleasure; and the character of the dove no doubt manifested the features that would be in evidence in Jesus here below.

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With the visible evidence there was also the Father's voice, declaring that Jesus was His beloved Son in whom all His pleasure was found. Only upon such an One could the Holy Spirit come in this manner, sealing Him as God's Own, and anointing Him for the mission with which God had entrusted Him. Here the whole Trinity is found, the Son in Person as Man upon earth to do the will of God, the Father publicly witnessing to the Person of the Son, and the Spirit upon the Son as the power for His testimony to the Father in this world.

Jesus Full of the Holy Spirit

In the opening verse of Luke 4 Jesus is brought before us as the vessel of the Spirit of God, and the vessel is full. John presents the Son as come to bear witness to the Father, but in Luke the Lord is seen as Son of Man come to do the will of God, and all that He does is by the Spirit of God. There is, as it were, nothing of self, but a vessel filled of God to carry out His desires in all things. Other vessels were to be filled with the Spirit, as had been the pious family of Zacharias, but there had never been such a vessel as this.

The Holy Spirit in *bodily form* was upon Him, for here was a vessel of infinite capacity to receive the Holy Spirit personally, so that the fulness of the Godhead dwelt in Him. And yet the vessel was full, for *all* the divine fulness was there. This is how the Lord as Man comes from the Jordan, shortly to emerge from the place of testing to public ministry, that in Him might be set forth God's thoughts for the blessing of men.

Jesus is led by the Holy Spirit

The same verse in which Jesus is brought before us as full of the Holy Spirit presents Him as "led by the Spirit into the wilderness." Not only was He led into the wilderness, but while in the wilderness He was led by the Spirit, the One subject to God's will in all things, not asserting Himself, but in meek and lowly submission to God *led by* the Spirit so that all might be wrought in the Spirit's power for the glory of God and the blessing of mankind.

It is noticeable that in Matthew's Gospel the same act is viewed in its kingly aspect, for "Jesus was carried up into the wilderness by the Spirit" (Matt. 4:1); but in Mark, where God's perfect servant is brought before us, "Immediately the Spirit driveth Him into the wilderness" (Mark 1:12). The design of each Gospel is clearly set forth in the manner of the Spirit's action in relation to the temptation of the Lord.

Jesus returns in the power of the Spirit

Satan had readily overcome the first man, Adam, but he had found the Second Man entirely different, for there was nothing in Him to which his temptations could appeal. A Man who was entirely given up to the will of God, thinking only of God and not of Himself, the tempter had never met before, and all his attempts to seduce Him from the path of obedience to God proved fruitless, and the enemy was compelled to leave Him. The nature of the Second Man

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was of fine flour mingled with oil, the Holy Spirit entering into every thought, desire, and movement of His life.

What power there was in the simple obedience of Jesus; it overcame the one who had brought the whole human race into bondage, and held them in slavish fear. Coming from the scene of His triumph, the power of the Holy Spirit was at once in evidence in His works and words, so that "there went out a fame of Him through all the region round about" ([Luke 4:14](#)). Had Satan triumphed in the wilderness the Lord Jesus never could have carried out His mission; the strong man had to be bound in the wilderness with the fetters of God's Word, so that the Stronger Man might, in His service to God, spoil him of his goods.

"The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me"

Before any of the Lord's works of power are recorded in Luke, the power of His ministry is brought before us. In chapter 4, on returning from the temptation, "He taught in their synagogues, being glorified of all" ([Luke 4:15](#)). His words, not His works, are noticed here. It is the same in the verses that follow, when He comes to Nazareth, and reads from the Book of Isaiah. After the reading, He says, "This day is this Scripture fulfilled in your ears," and then "all bare Him witness, and wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of His mouth" ([Luke 4:21, 22](#)).

His ministry, as anointed by the Spirit of God, was a ministry of grace. Here we learn that the Spirit upon Him anointed Him for His mission; the anointing setting Him apart for the carrying out of what had been given Him to do. Priests, prophets and kings had been anointed for God, and at the command of God, but there had never been such a mission to fulfil as this. Isaiah had prophesied of it in the detail of which the Lord reads at this time; and it was carried out with a perfection and fullness that glorified God, and brought the richest of blessing to the sons of men.

But how sad it was to find such deadly opposition to the vessel filled with the Holy Spirit, who had come to do them naught but good. They marveled at the words of grace, but called in question the glory of His Person, only seeing in Him the son of Joseph. Then when He reminds them that although the divine blessing was available to their fathers, only strangers of the Gentiles had benefited from it, they rose up against Him and sought to kill Him. Such is man, thoroughly exposed in his distance from and hatred to the God of richest grace manifested in Jesus.

The Gift of the Father

As in John's Gospel, so here in [Luke 11:13](#), the Holy Spirit is spoken of by the Lord as the gift of the Father. The Father had in grace given His only Son, and after the Son returned to heaven, having accomplished what had been given Him to do, the Father, caring for His children, would give them the richest possible gift, His own Holy Spirit. The Spirit was the promise of the Father,

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and the disciples were bidden to await His coming: but no doubt during the waiting period the disciples would ask for the promised Spirit.

Blasphemy against the Holy Spirit

"There is a sin unto death" ([1 John 5:16](#)) relates to a Christian proving himself unfit to live any longer on earth in testimony to the Son of God, and being taken home prematurely to heaven. Apostates, who having embraced Christianity, and deliberately turn their back on it, cannot be renewed to repentance ([Heb. 6:4-8](#)), but will come under the unsparing and eternal judgment of God. The awful sin of blasphemy against the Holy Spirit, attributing the work of the Holy Spirit to Satan, has no forgiveness. How very solemn it is that the work of grace and power in Jesus for the blessing of men should be spoken of as having a diabolical origin! Those who say this declare their origin — and seal their own judgment ([Luke 12:10](#)).

The Holy Spirit shall teach you

In [Luke 12:12](#), the teaching of the Holy Spirit has to do with answering in the time of trial, but in John's Gospel it is very much more comprehensive. But this aspect is most encouraging for the people of God, and the practical results in the Acts show how the power of God is manifested, as when the leaders of Israel "saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marveled" ([Acts 4:13](#)); and again, with Stephen, "they were not able to resist the wisdom and the Spirit by which he spake" ([Acts 6:10](#)). Whatever the circumstances, whatever the conditions, in which the Christian is found, he can rely on the help of the Spirit of God to give the right answer. It is indeed the Sword of the Spirit that enables us to triumph in the conflict of good against evil.

Faith in the Gospel of Luke

09 Nov , 2011Share

This post is part of a series on [faith in the New Testament](#).

[H]ere is a look at our third book in the New Testament filtering through all the examples we see of the word faith. This post will look at the twelve examples we see in the Gospel of Luke with a brief commentary on each.

Luke 5:20

When Jesus saw their faith, he said, "Friend, your sins are forgiven."

Luke includes the same story we saw in [Matthew 9:2](#) and [Mark 2:5](#). Your faith is shaped by the people around you.

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Luke 7:9

When Jesus heard this, he was amazed at him, and turning to the crowd following him, he said, "I tell you, I have not found such great faith even in Israel."

Here again we see the centurion from [Matthew 8:10](#). Mark didn't include this story in his Gospel. This is a powerful example of faith as a virtue, and we see Jesus bragging about this man's faith to the people in the crowd. Each time I read the example of the Centurion I am envious of his faith, and of Jesus' response to it.

Luke 7:50

Jesus said to the woman, "Your faith has saved you; go in peace."

Again we see faith as a virtue instead of a gift, but here we see it in a story found only in the Gospel of Luke. Jesus dines with a Pharisee and a woman pours perfume on his feet. She isn't healed physically, but Jesus responds to her gift by telling her that her faith has saved her.

Luke 8:25

"Where is your faith?" he asked his disciples. In fear and amazement they asked one another, "Who is this? He commands even the winds and the water, and they obey him."

The same story as [Matthew 8:26](#) and [Mark 4:40](#). The people closest to Jesus are rebuked for not having a healthy faith, whereas people like the centurion (7:9) are commended for their great faith.

Luke 8:48

Then he said to her, "Daughter, your faith has healed you. Go in peace."

The same story as [Matthew 9:22](#) and [Mark 5:34](#). Again, we see that her healing is a result of her faith. Like we've seen in the other two Gospels so far, Jesus seems to be taking the focus off of Himself and placing onto this woman.

Luke 12:28

If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today, and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, how much more will he clothe you—you of little faith!

This example is found only in Luke. It's another example of Jesus addressing little faith and again we see that He is addressing His own disciples about it!

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Luke 17:5-6

The apostles said to the Lord, "Increase our faith!" He replied, "If you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can say to this mulberry tree, 'Be uprooted and planted in the sea,' and it will obey you.

Another story found only in Luke, we see a great request from Jesus' disciples. This is the first tangible example that I've seen that could be used to argue faith as a gift. They desire more of it and so they ask Jesus for it. Interestingly, Jesus responds by talking about what their faith would allow them to do.

Luke 17:19

Then he said to him, "Rise and go; your faith has made you well."

This is from a story where Jesus heals ten lepers and is only found in Luke. Like we've seen many times so far, Jesus credits the man's healing on his faith alone.

Luke 18:8

I tell you, he will see that they get justice, and quickly. However, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on the earth?"

This is a question that Jesus asks only in Luke. This is also the question that prompted this sermon I preached on faith. Depending on your view of God's foreknowledge, Jesus could be wondering how much faith (as a virtue) people will choose.

Luke 18:42

Jesus said to him, "Receive your sight; your faith has healed you."

This story is also found in Matthew 20 and Mark 10. It is another example of healing from faith.

Luke 22:32

But I have prayed for you, Simon, that your faith may not fail. And when you have turned back, strengthen your brothers."

This interchange is only found in Luke. Jesus prays for Peter's faith not to fail? If Peter's faith is up to God alone (faith as a gift), then this is odd. If faith is up to Peter (faith as a virtue), then we see that Jesus is telling Peter that after he disowns him he needs to choose faith again.

Conclusion

Here are a few things we see by adding Luke's Gospel to this discussion:

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- faith can exist in community
- often Jesus rebuked His disciples for little faith and highlighted other people for their great faith
- there are a lot of unique faith examples found only in the Gospel of Luke
- most of the healing examples that Jesus does are attributed to the individuals' faith
- while the disciples request for Jesus to give them more faith could be argued for faith as a gift, there are many more examples for faith as a virtue

Questions

1. When does the believer indwelled with the Holy Spirit?
2. Is there a difference between the baptism of the Holy Spirit and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit?
3. Who holds the gift of healing? The individual or the Holy Spirit?
4. Why do we perceive one person to have the gift of healing as opposed to another?
5. What does the Bible say about the believer's role in the prayer of healing/
6. What part does the person who prays faith have to do with the outcome of the prayer?
7. How can a person grow in their faith?

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