

Commentary on Luke's Gospel

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INTRODUCTION

Introduction.

When I was teaching in a comprehensive school in England I was once called on to take a class of fifth formers for a one off RE (Religious Education) class. They greeted me quite cynically on my arrival, although with no hostility, and made it quite clear that they thought that religion was purely speculative. What grounds, they asked, could there ever possibly be for accepting it? And besides, there was no proof that Jesus ever existed. They were not interested in anything that I had to say.

So I commenced by saying, ‘well, let us look at the facts’. At least that brought a reaction. Their instant (and totally expected) reply was, ‘there are no facts. It is all just people’s beliefs’. To this I replied, ‘OK. I will write a fact on the board and you can then tell me whether it is a fact or not.’ I then proceeded to write on the board, ‘The Gospels exist.’ Of course they immediately began to say that that did not prove anything, but I pointed out that I was not suggesting that it proved anything about the Gospels (that is discovered by reading them sympathetically). All I wanted them to agree to was that they did exist. At last I got them to admit that it was true. In the end they admitted that whether they contained truth or not, they did exist. After all I had a copy of them with me. There was the first fact.

I then went on to point out that those Gospels contained teaching which was universally admired around the world. Wherever they reached the teaching within them was acknowledged by most thinking people, if not all, to be that of a 'master', indeed, a moral genius. This was not disputable. This too was a fact. They now had two facts. I then asked them where that teaching had come from. It had not existed in the previous century, and yet here it was suddenly arising in 1st century AD. What then was its source? Either we had to posit a number of moral geniuses who all wrote at the same time and pretended that what they wrote was spoken by someone else, (a unique event in the history of the world), or we had to posit that there was one moral genius of whose teaching they all wrote. One thing was sure it was not the production of a committee. Such unique gems do not result from committees. And had anyone even begun to manipulate it, its moral genius would have been lost. We know we have the genuine teaching of Jesus because if it had not been recorded accurately it would have been obviously spoiled. So now we had the fact that in 1st century AD there walked this earth a unique figure whose teaching is contained within the Gospels.

Then I pointed out that it did not matter what name we gave him. All we needed to see was that within that teaching that living genius had made claims that in any but a madman would be impossible. He had claimed to be the unique and only Son of God (e.g. 20.1-18), and that although He would leave this world through death He would one day come in glory to gather those who were His to be with Him for ever. Now such a claim could be made by a religious fanatic or a madman. But this was no religious fanatic or madman. He was surrounded by religious fanatics, and He alone remained calm. Every word He spoke revealed sanity and moral purity and perfection. Read His teaching for yourself. If He was not sane, no one was. This too was a fact, for these teachings were not just added on, they were interwoven within all His teaching. They were an essential part of it.

So now they had three facts where previously they had had none, firstly that the Gospels exist, secondly that they contain a moral teaching second to none spoken by someone who actually lived by them, and thirdly that He claimed that He had uniquely come from God, was looked at uniquely by God, and that He had come to fulfil God's will in a unique way. We will see more of this in the Gospel.

Thus I left them to think about something that they had never realised before. There were facts and they needed to think on them. And that is what the Gospel of Luke is all about. If you are not already a believer read it carefully and ask yourself, 'From where did this man have these things? Who was He'. For Luke is not just a history, it is a living reproduction. And it reveals Someone Who was 'out of this world'. And for your own sake, not for mine, you need to ensure that you come to the right conclusion about Him.

The Construction of the Gospel.

As with Acts which is its second instalment, Luke's Gospel appears to be carefully constructed. Luke says that he wrote his Gospel 'in order'. And that is certainly true for it is split into eight sections, beginning at the commencement of His life and ending with His death, each of which ends with a final telling phrase which can stand by itself. These phrases are as follows;

- . 'And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man' (2.52).**
- . 'And He was preaching in the synagogues of Judea' (4.44).**
- . 'For he who is not against you is for you' (9.50).**
- . 'And when He was come out from there the Scribes and Pharisees began to press Him hard and provoke Him to speak of many things, lying in wait for Him to catch something out of His mouth' (11.53-54).**
- . 'He who has ears to hear, let him hear' (14.35).**
- . 'And when He had said thus He went on before, going up to Jerusalem' (19.28).**
- . 'And every day He was teaching in the temple, and every night He went out and lodged in the mount which is called 'of Olives', and all the people came early in the morning to Him in the temple to hear Him' (21.57-58).**
- . 'And they returned to Jerusalem with great joy and were continually in the Temple, blessing God' (24.53).**

Each of the sections which are closed by these statement follow a chiastic pattern, a pattern favoured both by the Hebrews and the Greeks, bringing out and emphasising the central point in each passage. These central points are as follows:

- a Jesus is born in Bethlehem among the domestic animals, being laid in a manger (where He is proclaimed Saviour and Lord Messiah) (2.1-7).**
- b As the Son of God Jesus faces His temptations as to what His Messiahship will involve and defeats the Tempter (4.1-13)**
- c Jesus proclaims in parables concerning the secrets of the Kingly Rule of God (8.1-18).**
- d Jesus teaches His Disciples the Lord's Prayer for the evangelisation of the world and deliverance from the trial to come (11.1-4).**
- d The crooked woman is healed on the Sabbath, for Jesus has come to release from Satan's power and introduce God's rest (13.10-17).**
- c After first being rejected The Son of Man will be revealed in glory (the Kingly Rule of God is openly revealed) (17.22-24).**
- b In the parable of the vineyard Jesus reveals Himself as the only Son (20.9-18).**
- a Jesus is crucified in Jerusalem among thieves where He is declared to be 'the King of the Jews', the Messiah (23.26-34).**

Thus, whatever other emphases we discover in Luke, in his central themes he parallels the other Gospels, themes which apart from the account of the crooked woman are found also in those Gospels.

Note how in 'a' He is born in Bethlehem, because He is in the line of David, and yet is born among the lowly (and is proclaimed King by the shepherds), while in the parallel He dies in Jerusalem (because He is in the line of the prophets) among the lowly, but is proclaimed King of the Jews. In 'b' His Sonship is revealed in His conflict with Satan, in the parallel it is revealed in His conflict with men. In 'c' the secrets of the kingly Rule of God are proclaimed, and in the parallel the Kingly Rule of God is openly revealed. In 'd' the disciples are taught to pray for God's deliverance to be revealed on behalf of His people, and for Satan to be thwarted and in the parallel the crooked woman, symbolic of God's people, is delivered and Satan is thwarted.

Each of these sections of Luke can now be analysed as follows:

SECTION 1.

The Birth of the Messiah: The Birth of John and Jesus (1-2).

- a Introduction - wisdom is being offered to Theophilus (lover of God), who represents all God lovers, so that they might 'know' the truth (1.1-4).**
- b Zacharias goes up to the Temple and is promised a son, John, who will prepare the way for God's Messiah, and he is made dumb in God's presence (1.5-25).**
- c Mary receives the promise that she will bear the Messiah and she responds in obedience (1.26-38).**

- **d Mary visits Elizabeth who prophesies by the Holy Spirit over Jesus and Mary and rejoices and worships God (1.39-56).**
- **e Elisabeth's child is born and is circumcised (1.57-60).**
- **f Zacharias's tongue is loosed and the news of the remarkable events go round the neighbourhood (1.61-66).**
- **g Zacharias prophesies by the Holy Spirit concerning the coming of the Messiah, and his own son's part in preparing the way for the Messiah. (1.67-80).**
- **h Jesus is born in Bethlehem among the domestic animals, being laid in a manger (2.1-7).**
- **g The angels declare the coming of the Messiah and bless God for His goodness in sending the Messiah, and appear to the shepherds in the fields to prepare the way for His coming (2.8-14).**
- **f The shepherds see Him and filled with wonder give thanks to God and spread the word around the neighbourhood (2.15-20).**
- **e Jesus is circumcised and presented at the Temple (2.21-24).**
- **d Simeon, inspired by the Spirit, blesses God and prophesies over Jesus, and rejoices and worships God (2.25-35).**
- **c Anna the prophetess comes to where Jesus is in the Temple and gives thanks to God and spreads the news (2.36-40).**

- **b Jesus goes up to the Temple and receives understanding in the things of God in His Father's presence (2.41-51).**
- **a 'And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man' (2.52).**

Note that in 'a' wisdom is offered to all God-lovers that they might grow in it and enjoy God's favour, and in the parallel Jesus grows in wisdom and in favour with God and men. In 'b' Zacharias goes up to the Temple and receives a word from God, and in the parallel Jesus does the same. In 'c' Mary receives the promise of the Messiah, and in the parallel Anna comes to the promised Messiah and spreads news of Him all around. In 'd' Elizabeth prophesies over Jesus and praises and blesses God, and in the parallel Simon prophesies over Jesus and praises and blesses God. In 'e' John is circumcised and in the parallel Jesus is circumcised. All is rooted in the promise to Abraham. In 'f' Zacharias's tongue is loosed and the word goes round the neighbourhood, and in the parallel the shepherds spread the word around the neighbourhood. In 'g' Zacharias prophesies the coming of the Messiah and in the parallel the angels do the same. And in 'h' the Messiah comes.

SECTION 2.

The Launching of the Messiah: The Ministry of John, The Coming of the Holy Spirit, His Defeat of Satan In The Wilderness, The Beginning of the Ministry of Jesus (3.1-4.37).

- **a The powerful Spirit-filled ministry of John is described (3.1-14).**

- **b One is coming Who will send the Holy Spirit and will produce wheat for the harvest and cleanse His threshing floor (3.15-18).**
- **c John is rejected by Herod for teaching what he does not like (3.19-20).**
- **d The Holy Spirit comes on Jesus, and God declares that He is His beloved Son, and His anointed Prophet ‘in Whom He is well pleased’ (3.21-22).**
- **e Jesus is the son of David (the anointed King), the son of Abraham (the One through Whom the promises are to be fulfilled), the son of Adam (the seed of the woman who is about to break the serpent’s head), the son of God (the second Man, the last Adam, fully human in the same way as Adam, partaking as he had done in the image and likeness of God before the Fall), the One Who will fulfil God’s purpose in creation (3.23-38).**
- **f Jesus faces his temptations as to his Messiahship and defeats the Tempter who describes Him as the Son of God (Jesus ‘breaks his head’ with the word of God) (4.1-12).**
- **e Jesus, having as the Son of God defeated Satan, goes out in the power of the Spirit and is glorified of all (4.13-15).**
- **d Jesus reveals Himself from the Word of God as the Spirit anointed prophet of Isaiah 61.1-2 (4.16-21).**
- **c Jesus is rejected by the people for teaching what they do not like (4.22-30).**

- **b Jesus reveals Himself as the Coming One by His power over evil spirits, (cleansing His threshing floor). They declare ‘you are the Holy One of God’ but are rebuked. The people are amazed at His activity and the word spreads (4.31-37).**
- **a The powerful Spirit-filled ministry of Jesus is described (4.38-44).**
- **The section ends with ‘And He was preaching in the synagogues of Judaea’ (4.44).**

Thus in ‘a’ and its parallel we have the contrasting Spirit-filled ministries of John and Jesus. In ‘b’ we have the huge impact of the Coming One described, and in the parallel something of that impact. In ‘c’ and parallel we have the rejection of Jesus and John because their teaching is not acceptable. In ‘d’ we have Jesus anointed by the Holy Spirit for His ministry and declared by God to be His chosen Prophet, and in the parallel the Word of God declares Him to be the Spirit anointed Prophet. In ‘e’ we have Jesus revealed as the fulfilment of all the past, the final fulfilment of God’s purpose on creation, and in the parallel, having defeated Satan, as going out and being glorified by all. In ‘f’ and central to the whole is Jesus’ defeat of Satan in the wilderness.

SECTION 3.

The Ministry of Jesus Centres Around His Parables Which Convey The Secrets of the Kingly Rule of God (4.38-9.50).

- **a Jesus calls Peter and John and appoints them as fishers of men (5.1-11).**
- **b An ‘unclean’ skin diseased man is cleansed and all are amazed, a picture of what Jesus has come to do for Israel (5.12-16).**
- **c The Messiah reveals His glory under a series of Old Testament pictures. As the Son of Man He has power to forgive sins, as God’s Physician He has the ability to restore outcasts, as the Bridegroom He brings rejoicing to the people and as Son of Man He is Lord over the Sabbath. His glory shines out. The old has passed the new has come - it includes the Messianic healing of the paralysed man who is forgiven by the Son of Man - the door to faith as open to Levi and the outcasts through the Great Physician (The Messianic healer is here) - the joy that is present because of the coming of The Heavenly Bridegroom - the new authority of the One Who is Son of Man and is therefore also Lord of the Sabbath (5.17-6.11).**
- **d Jesus appoints His Apostles (6.12-19).**
- **e Jesus’ declares God’s blessings on the people of God, and woes on the rich and those who are highly thought of by men, followed by the new giving of the Law and general teaching (6.20-38).**
- **f Jesus’ power is sent out to heal the centurion’s servant (7.2-10).**
- **g The son of the widow of Nain is raised from the dead (7.11-17).**

- **h John the Baptist questions whether Jesus is the Messiah and is informed of the signs and wonders Jesus is doing so as to establish his faith - he is exalted by Jesus (7.18-35).**
- **i The sinful woman wipes His feet with her hair and kisses Him because she believes in Him, a picture of the response that should be Israel's, while the Pharisee's response is muted - the parable of the two Debtors (7.36-50).**
- **j Jesus proclaims His parables concerning the secrets of the Kingly Rule of God (8.1-18).**
- **i Jesus own mother, and his brothers, come to take Him away because they do not believe in him. They do not respond to Him (8.19-21).**
- **h Jesus as the Messiah quells the storm and delivers the demoniac (revealing His power over nature and evils spirits) establishing faith in His Apostles by signs and wonders (8.22-39).**
- **g The daughter of Jairus is raised from the dead (8.40-56).**
- **f Jesus' power is sent out through the twelve to preach and to heal (9.1-6).**
- **e The rich and powerful Herod is in doubt while the people of God are blessed at the sacramental meal where they receive His teaching (9.7-17).**
- **d His chosen Apostles, through Peter, confess Jesus as the Messiah (9.18-27).**

- **c The Messianic revelation is made at the Transfiguration where Jesus' glory shines forth. He is God's Servant and the focus of the law and the prophets as represented by Moses and Elijah (9.28-36).**
- **b A demon possessed boy with an 'unclean' spirit is cleansed and all are amazed, a picture of the deliverance of Israel (9.37-43).**
- **a What the fishers of men must recognise and the position that they must take up. The Son of Man must die - he who is great shall be least - he who is not against them is for them (9.44-50).**
- **The section closes with 'For he who is not against you is for you' (9.50).**

We note how in ‘a’ He calls Peter, James and John as fishers of men, and in the parallel makes clear the message that they must take out and the attitude that they must have. In ‘b’ a leper who is unclean is cleansed, and in the parallel a boy possessed by an unclean demon is cleansed, both pictures of what Jesus wants to do for Israel. In ‘c’ the Son of Man is revealed as what He is and in the parallel Jesus is revealed as what He is. In ‘d’ He appoints His Apostles, and in the parallel they recognise Him for what He is. In ‘e’ we have blessings on the people of God and woes on the rich and important, and in the parable we have the rich and important Herod in grave doubt and the people of God blessed at the sacramental meal, a meal which symbolises the future blessing. In ‘f’ His word and power are sent forth to heal the centurion’s son at a distance, and in the parallel the Apostles are sent forth with His word and power, and through them He heals at a distance. In ‘g’ the son of the widow of Nain is raised from the dead and in the parallel the daughter of Jairus is raised from the dead (another man/woman parallel). In ‘h’ John is told of the signs and wonders that Jesus is doing and in the parallel Jesus does signs and wonders so as to encourage the disciples. In ‘i’ the outcast sinful woman wipes His feet with her hair and her tears because of her love for Him and comes in, and in the parallel Mary, with her family, come to take Him because they do not believe in Him and remain outside. In ‘j’, central to it all, is the proclamation of the Kingly Rule of God.

SECTION 4.

Jesus Sets His Face Towards Jerusalem, Centring on the Lord's Prayer For The Evangelisation of the World (9.51-11.54).

- **a 'And it came about when the days were well nigh come that He should be received up He steadfastly set His face to go to Jerusalem' (9.51).**
- **b The Samaritans reject Him because of the physical place to which He is going. They do not look underneath to the heart. Nevertheless there is no woe on the Samaritans (9.52-56).**
- **c Call to discipleship and singleness of purpose so that they may proclaim the Kingly Rule of God (9.57-62).**
- **d The seventy go out preaching seeking men to win under the Kingly Rule of God - woes on the cities who reject them (10.1-15).**
- **e "He who hears you hears Me, and he who Hears Me hears Him Who sent me" (10.16).**
- **f The disciples rejoice because the devils are subject to them, Jesus declares 'I saw Satan fallen from heaven.' They will be delivered from serpents and scorpions (10.17-20).**
- **g Jesus rejoices in the Spirit, God has revealed His truth to babes, and given to His Son the privilege of revealing Him (10.21-24).**
- **h About the Good Samaritan who responds and gives good things to the one in need (10.25-37).**

- **i About Martha who serves well and feeds Jesus and the Apostles, and Mary who chooses the better part, the presence of Jesus (10.38-42).**
- **j The Lord's Prayer for the evangelisation of the world (11.1-4).**
- **i About the friend at midnight who responds and feeds his friend (11.5-8).**
- **h God will freely give from His goodness to those who reveal their need of Him (11.9-10)**
- **g Those who come to Him as Father will receive good things, (not serpents and scorpions), including the Holy Spirit given to those who seek Him (11.11-13).**
- **f The Pharisees accuse Jesus of being aligned with Satan because the devils are subject to Him, and He describes Satan's total humiliation and defeat (11.14-22).**
- **e "He who is not with Me is against Me, and he who does not gather with Me, scatters" (11.23).**
- **d Evil spirits are out looking for men to possess. Woe to the present generation for rejecting the Great One and His preaching (11.24-32).**
- **c The light is shining and men should open their eyes to it with singleness of eye and let it fill their lives (11.33-36).**
- **b The Scribes and Pharisees reject Him because He refuses to conform to their physical requirements, for they also do not look at the heart. But there are woes on the Pharisees, for they should know better (11.37-52).**

- **a ‘And when He was come out from there the Scribes and Pharisees began to press Him hard and provoke Him to speak of many things lying in wait for Him to catch something out of His mouth’ (11.53-54).**

Note that in ‘a’ mention is made of Jesus being ‘received up’ as a result of the action of His enemies, and in the parallel the Scribes and Pharisees are trying to entrap Him so that they can accuse Him. In ‘b’ the Sadducees are influenced by the physical place to which He is going, they do not look at the heart, however, no woe is to be declared on the Samaritans, but in the parallel the Pharisees are influenced by His failure to conform to their physical requirements, they too do not look at the heart, but woes are declared on the Pharisees for they should have known better. In ‘c’ men are called to follow Him with singleness of purpose, and in the parallel they are called to singleness of eye. In ‘d’ the seventy go out preaching and woes are declared on those who do not hear, and in the parallel evil spirits go out looking for men to possess and Jesus speaks of woes on the people because they reject His preaching. In ‘e’ there is a saying of Jesus, and in the parallel a similar saying is given. In f there is rejoicing over the defeat of Satan, and in the parallel Jesus is accused of complicity with Satan and describes his total defeat. In ‘g’ Jesus rejoices in the Spirit and reveals the Father to His own, and in the parallel the Holy Spirit is given to those who ask the Father for Him. In ‘h’ the Good Samaritan gives good gifts to the one in need, while in the parallel God will respond to those who reveal their need of Him. In ‘i’ Jesus is fed and in the parallel the friend at midnight is fed. Central to the whole passage in ‘j’ is the Lord’s prayer, which is reflected throughout the surrounding material.

SECTION 5.

Jesus Teaches Concerning Greed, Stewardship and the Need For Fruitfulness Under The Kingly Rule of God Centring on the Fact That He Will Make The Crooked Straight (12.1-14.35).

- **a Instructions to disciples concerning facing up to eternity (12.1-12).**
- **b An example is given of covetousness concerning an inheritance which is followed by the parable of the fool who decided to enjoy rich banquets, ignored the needs of the poor, and in the end suffered the unforeseen consequences of prematurely losing his wealth to others who benefited unexpectedly while the one expected to benefit lost out (12.13-21).**
- **c We are to seek the Kingly Rule of God and not to be anxious about other things (12.22-34).**
- **d We are to be like men serving the Lord in His house and awaiting His arrival from a wedding feast, being faithful in His service at whatever time He comes and meanwhile making use of all our time for His benefit (12.35-40).**
- **e There are stewards both good and bad who will be called to account for He has come to send fire on earth which will cause great disruption (12.41-53).**
- **f Men are to discern the times and not be like a debtor who realises too late that he should have compounded with the Great Creditor (12.54-59).**
- **g Some present draw attention to the tower that fell on men. It was no proof of guilt, all are sinful and will perish unless they repent. They would therefore be wise to repent (13.1-5)**

- **h The parable of the fig tree which is to be given its chance to bear fruit (13.6-9).**
- **i The crooked woman is healed on the Sabbath for Jesus has come to release from Satan's power (13.10-17).**
- **h The parables of the grain of mustard seed which is to grow and reproduce, and of the leaven which spreads, both of which represent the growth of the Kingly Rule of God in both prospective ultimate size and method of expansion (13.18-21).**
- **g Someone asks 'are there few that are saved?' The reply is that men must strive to enter the door while they can (13.22-23).**
- **f We must not be like those who awake too late and find the door closed against them and wish they had befriended the Householder (13.24-28).**
- **e We are to watch how we respond as His stewards for some will come from east, west, north and south, while others will awake too late, like Herod who seeks to kill Him and Jerusalem which is losing its opportunity and will be desolated and totally disrupted (13.29-35).**

- **d Jesus is invited into the home of a Chief Pharisee. And there He eats with him at table, surrounded by many ‘fellow-servants’. There He sees a man with dropsy. As God’s Servant He knows what His responsibility is to be a faithful and wise servant. It is to heal the man. For God’s works of compassion should be done at all times including the Sabbath and not just at times of man’s choosing. And yet He is surrounded by those waiting to catch Him out (14.1-6).**
- **c We are not to seek the higher place, he who humbles himself will be exalted (14.7-11).**
- **b An example is given of inviting the poor to dinner which is followed by the parable of a rich banquet, where those who made excuses were rejected, and the result was that due to unforeseen circumstances there a banquet for the poor, while those for whom it was intended lost out (14.12-24)**
- **a Instructions are given to the disciples concerning facing up to the cost (14.25-35).**
- **‘He who has ears to hear, let him hear’ (14.35).**

Note that in ‘a’ the Section opens with instructions to the disciples, and in the parallel it closes with instructions to the disciples, both seeing things in the light of eternity. In ‘b’ we have a parable dealing with the use of riches, and in the parallel the use of wealth to help the poor is dealt with, in ‘c’ we are to seek the Kingly Rule of God and trust our Father over our daily living, and in the parallel we are not to seek the higher place on earth, for the one who humbles himself will be exalted. In ‘d’ we are to be like men awaiting in the Lord’s ‘house’, awaiting His arrival at whatever time He comes and meanwhile making use of all our time and serving Him faithfully, and in the parallel Jesus is in the Chief Pharisee’s house and is called on to perform an act of faithful service even though it is the Sabbath, an act which He does perform. It is an example of faithful service even in the face of difficulties, and a reminder to us that we are to use all our time, including the Sabbath, for doing God’s work. In ‘e’ there are stewards both good and bad who will be called to account, for He has come to ‘cast fire on the earth’, and in the parallel we are to watch how we respond as His stewards, for some will come from east, west, north and south, while others will awake too late, like Herod who seeks to kill Him and Jerusalem which is losing its opportunity and will be desolated. In ‘f’ men are to discern the times, and in the parallel we are not to be like those who awake too late. In ‘g’ and its parallel the imminence of death and what our response should be to it is described. In ‘h’ the vine is to be allowed its opportunity of bearing fruit, and in the parallel the mustard seed will grow and bear fruit. Central in ‘i’ is the healing and making straight of one who is crooked, a picture of what He has come

to do for Israel. This is the whole purpose of the Kingly Rule of God.

SECTION 6.

Men Must Live In The Light Of The Coming Of The Son of Man In His Glory (15.1-19.28).

- **a Now the tax collectors and sinners were all drawing near to hear Him (15.1).**
- **b The parables concerning the seeking Saviour who goes out into the wilderness, the woman with the coins, and the three, the father and the two young men, who each make their choice (15.2-32).**
- **c The steward who used his lord's wealth wisely, and thoughts on using money wisely (16.1-13).**
- **d The Pharisees are blind to the truth about Jesus and cavil at His teaching, but those who see the truth press into the Kingly Rule of God (16.14-18).**
- **e The rich man and the beggar Lazarus, the wrong use of wealth (16.19-31).**
- **f The danger of putting stumblingblocks in the way of others especially of children (17.1-5).**
- **g The servant who only does his duty does not expect a reward (17.6-10).**
- **h Ten lepers are healed - and there is one, a Samaritan, who seeks out Jesus with gratitude so as to give thanks. Among the many the one stands out. He alone is vindicated. Jesus asks, 'where there not ten cleansed, where are the nine?' and stresses his faith (17.11-19).**

- **i The Kingly Rule of God does not come with signs (17.20-21)**
- **j After first being rejected the Son of Man will come in His glory (17.22-24).**
- **i His coming will be unexpected (and thus without signs) (17.25-37).**
- **h In parable there is an unrighteous judge, and he is faced by one who comes to him seeking for vindication. His elect must persevere in prayer and seek Him with faith that they too might find vindication. Among the many, the few stand out. Jesus asks, ‘when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on earth?’ (18.1-8).**
- **g The Pharisee who thinks he does his duty and expects thanks for it, and the one who comes humbly and is justified (18.9-14).**
- **f The Kingly Rule of God must be received as a little child (18.15-17).**
- **e The rich young ruler and the wise use of wealth (18.18-30).**
- **d While the Apostles remain partially blind to the truth about Jesus, the blind man at Jericho recognises Him as the Son of David and insists on being brought to Jesus and his eyes are opened (18.31-43).**
- **c Zacchaeus uses his wealth wisely and yields it to the Lord. Jesus has come to seek and save the lost (19.1-10).**

- **b The king goes to a far country to receive Kingly Rule, he gives coins to his servants to trade with, and his three servants have each made their choice (19.11-27).**
- **a ‘And when He had said thus He went on before, going up to Jerusalem’ (19.28).**

Note how the section opens with the tax collectors and sinners drawing near to hear Him, and ends with Him concluding His words and moves on towards His death in Jerusalem. In ‘b’ the shepherd goes into the wilderness, the woman looks after her coins, and a father and his two sons make their choices, while in the parallel a king goes into a far country, he dispenses coins to be looked after, and three servants make their choices. In ‘c’ the steward uses money wisely and in the parallel Zacchaeus uses his money wisely. In ‘d’ The Pharisees are ‘blind’ to the truth about Jesus and cavil at His teaching, while those who see the truth press into the Kingly Rule of God and in the parallel the disciples are ‘blind’ to Jesus’ teaching, while the blind man presses into seeing Jesus. In ‘e’ we have the rich man who used his wealth wrongly and in the parallel the rich young ruler who refused to use his wealth rightly. In ‘f’ we are told of the danger of putting stumblingblocks in the way of others, especially of children, while in the parallel the Kingly Rule of God must be received as a little child. In ‘g’ the servant who only does his duty does not expect a reward, while in the parallel the Pharisee is confident that he has done his duty and boasts about it, but is seen as lacking. In ‘h’ one stands out as seeking Jesus and is commended and his faith is emphasised, in the parallel His elect are to seek out God and are commended but lack of faith on earth is feared. In ‘i’ the Kingly Rule of God does not come with signs, and in the parallel His coming will be unexpected (and thus without signs). In ‘j’, and centrally, the rejected Son of Man is to come in His glory (17.22-24).

SECTION 7.

Jesus Rides Into Jerusalem And Is Revealed As God's Only Son (19.29-21.58).

- **a After initial preparations Jesus rides into Jerusalem in triumph on a colt (19.29-40).**
- **b Jesus weeps over a Jerusalem which will be desolated (19.41-44).**
- **c Jesus enters the Temple in which they trust, as its Lord, and as God's Cleanser, of the Temple, as a warning against the unworthiness of the chief priests and of the state of their Temple (which is subject to condemnation) (19.45).**
- **d The chief priests and scribes and elders seek to destroy Jesus but could not (19.46-48).**
- **e Jesus is challenged as to His authority (20.1-8).**
- **f The parable of the vineyard - Jesus is the only Son (20.9-18).**
- **e Jesus challenges His questioners use of Caesar's image and therefore their authority (20.19-26).**
- **d The Sadducees seek to undermine Jesus' teaching, but could not (20.27-40).**
- **c Jesus is David's Lord, the Messiah. The people are to beware of the unworthiness of the Scribes in whom they trust, who desolate others, for they will receive the greater condemnation (20.41-47).**
- **b Jerusalem is to be desolated (20.45-21.7).**
- **a After initial preparations Jesus will come back in triumph to the world (21.8-36).**

- **‘And every day He was teaching in the temple, and every night He went out and lodged in the mount which is called ‘of Olives’, and all the people came early in the morning to Him in the temple to hear Him’ (21.57-58).**

SECTION 8.

Jesus Is Crucified And Rises Again (22.1-24.53).

- **a Satan enters into Jesus’ betrayer who plots His betrayal in return for silver (22.1-6).**
- **b Jesus feasts with His disciples (22.7-22).**
- **c Discussion of who is the greatest, but they are rather to be servants, yet they will in the end sit at His table (22.23-28).**
- **d The Garden of Gethsemane where Jesus shunned death, Peter is revealed to be empty and as lacking what is to come (22.29-62).**
- **e Jesus is exposed to the verdicts of the chief priests and then of Pilate and Herod (22.63-23.25).**
- **f Jesus is crucified as the King of the Jews, the Messiah (23.26-34).**
- **e Jesus is exposed to the mockery of the chief priests (the rulers) and to the verdicts of the two thieves (23.35-49).**
- **d The Garden where Jesus was buried, but defeated death, the tomb proves to be empty (23.50-24.10).**
- **c Jesus sits at table with two of His disciples a prelude to their future (24.11-35).**

- **b The risen Jesus feasts with His disciples (24.36-47).**
- **a God's Power will enter into them and they are to be His witnesses to His glory and triumph (in contrast with His betrayer and Satan who sought His downfall) (24.48-53).**
- **'And they returned to Jerusalem with great joy and were continually in the Temple, blessing God' (24.53).**

It should be noted that Luke achieved this pattern while still accurately following his sources as he built up the story of Jesus. Together with the six sections of Acts this makes fourteen sections (twice seven). Perhaps this was a deliberate ploy indicating the divine perfection of the story.

The Sources of Luke.

As to sources Luke himself makes clear that he was aware of many ‘narratives’ which had been written or were in preparation about Jesus (1.1). The fact that he knew of them emphasises the amount of research in which he engaged, and he was not satisfied with them, for he clearly felt that he could better them. Furthermore as an associate of Mark he would no doubt have discussed his Gospel with him and they would have shared notes, for Mark was compiling his Gospel at the same time. It may well be that Mark lent him his unfinished manuscript in order to assist him. Certainly Luke appears to have had available to him some form of Mark’s Gospel. But while he uses it to quite some extent, he does not use it slavishly. He omits for example the section of Mark from 6.45-8.26. This was probably because Luke wanted to avoid the transition in Jesus’ teaching and ministry from being solely to the Jews, but expanding to the Gentiles, which is inherent in that passage based around the Syrophoenician woman (Mark 7.24-30). That was a major theme in Matthew, and was prominent in Mark. Luke wants his Gentile readers to apply everything to themselves from the beginning (2.14, 32; 3.38; 4.25-27; 7.2-10; 9.51-54; 10.30-37; 13.29; 24.47). He did not want them to feel excluded. And once they felt at home with Jesus they were to await the dramatic change in Acts 10-13 when concentration turns from Jew, to Jew first and then Gentile.

Luke also says that he had followed all things closely from the beginning. This suggests that he had sought out eye-witnesses and obtained from them what information he could.

Thus he put together his Gospel from a combination of writings, probably including both Greek and Aramaic ones, as well as on the basis of personal reminiscences. His sources included:

- At least one source containing sayings which was also available to Matthew (often called 'Q', but it must be recognised that there may have been more than one 'Q').**
- Mark's Gospel itself, or a draft of it.**
- Eye-witness accounts (including Mary's) which he obtained for himself, much in Aramaic.**
- Other written sources which contained the recorded traditions of the churches.**

We would therefore expect occasions when he agrees verbally with Mark, occasions when he agrees verbally with Matthew (through their joint source/sources), occasions when he alters what these sources said without distorting them so that they bear his style, occasions when he uses other sources which will contain other teaching and doings from the life of Jesus, and occasions when we have his own translation from the Aramaic of information given to him, which will therefore be very much in his style. And that is precisely what we find in Luke.

Furthermore in view of:

- The continual day by day teaching of Jesus, when He taught both the crowds and His disciples so that they could learn by rote, which meant that many of them knew His teaching word for word.**

- **The thousands of sermons that He must have preached.**
- **The thousands of times that He must have been questioned by individuals and small groups, replying to similar questions a hundred times over in slightly different ways, in answers that would yet overlap.**
- **The probability, or we may say certainty, that He Himself would continually reshape His teaching in order to improve it or make it clearer, therefore presenting the same teaching or parable in slightly different ways, and all the time improving His illustrations**

we would expect His teaching to appear in the different Gospels as revealing both similarities and differences. This will not therefore not necessarily be seen as evidence that one has altered the other, but as evidence that both had access to different sources which might equally have been reliable. It is all in the end just a matter of opinion. Thus we do not intend in the commentary to discuss what came from Q and what did not, or whether Matthew altered Q or whether Luke altered Q or whether either altered other joint sources, as we recognise that any differences may simply arise from the use of different records of traditions each based, in view of how they were treasured, on true and accurate memories of the teaching of Jesus. While also we will expect that they may bear the mark of being put into what the writer thinks is suitable Greek, we will recognise that that does not necessarily mean that he altered the meaning or the overall presentation of the teaching or incident. Such studies may be interesting, they may reveal certain insights (they may darken others), but in the end they do not tell us what Luke was trying to say. They merely tell us what sources that we do not have may (or may not) have said.

Certainly it would have been considered imperative in the early church to have available the teaching of Jesus, and something of His life story. He was what the Good News was all about. This would partly be in accounts which were memorised and took on a certain approved form, and were passed on (possibly called The Testimony of Jesus). But it is inconceivable that some would not have taken on written form as Luke suggests when speaking of ‘many narratives’. Many of the new Christians were highly educated men. There may well also have been especially a number of sources which included sayings and were accessible to both Matthew and Luke, as is evident by comparing their Gospels, material which Luke was able to verify personally with the Apostles. Such sayings would be treasured. But notice Luke’s emphasis on the fact that they were delivered to him by eyewitnesses (1.2).

It is equally certain that the church would have taken steps to ensure that these sources did not become corrupted, for as Paul makes clear, they especially revered teaching of which they could say, ‘this is what the Lord said’, and that they succeeded in this comes out in the fact that the teaching of Jesus as found in the Gospels has not been adulterated in any noticeable way but has kept its pristine purity. An early church free for all would soon have rendered it unrecognisable. If the early church really had got to work on it the Bible would have been burned long ago as not worth bothering with, long before the present day. It is one of the mysteries of life that some intelligent scholars cannot see this. As though the Sermon on the Mount could have been produced by a committee! It is quite frankly inconceivable. We only have to consider the words of Papias (end of 1st century AD) to realise that their greatest desire was to go back to the source.

“But whenever someone who had followed the Elders came along, I would carefully ask about the words of the Elders -- what Andrew or what Peter had said or what Philip or what Thomas or James or what John or Matthew or any other of the disciples of the Lord -- just as what Aristion and the Elder John, disciples of the Lord were saying. For I did not assume that whatever comes from books is as helpful to me as what comes from a living and lasting voice.”

To our knowledge Luke visited Jerusalem at least once, and probably more, and also spent two years in Caesarea in close connection with Philip the Evangelist (Acts 20.8 with 24.27), and we have no need to doubt that he took the opportunity then to further his knowledge of the events in Jesus' life from eyewitnesses. He would have been a strange author had he not done so. He would also at various times have had connections with many people, including some of the Apostles, who knew the Lord (for what it is worth Jerome says 'he had careful conversation with the other Apostles'). We can hardly doubt that many visited Paul at one time or another.

And being the careful historian that we know he was, (amply verified by research), he would have taken a great deal of trouble to separate fact from fiction. He is proved to have been no careless writer. And as that is what he also claims for himself in his introduction we have no reason to doubt it.

So our aim in this commentary is to comment on the words written and the significance of what Luke was trying to say, believing that he genuinely sought to follow the claims of his introduction and gave us an accurate account of what he received. It is thus what he was saying that will (hopefully) be the basis of our comments.

The Emphases of Luke.

There are certain emphases which are unmistakable in Luke which we should note as we read his Gospel.

The Temple.

His concern to reveal that the Gospel sprang from the Temple and then finally outpaced the Temple is made quite clear by the end of Acts. The story in the Gospel commences in the Temple (1.9) and ends with the Temple (24.53), and in 1-2 Jesus connection with the Temple, and its true worship as conducted by the true people of God, is emphasised. These were not the ones that He wanted to sweep out of the Temple. These were the faithful in Israel. It was for their sakes that He attempted to cleanse it. But in the end the Temple had to be done away with because as a whole it had rejected its Messiah, something which Luke emphasised in his Gospel (13.35; 21.6, 20), and makes clear in Acts (7.48-49; 21.30).

The Temple is mentioned six times in Luke 1-2, three times as the place from which God's revelation through Zacharias came, and three times in connection with Jesus presence there as the fulfilment of that revelation. It is His Father's house (2.49). Three times near the end He is mentioned as preaching there (20.1; 21.37, 38) and He refers back to that preaching when He is arrested (22.53). And the Temple is then seen as the place where His people await the Holy Spirit as they worship and praise God for His resurrection and exaltation (24.53). In Acts the ministry of the Apostles continues in the Temple (twelve mentions in the first five chapters) but we are then reminded that God does not dwell there (Acts 7.48; 17.24) and that Paul was thrust out of the Temple which closed its doors on him (Acts 21.30). Thus, although none but Jesus realised it at the time, it was doomed because it had turned away from its Messiah, and in Acts 13 Jerusalem was replaced by Syrian Antioch as the source from which the word went out (see our commentary on Acts). It was no longer His Father's House.

Jerusalem.

Closely connected with the Temple is Jerusalem, the destiny of which follows the same pattern. Luke emphasises Jerusalem first as the place where the coming of Jesus is prophesied (chapter 1), and then as the place where He is offered to God by those connected with the Temple who were filled with the Holy Spirit (chapter 2). While the chief priests carried on their sterile ritual, the true life of the Temple throbbed underneath in those ‘who were looking for redemption in Jerusalem’ (2.38). And it is to Jerusalem and the Temple that He comes when He wants to learn from the great teachers of the day (2.46, 49). Then they were His friends in His Father’s house.

But these godly people should perhaps have taken note that He was growing up in Galilee. No acceptable prophet ever came from Galilee (John 7.52). He was thus ‘unorthodox’. He was not to be the creature of Jerusalem’s ritual, but to be the possessor of a free and unshackled vibrant faith. Thus He Who, as it were, came from Jerusalem grew up in despised Galilee and was known as a Galilean.

One of Luke's main emphases was in fact His 'avowed purpose to go to Jerusalem' to die (9.51; 13.22 with 34), often called the journey to Jerusalem. As a prophet He must come to Jerusalem for it cannot be that a prophet dies outside Jerusalem (13.33). But this was not a literal one off journey (and the name 'Journey' is therefore misleading). When He set His face to go towards Jerusalem because the days were coming when He would be received up (9.51: Mark 10.32) He was not actually at that time bound directly for Jerusalem to die, He was simply indicating His avowed purpose on His visit at that time to Jerusalem. There He was going through Samaria and would arrive on the edge of Jerusalem in 11.38. And yet later He would be walking the border between Samaria and Galilee (17.11). And during that 'journey to Jerusalem' He visited Jerusalem in 11.38-42, and probably 13.34 (compare Matthew 23.37). Thus His 'journey' was a long one, a journey of the heart, in order to fulfil the purpose for which He had come. It was a constant one nevertheless. Wherever He was His face was always 'set towards Jerusalem'. In 13.22 He went on His way journeying towards Jerusalem (which resulted in His heart cry of 13.34), in 17.11 he was 'on the way to Jerusalem', in 18.31 He said to the twelve, 'we are going to Jerusalem', and in 19.28 'He went on ahead, going to Jerusalem'. Whatever he did, wherever He taught, He was 'on the way to Jerusalem'. For it could not be that a prophet should die outside Jerusalem (13.33). So in this constant determination to go to Jerusalem was His recognition that He would die there.

The references are as follows:

- **‘(Jesus) Who appeared in glory, and spoke of His exodus which He was about to accomplish at Jerusalem’ (Luke 9.31).**
- **‘And it came about that when the time was come that He should be received up, He set His face like a flint to go to Jerusalem’ (Luke 9.51).**
- **‘And they did not receive Him, because His face was as though He was going to Jerusalem’ (Luke 9.53).**
- **‘And Jesus answering said, ‘A certain man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and he fell among thieves, who stripped him of his clothing, and wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead (Luke 10.30).**
- **‘Or those eighteen, on whom the tower in Siloam fell, and slew them, do you think that they were sinners above all men who dwell in Jerusalem? (Luke 13.4).**
- **‘And He went through the cities and villages, teaching, and journeying towards Jerusalem’ (Luke 13:22).**
- **‘Nevertheless I must walk to day, and to morrow, and the day following, for it cannot be that a prophet perish out of Jerusalem’ (Luke 13.33).**
- **O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, who kills the prophets, and stones those who are sent to her, how often would I have gathered your children together, as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you would not!’ (Luke 13.34).**
- **‘And it came about that as he went to Jerusalem, he was passing through the midst of (between) Samaria and Galilee (Luke 17.11).**

- **‘Then he took to him the twelve, and said to them, “Behold, we go up to Jerusalem, and all things which are written by the prophets concerning the Son of man shall be accomplished (Luke 18.31).**
- **‘And as they heard these things, he added and spoke a parable, because he was nigh to Jerusalem, and because they thought that the kingly rule of God was about to immediately appear’ (Luke 19:11).**
- **‘And when he had thus spoken, he went on before, going up to Jerusalem’ (Luke 19.28).**

That His death in Jerusalem was seen as central and important comes out in the amount of space that Luke and the other Gospel writers give to His last days in Jerusalem (basically 19.1 onwards). For He was there to be ‘numbered among the transgressors’ (22.37). As He would say at the Last Supper, ‘this cup is the blood of the new covenant which is poured out for you’ (22.20). Luke knew why Jesus had to die. He was the Servant (2.32; 3.22; 4.18-21; 9.35; 22.26-27, 37), who would be ‘numbered with the transgressors’ (22.37), Who would give His life as a ransom for many (Mark 10.45). Luke says the same thing as Mark (who also had Isaiah 53 in mind), but connects it more directly with individuals.

It is interesting to compare Paul’s journey towards Jerusalem in Acts:

- **‘After these things were ended, Paul purposed in the Spirit, when he had passed through Macedonia and Achaia, to go to Jerusalem, saying, “After I have been there, I must also see Rome” (Acts 19.21).**

- **For Paul had determined to sail by Ephesus, because he would not spend the time in Asia, for he hasted, if it were possible for him, to be at Jerusalem the day of Pentecost (Acts 20.16).**
- **‘And now, behold, I go bound in the Spirit to Jerusalem, not knowing the things which will befall me there’ (Acts 20.22).**
- **‘And having found the disciples, we tarried there seven days, and these said to Paul through the Spirit, that he should not set foot in Jerusalem (Acts 21.4).**
- **‘And (Agabus) coming to us, he taking Paul's girdle, he bound his own feet and hands, and said, “Thus says the Holy Spirit, so will the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man who owns this girdle, and will deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles” (Acts 21.11).**
- **‘And when we heard these things, both we, and they of that place, besought him not to go up to Jerusalem’ (Acts 21.12).**
- **‘Then Paul answered, “What are you doing, weeping and breaking my heart? For I am ready not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus” (Acts 21.13).**
- **‘And after these days we took up our luggage, and went up to Jerusalem’ (Acts 21.15).**

To Luke it was important that the witness begin from Jerusalem, both in the Gospel and in Acts. In the Gospel he emphasises Jesus' connection with Jerusalem in the beginning, emphasises the resurrection appearances in Jerusalem, ignores the journey that the disciples certainly made to Galilee before they returned to Jerusalem (mentioned in all three other Gospels), and describes the ascension which took place from Jerusalem (24.50-51).

It is also interesting to compare the final references in Luke and the first references in Acts, which interestingly themselves form a chiasmus, stressing the unity of Luke and Acts:

- a 'And they rose up the same hour, and returned to Jerusalem, and found the eleven gathered together, and those who were with them' (Luke 24.33).**
- b 'And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem' (Luke 24.47).**
- c 'And, behold, I send the promise of my Father on you, but tarry you in the city (of Jerusalem), until you be endued with power from on high' (Luke 24.49).**
- d 'And they returned to Jerusalem with great joy and were continually in the temple blessing God' (Luke 24.52).**
- c 'And, being assembled together with them, He commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, says He, you have heard of me' (Acts 1.4).**

- **b ‘But you will receive power, when the Holy Spirit has come on you, and you shall be witnesses to me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and to the uttermost part of the earth’ (Acts 1.8).**
- **a ‘Then they returned to Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is from Jerusalem a sabbath day's journey’ (Acts 1.12).**

This makes clear that what was promised at the end of Luke is reinforced at the beginning of Acts. So we note that it was from Jerusalem that He commanded them to go forth (Acts 1.8), and the significance of Jerusalem in the first six chapters of Acts is perhaps best brought out by listing the references;

- **‘And, being assembled together with them, He commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, says He, you have heard of me’ (Acts 1.4).**
- **‘But you will receive power, after that the Holy Spirit is come on you, and you shall be witnesses to me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and to the uttermost part of the earth’ (Acts 1.8).**
- **‘Then they returned to Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is from Jerusalem a sabbath day's journey’ (Acts 1.12).**
- **‘And it was known to all the dwellers at Jerusalem, insomuch that that field is called in their proper tongue, Aceldama, that is to say, The field of blood’ (Acts 1.19).**
- **‘And there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven’ (Acts 2.5).**

- **‘But Peter, standing up with the eleven, lifted up his voice, and said to them, “You men of Judaea, and all you who dwell at Jerusalem, be this known to you, and listen to my words’ (Acts 2.14).**
- **‘And Annas the high priest, and Caiaphas, and John, and Alexander, and as many as were of the kindred of the high priest, were gathered together at Jerusalem’ (Acts 4.6).**
- **‘Saying, What shall we do to these men? for that indeed a notable miracle has been done by them is manifest to all those who dwell in Jerusalem, and we cannot deny it’ (Acts 4.16).**
- **‘There came also a multitude out of the cities round about to Jerusalem, bringing sick folks, and those who were distressed by unclean spirits, and they were healed every one’ (Acts 5.16).**
- **‘Saying, Did we not straitly command you that you should not teach in this name? and, behold, you have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine, and intend to bring this man's blood on us’ (Acts 5.28).**
- **‘And the word of God increased, and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly; and a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith’ (Acts 6.7).**

This interest then continues in chapters 8-11, for Jerusalem is the place from which all witness is overseen, and it is therefore all the more significant that in Acts 12 and 19 he makes it clear that Jerusalem is rejected because it has rejected its Messiah. Its commission is seen as taken over by Syrian Antioch (and by all the other areas from which the Apostles operated).

The Holy Spirit's Work In Luke and Acts.

The next thing that we must draw attention to about both Luke's books (Luke and Acts) is that they each commence with a great emphasis on the new work of the Spirit which was taking place in the days of which they speak, which was then mainly assumed as going on in the remainder of each book, with but an occasional reminder necessary to confirm it. The Spirit is clearly at work right from the commencement of Luke's Gospel, and thus while the happenings at Pentecost in Acts 2 in one sense open up a new era, they are seen as by no means the beginning of the work of the Spirit. The emphasis there is rather on a second surge of the Spirit, following on the one which was the mainspring of the life and ministry of John the Baptist and Jesus Christ.

But whereas in Luke this resulted in a Spirit filled John (1.15) and a Spirit filled Jesus (4.1) going forward with a Spirit filled ministry, so that His disciples participated in the Spirit through Him (they were born from above and cast out evil spirits and healed), Acts reveals directly Spirit filled Apostles as carrying it on. In Luke the Holy Spirit descended visibly on Jesus. In Acts the Holy Spirit descends visibly on His Apostles.

The beginning of Luke's Gospel laid great emphasis on the work of the Spirit. John the Baptist was described as "filled with the Holy Spirit from his mother's womb" (Luke 1.15). The word for 'filled' is pimlemi which always refers to a special gift for a particular occasion or ministry. In other words John was prepared from birth to be the instrument of God's sovereign work, working by the power of the Spirit. He would in fact walk "in the spirit and power of Elijah" (Luke 1.17). But he would do no miracles (John 10.41). It was not yet the new age. The Spirit's power was rather revealed in the success of his preaching. Notice in the prophecy of John's birth the contrast between strong drink and the Holy Spirit (Luke 1.15). Paul the Apostle also points out that the man who would be filled (pleroo) by the Spirit must avoid excess of wine (Ephesians 5.18).

The power within John as a result of the permanent fullness of the Spirit would be all the stimulation that he needed, and would enable him to "turn many of the sons of Israel to the Lord their God" so as to prepare a people for the Lord's coming (Luke 1.14-17). As he grew the 'hand of the Lord' was 'with him' (Luke 1.66; compare Psalm 89.21, Acts 11.21). This would remind Luke's readers of Elijah (1 Kings 18.46) and Ezekiel (1.3 and often), although the preposition here is different signifying a more permanent, but less outwardly emphatic an experience. Thus the whole of John's ministry is a work of the Spirit.

It was not, however, only on John that the Spirit was depicted as coming. Luke seems at pains in his first chapters to stress the new activity of the Spirit. The coming age, the age of the Spirit, was seen as dawning. Elizabeth (Luke 1.41) and Zechariah (Zacharias) (1.67), John's mother and father, were also "filled (pimplemi) with Holy Spirit" and prophesied, while Simeon, an aged servant of God, was described as having Holy Spirit 'upon him' (Luke 2.25). Indeed the Spirit had revealed to Simeon that he would not die until he had seen the coming king (2.26). It was in preparation for that King, that the Spirit was at work. And when the baby Jesus was taken to the Temple in accordance with God's law, Simeon was 'inspired by the Spirit' to go there, and that explains the source of his prophecy concerning Jesus. It is stressed that he was righteous and devout, and looking for 'the consolation of Israel' (2.25), as were Elizabeth and Zechariah (1.6) and a number of others in Jerusalem (1.38), including a godly prophetess (1.36-37). Thus in Luke the Spirit prepared the way for Jesus, before filling Him totally.

Being "filled with the Holy Spirit" is seen to be a temporary experience for Elizabeth and Zechariah, enabling them to prophesy the once, while it is a permanent experience for John, the specially chosen instrument of God's purpose. The fact that he is filled with the Spirit from birth demonstrates that in him God had begun the new work of the Spirit in Sovereign power without outside intervention, (even from John). It was all God's work. Then Jesus when He goes out to preach is 'full (pleres) of Holy Spirit' (Luke 4.1). The same continuing idea of sovereign power carries on in Acts. The phrase "filled (Gk. pimplemi) with Holy Spirit" is clearly synonymous with the phrase "the Spirit of the Lord came upon --" in the Old Testament (e.g. in Judges). There also it was usually temporary, but could be permanent in certain cases, and was for those chosen out for special service, or for a special prophetic word.

This phrase is used in Acts in a similar way to Luke, thus identifying the experiences of Acts with those of the past. In this regard we must distinguish "being filled (pimplemi) with the Holy Spirit" (2.4; 4.8; 4.31; 13.9), which is limited to certain people, is always for some only, is for a specific purpose, and very often occurs in a particular circumstance, and is mainly with rare exceptions temporary, and "being filled (pleroo) (13.52) and therefore full (pleres) (6.3, 5; 7.55; 11.24) of the Holy Spirit" which is a more general and continuing experience, is for all, and produces general spiritual benefit, the latter being in mind in Ephesians 5.18.

When Jesus was to be born Mary was told, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you. And the power of the Most High will overshadow you, Therefore the child who is to be born will be called holy, The Son of God.” (1.35). Thus it was through the Holy Spirit’s activity that Jesus came into the world.

John began his preparatory ministry with great success. People flocked to him from Jerusalem, Judaea and Galilee and he called them to change their ways in readiness for One who would come. He made it clear that he was only the preparer of the way. He had come to call men to turn from sin, and, as a sign of a changed heart and mind, to be baptised (drenched) in water for the forgiveness of sins, but with the promise that the Greater One who was coming “will baptise (drench) you with Holy Spirit and with fire.” (3.16 compare Matthew 3.11). The thought here is of comparison with the lifegiving rain and the fires of purification and judgment, two Old Testament themes (3.8-9). This will produce the harvest of wheat to be gathered in, while the fire will burn up the useless chaff (3.17). But he stressed that he was preparing for the coming of Jesus Who ‘will drench men in the Holy Spirit’. That is what his baptism pointed to. All this resulted from the fact that John the Baptist had been filled with the Holy Spirit from the womb.

Furthermore we should note that Jesus made clear that the Kingly Rule of God (Heaven) was available through John's preaching from the beginning. According to Him the tax collectors and prostitutes who heard John and repented went into the Kingly Rule of God, preceding any Pharisees who repented later (Matthew 21.31-32).

When Jesus went into the water to be baptised, as He came out "the Holy Spirit came down on him in a bodily shape like a dove" (3.22 compare Matthew 3.16; Mark 1.10). At the same time a voice from Heaven said, "You are My son, My beloved, in whom I am well pleased." This immediately linked Jesus with the kings of Israel/Judah who were crowned with the words, "You are my son --" (Psalm 2.7), along with the promise of eventual worldwide rule. Thus He is depicted as the king who is coming, upon whom will rest the Spirit of the Lord (Isaiah 11.2) resulting in wisdom and understanding. The final part of the sentence links with Isaiah 42.1, the promise of a coming Servant of God who will have God's Spirit upon him and proclaim God's justice to the nations of the world. (The final destiny of this Servant is found in Isaiah 53). So Jesus was from the commencement of His ministry seen as both King and Servant and as such endowed with the Spirit of God (Isaiah 11.1-2; 42.1).

Jesus returned from the Jordan ‘full (pleres) of the Holy Spirit’ (4.1), something which would carry Him through His ministry, and it was by the Holy Spirit that He was led into the wilderness (4.1) to face up to the temptations of Satan and the significance of His ministry. He began His ministry in the power of the Spirit (4.14) and immediately proclaimed Himself to be the anointed prophet on whom the Spirit of the Lord would rest as promised in Isaiah 61.1-2 (4.18-20). He declared, “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me because He has anointed me to proclaim the good news to the poor. He has sent me to heal the broken hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are bruised and to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord.”. This idea of the anointing of the Spirit on Jesus also appears in Acts 4.27; 10.38. Luke then brought out how exactly Jesus was carrying out this ministry of the great prophet. He taught the people with authority (4.32), He released the captives of the demons (4.33-36), He delivered those oppressed with diseases (4.38-40) and He proclaimed the good news of the Kingly Rule of God (4.43 compare Matthew 11.4-6). The new age was commencing.

It is made quite clear then that His ministry was to be in the power of the Holy Spirit. But having abundantly and quite clearly established that the new work of the Spirit was taking place in a number of ways Luke now almost ceases to mention Him. In the remainder of Luke there is a remarkable silence about the Holy Spirit, especially in the last chapter. In that last chapter we are just waiting for Him to be mentioned. But there is only an indirect mention of Him as ‘power from on high’. The reason for this can only be that having established the source of the power in Jesus’ ministry, Luke wanted all attention now to be turned on Jesus. Thus while he wants us to recognise that the Spirit’s work was going on through Jesus (He is ‘full of Holy Spirit’) and in a continuing manner, at the same time he wants to put the focus on Jesus Himself, as the One Who has come uniquely from God and acts in God’s power so that He may go to Jerusalem and die, and rise again. Unlike all others His success comes from within Himself.

There is, however, one outstanding exception to this fact, and that is in 11.13. There Luke speaks of the Holy Spirit being given to all who ask Him. It is a kind of renewal of the promise of the ‘drenching in the Holy Spirit’ which is to come. Just as in the same way Jesus ‘rejoicing in the Holy Spirit’ (10.21) is a renewal of the picture of Him as full of the Holy Spirit. And then once again silence, so much so that Matthew’s ‘Spirit of God’ becomes in Luke ‘the finger of God’ (11.20). The abundant picture in Acts which is to come must not be diminished.

John's Gospel in fact makes clear the continual nature of the Spirit's work throughout (John 3.1-11; 4.1-26 based on the fact that God is Spirit; John 6.63; 7.37-39), and stresses that the Spirit is given to Jesus in full measure with no restriction (John 3.34). Luke, however presents things differently. In Luke Jesus does later rejoice over the fact that God has revealed His truths to the lowly, He does describe Him as rejoicing "in Spirit" (10.21 compare Acts 13.52), and we are probably justified in seeing here the idea of the joy-giving work of the Spirit (Ephesians 5.18-19), as indicating that He is still 'full of the Holy Spirit' (4.1). Luke also tells us that He promises his disciples that when they are dragged before accusing judges the Holy Spirit will teach them what to say (12.12; compare Matthew 10.20), and this must in context be seen as including while Jesus Christ was on earth. The Spirit is thus seen still to be there and active. But on the whole it cannot really be doubted that He is kept in the background by Luke from chapter 5 onwards.

That it is probably fair to say that there is in Luke's Gospel from chapter 5 onwards on the whole a studied absence of mention of the Holy Spirit, which is emphasised when he deliberately translated the Aramaic as 'the finger of God' (11.20) where Matthew uses 'the Spirit of God' (Matthew 12.28) and even more emphatic is the fact that while pointing to the coming pouring out of power from above during Jesus' resurrection appearances he seems specifically and deliberately to refrain from mentioning the Holy Spirit (24.49). In view of Acts 1 this can surely not be accidental. It would seem to us that the reason for this is twofold. Firstly, it is in order that, once he has established the new working of the Spirit, and has made clear that Jesus Himself is full of the same Holy Spirit, he might then concentrate all the attention on Jesus. Thus his Gospel from 4.1 onwards majors on Jesus and Jesus only. But secondly it is in order to allow for the greater impact on the reader of the second great surge of the Holy Spirit in Acts when His manifestation in power occurs as a new climactic event. The rather vague 'power from on high' with which the Gospel finishes is introduced in Acts as resulting from the powerful and effective drenching of the Holy Spirit. So much so that popular opinion often incorrectly sees Acts as when the Spirit commenced His work.

Acts can then overall at first be said to follow a similar pattern to Luke. Like Luke it commences by emphasising the drenching of the Holy Spirit connected with John the Baptist's ministry (1.5) and stresses that it will occur through Jesus' activity ('He will drench you in the Holy Spirit'), and he also emphasises that the Holy Spirit spoke through Jesus' ministry (1.2). Then he explains that the power from on high mentioned previously in the Gospel (Luke 24.49) will be because the Holy Spirit comes on His disciples (1.8), which then results in an epoch-making experience of the Holy Spirit in Acts 2. But then after that Acts follows up with abundant references to the Holy Spirit over a number of chapters (44 times in the first thirteen chapters). In these chapters the Holy Spirit is emphasised as working everywhere.

Reference to the Holy Spirit becomes less in the middle chapters (12 times in chapters 14-21), although still frequent enough to draw attention to His continued presence, and then after that there is no further reference to the Holy Spirit at all until we arrive in chapter 28, and there the reference is simply to the Holy Spirit as speaking through the Scriptures. Again this must be seen as significant, especially so as Paul's being brought before governors for the sake of Christ is undoubtedly one scenario where we might have expected mention of the Holy Spirit. For Luke 12.12 makes clear that it is in precisely such circumstance that the Holy Spirit will step in on behalf of His people.

This might to some extent be seen as due to his sources, but unless we accuse Luke of merely being an editor, which he most decidedly was not, that cannot be seen as sufficient explanation for the phenomenon. Nor does it explain why in chapter 19 there is a momentary reversal back to the experiences of the first chapters of Acts. The main reason, therefore would seem to be the impression that Luke is seeking to give. In the first part of Acts up to chapter 13 he places all attention on the powerful, direct activity of the Holy Spirit, as He sweeps on in reaching out first to Jerusalem, then to Judaea and Samaria, then to the Gentiles as represented by Cornelius, and then in the commencement of the ministry of Paul. We are intended to see here the Holy Spirit working in irresistible and unceasing power. Nothing can prevent His activity. We are reminded of Isaiah's words, 'He will come like a rushing stream which the wind of the Lord drives' (Isaiah 59.19 RV RSV).

But then in the second part from chapter 14 onwards, while he intends us to see that the Holy Spirit is still active in guiding God's people, it is in a more gentle and controlled fashion (16.7, compare 13.2). Having irresistibly driven His people to recognise that Jew, Samaritan and Gentile must all be included in His saving work, and having brought it about by His powerful activity, and having filled both Paul and His people ready for the next stage, He is seen as consolidating His work among the Gentiles, still effectively, but generally more quietly. His message goes out to peoples and nations through Paul and his associates, and the Holy Spirit guides the church to a wise solution with regard to Gentile participation in the church (chapter 15), but it is only in 19.1-6 that we again sense the atmosphere of the early part of Acts, for 18.1-19.20 is a kind of Acts in miniature, commencing with the baptism of John and ending with the triumph of Jesus.

Then in the last part of Acts, while God is still clearly in control and working out His sovereign purpose, the emphasis is no longer on the Holy Spirit but on man's activity (but always under God's control) in dragging Paul to Rome. It is that which is stressed and the Holy Spirit is not mentioned at all. (Satan is seen to be doing God's work for Him as he did in the crucifixion of Christ). The Holy Spirit could in fact have been mentioned a number of times, for Paul is brought before governors for Christ's sake (compare Luke 12.12), but Luke's silence deliberately brings out that it is men, not the Holy Spirit, who, having taken charge, are forced to bring about God's will in bringing Paul to Rome where he can proclaim the Kingly Rule of God. In these chapters Paul still speaks powerfully, and surely by the Holy Spirit, but that is no longer Luke's emphasis. His emphasis is now on man's sinfulness and brutality and on God's sovereignty. Man is seeking to direct God's affairs, but God overrules.

Having said this, throughout Acts the Spirit is seen as paralleling Jesus' ministry in teaching the people with authority (Acts 1.8; 2.4; 4.8, 31-33; 5.32 etc), releasing the captives of evil spirits (8.7; 16.18; 19.12), delivering those oppressed with diseases (3.1-11; 6.5-8; 19.12) and proclaiming the good news of the kingdom (8.12; 14.22; 19.8; 20.25; 28.23). The prophetic ministry of Jesus is thus clearly being carried on by the Apostles in the power of the Spirit. The Servant's work continues (13.47).

This all confirms that He wants us to concentrate on the work of the Holy Spirit as being that of carrying forward the movement from Jerusalem to Rome, with a kind of hiatus occurring once Paul has been arrested. It is as though Luke sees Paul's arrest as having somehow interfered with that process, while at the same time being part of it.

The hiatus is powerful. It is not that he doubts that Paul's arrest is within God's purposes, only that he sees it as an indication of an interruption in the forward flow of the preaching of the Gospel, which God turns to His own account, and indeed we discover He is behind it all the time (23.11). Although we may also be intended to see here an indication that Satan's hand is at work (26.18) but as one who is defeated (27.5).

Depending on when Luke wrote this could well have been helpful to his readers. By then the first exciting years had passed and they were having to face a world where the Holy Spirit was not quite so openly active, a world which was resistant to them, as it was to Paul in those final chapters. The sense that God was at work, even in the bleakest of circumstances, would have been a great encouragement to them.

So we may argue that Luke wants us to see that Paul's final journey to Rome, while being in God's purposes (23.11), was not a matter of being borne along by the Holy Spirit but of seemingly being borne along by the hand of men, although finally being something which God would turn to His own account. He is saying that while men might have appeared at this time to have taken over control so as to stem the onward moving work of the Spirit, God turned it to His own purposes. For in the end he makes it quite clear that all was in God's hands, and that it resulted in His sovereignty prevailing, with Paul being firmly established in Rome and able freely to proclaim the Kingly Rule of God at the very heart of the Roman Empire. Here again the Holy Spirit is mentioned (28.25), and he is seen as established for the purpose of proclaiming the Kingly Rule of God in Rome.

So what happened did not prevent God's work continuing. Witness was made to governors and kings, people were converted. There was thus still evidence of God's power. And we are able to remember that, like John, Paul was given a permanent filling (pimplemi) of the Holy Spirit which was unique to these two (Luke 1.15; Acts 9.17 - both announced by messengers of God). But what he wants us to see was that in general what was happening was not God's positive purpose, but was brought about by man under God's sovereignty, with Him turning their evil purposes to good. It revealed that Paul was in his own way delivered out of the power of Satan to God (26.18).

We may compare this part of his life with the last days of Jesus, when Satan was active (Luke 22.3) in doing all that he could to destroy Him. But he makes clear that both Jesus and Paul triumphed in the end. God was in the experiences of both. We may also note that after the journey to Jerusalem in Luke Jesus' enemies were thwarted by the resurrection, while after Paul's journey to Rome they were thwarted by Paul's being able to live in his own house and declare the Kingly Rule of God to both Jews and Gentiles.

These silent chapters at the end of the books demonstrate that while revealing the work of the Holy Spirit must be seen as one of Luke's main purposes in both Luke and Acts it cannot be seen as the one central one, otherwise He would have been mentioned in these final chapters in Acts in places where mention of Him might be expected. The Holy Spirit's work is to be seen as only one aspect of the books, not their major theme.

Luke's Slant Towards the Gentiles.

Luke makes apparent that the Good News is for the Gentiles from the very beginning although still confirming the position of the other Gospels, first the Jew and then the Gentiles, which is also a theme of Acts.

In the introductory chapter there is, first of all, great emphasis on the fact that the One Who is coming is coming on behalf of the faithful in Israel, and to turn Israel back to God, but then in chapter two, he describes the coming of the outcasts and unclean to Jesus in the form of the shepherds, followed by the promise that Jesus is coming as God's Salvation prepared in the face 'of all peoples', and to be 'a light for revelation to the Gentiles' (2.16-17).

In chapter 3 he makes it clear that John's message is for the people, then for the outcasts and unclean (the tax collectors) and then finally for the soldiers (3.10-14). It is true that we do not know who exactly these soldier were, but it is later clear in Luke and Acts that the only interested soldiers actually mentioned are Gentiles (7.1-10; Acts 10). And this interest in the whole world is further emphasised when he takes Jesus' genealogy right back to Adam.

In chapter 4 which opens by giving the anticipation of a hugely successful ministry to come (He comes ‘full of the Holy Spirit’ from the Jordan), the temptations themselves make clear that while Jerusalem is central (it is involved in the final temptation), all the nations of the world are also in mind in the second temptation, the idea being conveyed that this is Jesus’ final aim. This is then followed by His visit to Nazareth where He proclaims the purpose of His coming as being that of the anointed Spirit-filled Prophet of Isaiah 61, preaches successfully to Jews, but is rejected by His Jewish neighbours in Nazareth, and in His rebuke to them cites two examples of Old Testament prophets going to the Gentiles. The actual intention of His illustration were not to that end, but they did make clear that He did not draw back from the idea of a ministry to the Gentiles, and that He accepts that God has a genuine message for them as well.

This is then followed by the call of four of His disciples (5.1-11), which is subsequently followed by the approach of one who is unclean (5.12-16), by further Jewish opposition (5.17-26), by the call of Levi the outcast, which includes consorting with his friends (5.27-32), and results in His dealings in Capernaum with a Roman centurion of whom He declares that He has not seen any faith like his in Israel (7.1-10).

It is significant that in his use of Mark he omits the section including the Syro-phoenician woman, around which is built a movement in Jesus' ministry towards the Gentiles, for that would have countered his picture of Gentile involvement as being from the beginning. But he cites the examples of the presenting of the wisdom of Solomon to the Gentile Queen of the South, the Queen of Sheba, and of the preaching of the prophet Jonah to the Gentiles of Nineveh (11.29-32), both incidents which demonstrate that God sought to present His word to the Gentiles. And later on he stresses that men will come 'from east and west and north and south' and sit at table in the Kingly Rule of God (13.29). And then in 17.17 it is a 'foreigner' who returns to give thanks. Following the theme, in 18.10-14 it is the outcast and unclean whose prayers are heard in the Temple, even though he does have to stand afar off. But significantly he does not mention that the Temple was to be a house of prayer for all nations, for in Acts he will reveal that that Temple has been set aside. It is no longer the house of prayer for all nations. And the Gospel finishes off with the declaration that the repentance and forgiveness of sins should be preached in His name to all nations, although beginning in Jerusalem (24.47), which is what Acts is all about.

Thus Luke makes clear, without actually altering the facts, that the Gentiles and the unclean are welcomed by God from the beginning.

Luke's Emphasis on Women.

In a day when women tended to be ignored or looked down on Luke goes out of his way to introduce them and put them on a par with men as regards the Gospel, and there would seem little doubt that part of this tendency can be traced back to Jesus Christ Himself. At this stage we must limit ourselves to illustrating this fact from the text. It will be noted that some examples are common to Mark, which reveals that to a lesser extent Mark does the same. It will also be noted that in a number of cases the women come first, where the order could equally have been reversed (this applies also to the examples cited from Jesus).

- In the birth narratives Luke gives women, both Elizabeth and Mary, an equal say with Zacharias.**
- In chapter 2.25-40 Jesus' visit to Jerusalem is witnessed to by both Simeon and Anna the Prophetess, and it is Mary and not Joseph who is prominent in the description of Jesus' visit to the Temple in His youth.**
- In 4.23-27 Jesus gives two examples of God's blessing on Gentiles in the Old Testament, one concerning a woman, the widow of Zarephath, and one concerning a man, Naaman the Syrian.**
- In chapter 7 he alternates stories of the Roman centurion, the widow of Nain, John the Baptist, and the sinful woman.**
- In 8.1-2 he introduces first the twelve, and then the women who accompanied Jesus, some by name.**

- **Later in chapter 8 we have the man Jairus with his daughter, intermingled with which is the woman with the issue of blood.**
- **In chapters 10-11 the Lord's prayer is surrounded by two examples of a prayerful attitude, on one side is Mary (with Martha), and on the other the visit of the male friend at midnight.**
- **In 11.29-32 he cites two examples of Gentiles who listened to the word of God in the Old Testament, the queen of the south and the men of Nineveh.**
- **In 11.24-28 the man with the unclean spirits is followed by the woman who blesses Jesus.**
- **In 12.22-32, in the sermon on the plain, his examples of those that God provides for are the masculine ravens and the feminine flowers.**
- **In 13.6-17 the man who planted a fig tree is followed by the woman who could not straighten herself. This is followed in 13.18-21 by the man who sowed the mustard seed who is paralleled with the woman who inserted the leaven into the flour, both illustrations of the successful advance of the Kingly Rule of God.**

In chapter 15 the parable of the shepherd and the lost sheep is followed by that of the woman and the lost coin.

- **In 17.34-35 the examples of the men in bed are followed by the women grinding.**
- **In chapter 18 the example of the woman who prayed is followed by the example of the men who prayed.**

- **In 20.45-21.4 the example of the men who devoured widows' houses is followed by the example of the widow who gave her all.**

It will be apparent from a consideration of these examples that some are the result of Jesus' own emphasis on the equality of women in God's sight, and some are specifically deliberately the work of Luke.

The Spread of The Word.

The idea of the impact and spread of the word is central to Luke-Acts. Consider the following:

Lk:1:2: Even as they delivered them to us, which from the beginning were eyewitnesses, and ministers of the word;

Lk:1:38: And Mary said, Behold the handmaid of the Lord; may it be to me according to your word. And the angel departed from her.

Lk:2:29: Lord, now let your servant depart in peace, according to your word:

Lk:3:2: Annas and Caiaphas being the high priests, the word of God came to John the son of Zacharias in the wilderness.

Lk:4:22: And all bore Him witness, and wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of His mouth. And they said, Is not this Joseph's son?

Lk:4:32: And they were astonished at His doctrine, for His word was with power.

Lk:4:36: And they were all amazed, and spake among themselves, saying, What a word is this! for with authority and power He commands the unclean spirits, and they come out.

Lk:5:1: And it came about, that, as the people pressed on Him to hear the word of God, He stood by the lake of Gennesaret,

Lk:5:5: And Simon answering said to him, Master, we have toiled all the night, and have taken nothing: nevertheless at Your word I will let down the net.

Lk:7:7: Wherefore neither thought I myself worthy to come to you: but say in a word, and my servant shall be healed.

Lk:8:11: Now the parable is this: The seed is the word of God.

Lk:8:12: Those by the way side are those who hear; then comes the devil, and takes away the word out of their hearts, lest they should believe and be saved.

Lk:8:13: They on the rock are they, which, when they

hear, receive the word with joy; and these have no root, which for a while believe, and in time of temptation fall away.

Lk:8:15: But that on the good ground are they, which in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, keep it, and bring forth fruit with patience.

Lk:8:21: And He answered and said to them, My mother and my brethren are these which hear the word of God, and do it.

Lk:9:26: For whosoever shall be ashamed of Me and of My words, of him shall the Son of man be ashamed, when He shall come in His own glory, and in His Father's, and of the holy angels.

Lk:10:39: And she had a sister called Mary, which also sat at Jesus' feet, and heard His word.

Lk:11:28: But He said, Yes, rather, blessed are they who hear the word of God, and keep it.

Lk:20:20: And they watched Him, and sent forth spies, which should feign themselves righteous men, that they might take hold of His words, that so they might deliver Him to the power and authority of the governor.

Lk:20:26: And they could not take hold of His words before the people: and they marvelled at His answer, and held their peace.

Lk:21:33: Heaven and earth shall pass away: but My words shall not pass away.

Lk:22:61: And the Lord turned, and looked on Peter. And Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how He had said to him, Before the cock crow, you will deny me thrice.

Lk:24:8: And they remembered His words,

Lk:24:19: And He said to them, What things? And they said to Him, Concerning Jesus of Nazareth, which was a prophet mighty in deed and word before

God and all the people:

Lk:24:44: And He said to them, These are the words which I spoke to you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning Me.

Acts:2:14: But Peter, standing up with the eleven, lifted up his voice, and said unto them, You men of Judaea, and all you who dwell at Jerusalem, be this known to you, and listen to my words:

Acts:2:22: You men of Israel, hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by Him in the midst of you, as you yourselves also know:

Acts:2:40: And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation.

Acts:2:41: Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added to them about three thousand souls.

Acts:4:4: Howbeit many of them who heard the word believed; and the number of the men was about five thousand.

Acts:4:29: And now, Lord, behold their threatenings: and grant to Your servants, that with all boldness they may speak Your word,

Acts:4:31: And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they spoke the word of God with boldness.

Acts:5:5: And Ananias hearing these words fell down, and gave up the ghost: and great fear came on all them that heard these things.

Acts:5:20: Go, stand and speak in the temple to the

people all the words of this life.

Acts:6:2: Then the twelve called the multitude of the disciples unto them, and said, It is not rational that we should leave the word of God, and serve tables.

Acts:6:4: But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word.

Acts:6:7: And the word of God increased; and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly; and a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith.

Acts:6:11: Then they suborned men, which said, We have heard him speak blasphemous words against Moses, and against God.

Acts:6:13: And set up false witnesses, which said, This man ceases not to speak blasphemous words against this holy place, and the law:

Acts:8:4: Therefore they that were scattered abroad went every where preaching the word.

Acts:8:14: Now when the apostles who were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent to them Peter and John:

Acts:8:25: And they, when they had testified and preached the word of the Lord, returned to Jerusalem, and preached the gospel in many villages of the Samaritans.

Acts:10:22: And they said, Cornelius the centurion, a just man, and one who fears God, and of good report among all the nation of the Jews, was warned from God by an holy angel to send for you to his house, and to hear words from you.

Acts:10:36: The word which God sent to the children of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ: (he is Lord of all:)

Acts:10:37: That word, I say, you know, which was published throughout all Judaea, and began from

Galilee, after the baptism which John preached;
Acts:10:44: While Peter yet spoke these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word.
Acts:11:1: And the apostles and brethren that were in Judaea heard that the Gentiles had also received the word of God.
Acts:11:14: Who will tell you words, whereby you and all your house will be saved.
Acts:11:16: Then remembered I the word of the Lord, how that he said, John indeed baptized with water; but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit.

Acts:11:19: Now they which were scattered abroad upon the persecution that arose about Stephen travelled as far as Phenice, and Cyprus, and Antioch, preaching the word to none but to the Jews only.

Acts:12:24: But the word of God grew and multiplied.

Acts:13:5: And when they were at Salamis, they preached the word of God in the synagogues of the Jews: and they had also John as their servant.

Acts:13:7: Which was with the deputy of the country, Sergius Paulus, a prudent man; who called for Barnabas and Saul, and desired to hear the word of God.

Acts:13:15: And after the reading of the law and the prophets the rulers of the synagogue sent to them, saying, You men and brethren, if you have any word of exhortation for the people, say on.

Acts:13:26: Men and brethren, children of the stock of Abraham, and whoever among you fears God, to you is the word of this salvation sent.

Acts:13:42: And when the Jews were gone out of the synagogue, the Gentiles besought that these words might be preached to them the next sabbath.

Acts:13:44: And the next sabbath day came almost the whole city together to hear the word of God.

Acts:13:46: Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold, and said, It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you: but seeing you put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles.

Acts:13:48: And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord: and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed.

Acts:13:49: And the word of the Lord was published throughout all the region.

Acts:14:3: Long time therefore abode they speaking boldly in the Lord, which gave testimony to the word of his grace, and granted signs and wonders to be done by their hands.

Acts:14:25: And when they had preached the word in Perga, they went down into Attalia:

Acts:15:7: And when there had been much disputing, Peter rose up, and said to them, Men and brethren, you know how that a good while ago God made choice among us, that the Gentiles by my mouth should hear the word of the gospel, and believe.

Acts:15:15: And to this agree the words of the prophets; as it is written,

Acts:15:32: And Judas and Silas, being prophets also themselves, exhorted the brethren with many words, and confirmed them.

Acts:15:35: Paul also and Barnabas continued in Antioch, teaching and preaching the word of the Lord, with many others also.

Acts:15:36: And some days after Paul said unto Barnabas, Let us go again and visit our brethren in every city where we have preached the word of the Lord, and see how they do.

Acts:16:6: Now when they had gone throughout Phrygia and the region of Galatia, and were forbidden of the Holy Spirit to preach the word in Asia,

Acts:16:32: And they spoke to him the word of the Lord, and to all who were in his house.

Acts:17:11: These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so.

Acts:17:13: But when the Jews of Thessalonica had knowledge that the word of God was preached of Paul at Berea, they came there also, and stirred up the people.

Acts:18:11: And he continued there a year and six months, teaching the word of God among them.

Acts:19:10: And this continued by the space of two years; so that all they which dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks.

Acts:19:20: So mightily grew the word of God and prevailed.

Acts:20:32: And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all those who are sanctified.

Acts:20:35: I have shown you all things, how that so labouring you ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how He said, It is more blessed to give than to receive.

Acts:22:22: And they gave him audience to this word, and then lifted up their voices, and said, Away with such a fellow from the earth: for it is not fit that he should live.

Acts:26:25: But he said, I am not mad, most noble Festus; but speak forth the words of truth and

soberness.

Acts:28:25: And when they agreed not among themselves, they departed, after that Paul had spoken one word, Well spoke the Holy Spirit by Esaias the prophet to our fathers,

Acts:28:29: And when he had said these words, the Jews departed, and had great reasoning among themselves.

The centrality of the importance of the word (and words) cannot be doubted.