

**JESUS MOVES FROM HIS EARTHLY
MINISTRY TO HIS HEAVENLY MINISTRY!**
ACTS CH1:1-5

ILLUSTRATION

The Sequel! Who can name different film sequels? Ian?

JESUS' MINISTRY BEGINS! V1-2

Luke is only mentioned three times in the New Testament and each time through the apostle Paul's writings we learn something about the qualities of Luke, **Colossians Ch4:14 (my dear friend Luke the Doctor), Philemon 24 (my fellow-worker) and 2 Timothy Ch4:11 (Only Luke is with me)**. What do we learn about Luke? He is a dear friend to Paul and others, along with being a medic! He is regarded by Paul as a fellow worker in the gospel and remains a faithful friend, helper and encourager to the end, as he was present in Rome for both of Paul's imprisonments!

We meet him for the first time in Troas where he joins Paul and Silas and Timothy on the second missionary journey (Acts Ch16:10), note the "we". He may have been converted there and joined the missionary team as a kind of staff doctor.

Along with the above references, in the Book of Acts also written by Luke, he is mentioned in the we/us accounts, during **Paul's second missionary journey covered from Acts Ch15:36 – Ch18:22**. Finally he is mentioned once on the **third missionary journey of Paul in Acts Ch20:15**, where we can gather that Luke was part of the team that Paul had assembled to spread the gospel, making Luke an evangelist! The volume of writings contained in both the Gospel of Luke and the Book of Acts, not only makes the Gospel of Luke the largest, but combined with Acts, **Luke in terms of volume is the single biggest contributor of the entire New Testament**.

All these years in all these travels, including two years in Palestine, Luke is taking notes about the works and words of Jesus and the progress of the church. Finally, God moves him to write a two-volume work that makes up more of the New Testament than what any other New Testament writer wrote, including the apostle Paul.

In the Gospel of Luke we find him writing to his friend the "*most excellent Theophilus*" **and is so concerned about his spiritual well-being**, he sets out clearly the Gospel of Jesus Christ. It's probable at the time of writing that Gospel, Theophilus is not yet saved, notice the way that Luke refers to him, as it is highly unlikely that Luke would greet a Christian in the same way. Theophilus is probably some kind of Roman official because of the title "most excellent" which Luke uses only for Roman officials like Felix (Acts Ch23:26) and Festus (Acts Ch26:25), the governors of Judea. Theophilus had some knowledge of Jesus and the church, but it was not clear and certain and complete. Luke's aim was to give him a faithful account of what Jesus did and said and then of the progress of the church in the world.

However, look at how Luke addresses Theophilus in Acts Ch1:1, it's so different. ***It is probably different because Theophilus is now born again!***

Dr. Luke is an amazing man! He was not an eye-witness to the life, death, burial, resurrection of Jesus. He was more like an **investigative reporter**. He was a guy who would go out, and he would investigate. So, he would go talk to those who knew Jesus,

kids who grew up with him, family members who were still alive.

He would go to the places that Paul preached and that Peter preached and where churches were assembled, and he would do the work of an **investigative reporter**: he would talk to the eye-witnesses, he would gather the oral tradition, he would look at any evidence that was there, and he would try to collect and amass the story of Jesus in the book of Luke and Jesus' people in the book of Acts.

He was very close friends with Paul. As we read together the book of Acts, you're going to see certain passages where Paul says, "We went here, and we did this, and we did that," and you wonder, "Well, I know who Paul is. Who's Mr. 'We'?" Mr. "We" would be Dr. Luke. Dr. Luke is the travelling companion of Paul. He's friends with Paul. I think that he might have actually also been Paul's personal physician. As Paul's getting beaten, shipwrecked, homeless, imprisoned, a doctor would help. And he's got with him Dr. Luke. And so, he's there travelling with Paul, and he's seeing what's happening, and he's recording what's happening. He is the **investigative reporter**, who's doing the work of going back to look at what Jesus did, and also an eye witness, recording what's happening through the Holy Spirit with leaders like Paul.

Now, Luke and Acts are two books of the New Testament, but together they constitute the majority of the New Testament. Just by sheer length, Luke writes the majority of the New Testament. ***The largest number of books in the New Testament is written by Paul, who, again, is a friend of Luke. And so, Luke is involved in, to some degree, the vast majority—of almost the entirety—of the New Testament!***

JESUS' MINISTRY CONTINUES! V3

Jesus continues to talk to the disciples about the "**Kingdom of God**", a phrase that when used in the Gospels signifies the saving and sovereign action of God through Jesus, and it is the same theme which is now to continue through the power of the Holy Spirit, working in the disciples (Ch8:12, Ch14:22, Ch19:8, Ch20:25, Ch28:23 + 31).

The Bible notes the time span of "40 days and nights" in a number of references. For example, Genesis Ch7:4+12 tells us God was so troubled by the wickedness of the world that he planned to destroy all life – with the exception of those righteous few on the ark – and "rain fell on the earth forty days and forty nights."

Later, after Moses led the Israelites out of Egypt toward the Promised Land, God called him to the top of Mount Sinai for "forty days and forty nights without eating bread or drinking water" (Exodus Ch34:28). There, God gave Moses His covenant, the Ten Commandments, so they could live in alignment with the Lord.

On the eve of their long-awaited entry to Canaan, God had Moses send out spies into the land so they could explore. They spent 40 days and nights scouting the land, then returned and reported all they had found (Numbers Ch13:25).

In the famous story of David and the giant Goliath, God's people endure 40 days of taunting and challenges from Goliath before David is sent to the battlefield with bread for his brothers and decides he's the one who will fight for his people (1st Samuel Ch17:16).

When the prophet Elijah fled the wicked queen Jezebel, he travelled 40 days and nights until he reached Mount Horeb (1st Kings Ch19:8). There, in the shelter of a cave, he heard God — not in the mighty wind, earthquake, or fire, but in a gentle whisper.

After Jonah's rebellion, he prophesied about God's wrath to the Ninevites, telling them they would be destroyed in 40 days (Jonah Ch3:4).

Many, many years from that time, the Bible tells us that after His baptism, Jesus was led by the Holy Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by Satan. He fasted 40 days and nights, and the devil tempted Jesus there in His hunger and apparent weakness (Matthew Ch4:2).

JESUS' MINISTRY THROUGH THE HOLY SPIRIT AND THE APOSTLES! V4-5

We cannot understand the power of the Holy Spirit apart from the life of Jesus. There's no example of what it means to live a **Spirit-empowered life** unless we look at the life of Jesus. And so, that's what Luke is telling us. He says, "OK, Jesus lived by the power of the Holy Spirit." He lives without sin, he dies for our sin, he rises for our sin, he evidences it for forty days, and he tells his people, "Don't go do ministry yet. Wait. You need power. The Holy Spirit's coming to cause you to be like me." That's why the former book and the latter book go together.

So, in the book of Luke, what is the relationship between Jesus and the Holy Spirit?

1. Jesus was **conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit** in his mother, Mary. Jesus' conception, his entrance into human history as a man, was by the power of the Holy Spirit. (Luke Ch1:35)
2. At Jesus' baptism, God the Father speaks from heaven. The whole Trinity is there. "This is my Son, in whom I am well pleased." Here's Jesus, the Son of God, the second member of the Trinity coming up out of the water. Who descends on Jesus? **The Holy Spirit in the form of a dove**. This is to show publicly that Jesus is anointed by the Holy Spirit, that he's indwelt by the Holy Spirit, that he's filled by the Holy Spirit, that he's empowered by the Holy Spirit, that his whole life is by the power of the Holy Spirit. That's why this was public, so everybody could see it. See, Jesus already knew it. This wasn't for Jesus' understanding; this was for our understanding. (Luke Ch3:21-22)
3. The book of Luke, then, goes on to say that Jesus was **"full of the Holy Spirit."** How many of you have heard, "You should live a Spirit-filled life." That's true. You know what that looks like? Jesus. Any time we lift someone else up and say, "Well, there's the Spirit-filled person, be like them," wrong person. None of us sinners are perfectly, continually full of the Holy Spirit. **We resist (Acts Ch7:51), grieve (Eph Ch4:30), we quench (1st Thess Ch5:19), and we insult the Holy Spirit at times (Hebrews Ch10:29). But Jesus was, "full of the Holy Spirit"—continually, perfectly.** (Luke Ch4:1)
4. The Gospel of Luke says that he was **"led by the Spirit."** So, Jesus goes here because that's where the Spirit is directing him. He teaches these people, he leads these people, he casts out these demons, he prays over this crowd. Why? Because he's led by the Holy Spirit. (Luke Ch4:1)
5. We read in the Gospel of Luke that he came **"in the power of the Spirit."** How did he teach? In the power of the Holy Spirit. How did he cast out demons? In the power of the Holy Spirit. How were those who were blind given sight? Because he was empowered by the Holy Spirit. He came with, by, for, through the power of the Holy Spirit. See, ministry has programs, but it does nothing without power. (Luke Ch4:14)
6. The Gospel of Luke says that he **"rejoiced in the Holy Spirit."** When he had joy, when he celebrated, it was because the joy of the Lord was his strength. It was the Holy Spirit in him, causing him to glorify, to worship, to enjoy, to adore, to thank, to bless God the Father. (Luke Ch10:21)
7. Early on in his ministry, he walks into a synagogue, he opens the book of Isaiah, Isaiah 61:1-2, and he reads it. Do you remember what he reads? He reads this:

“The Spirit of the Lord is upon me to preach good news and to set captives free.” And then he closed it up, and he said this: “Today, this Scripture is fulfilled in your hearing.” Isaiah wrote seven hundred years prior and said, “There’s one who is coming, and the Spirit of the Lord will reside on him so that he could preach good news and set captives free from sin and death. ***”And Jesus says, “I’m here. That’s me. I’m the one you’ve all been waiting for, and the Spirit of the Lord is upon me.”*** (Luke Ch4:16-21)

What is the essence of being baptized with the Holy Spirit? Is it the sound of wind, the tongues of fire, the other languages, the words of praise, the prophecies and dreams and visions? Can we get at the essence of what it means to be baptized with the Holy Spirit, or does it have to include all these things?

I think the essence of being baptized with the Holy Spirit is ***when a person, who is already a believer, receives extraordinary spiritual power for Christ-exalting.*** There are good reasons for believing that these disciples were already born again and converted and had the Holy Spirit dwelling in them (John Ch13:10; Ch15:3; Romans Ch8:9). But even more important than that is the fact that the issue of the new birth and conversion of the disciples is simply not in view at all in Acts Ch1 + Ch2. Jesus doesn’t say, “Wait in Jerusalem until you are born again or converted or put into the body of Christ.” He says, “But you will receive power.....” He doesn’t say, “You shall receive membership in the body of Christ when the Holy Spirit has come upon you.” He says, “But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you.”

So filling with the “Spirit” is a special empowering for ministry that is described as “.....baptised with the Holy Spirit.” and this idea of “baptism” is almost always associated with this extraordinary power for ministry in the book of Acts. Notice that when the baptism with the Spirit happens in Acts Ch2:4, Luke says, “All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit” The effect of that filling was a powerful and even miraculous testimony to the truth of Christ that resulted in 3,000 people being converted (Acts Ch2:41).

So here my conclusion is that being baptized with the Holy Spirit is when a believer in Jesus Christ receives extraordinary power for Christ-exalting ministry.

To be an apostle, what four things were required?

- To be chosen by Jesus (v2)
- To be witnesses of the resurrected Jesus (v3)
- To be commissioned by Jesus (v4)
- To receive the power of the Holy Spirit by Jesus (v5)

APPLICATION

How would you describe the link between the Book of Luke and Acts?

What proof did Luke provide to Theophilus that Jesus was alive?

What is the significance of 40 in the Bible?

What are the requirements for being an apostle?

Are there modern day apostles? Why? Why not?