

Session 4 A Biblical Understanding of the Holy Spirit For Today
Topic: The Spirit in Luke-Acts writings.

The Gospel of Luke

The work of the Spirit is demonstrated as programmatic and decisive in this account of the gospel. God is sending the disciples into the world.

Luke 4: 16 – 30.

1. What is being associated with Jesus in verses 18-19 and 21?
2. What was the point Jesus was making by using verses 26-27?

In the story reported in Luke, we can observe the movement of the Spirit.

Luke 1:5 to 4:15 shows the initiative of the Spirit in establishing God's presence. God's presence is restoring Israel and welcoming people into a new world.

3. Read Luke 1:5 (Revelation to Zechariah and Elizabeth)
4. Read Luke 1:44 (Elizabeth visited)
5. Read Luke 1:35 (Angel reveals to Mary – compare with 2 Samuel 7:12-13)

Holy Spirit animates and initiates prophetic interpretation.

6. Luke 1:68-79 (What is important in this encounter?)
7. Luke 2: 25-27 (Mary and Joseph in the Temple)
 - Why is the Temple associated with prophesy about Jesus/Nation?
 - Simeon with Spirit upon him prayed (Luke 2:29-32)
 - Anna prophetess 84 years [12x7] celebrated divine freedom (Luke 2:36-38).

Baptism of Jesus empowered by the Spirit:

8. Spirit Baptism along with water baptism – Luke 3:16, 21-22
 - Significance of Spirit/Dove → Descended in bodily form (see Gen. 1:2 and Gen 8:8)
perhaps symbolizing the peaceful mission of the Son of God.

9. Spirit Anointed Son - Led by the Spirit into the wilderness – Luke 4:2-13, 14-15.

10. Jesus as Spirit empowered leader – Luke 8: 18-21

11. Spirit inspired prayer - Luke 11:2-13. How is the Holy Spirit described in relation to the faithful?

12. Spirit inspires intellectual speech – Luke 12:8-12

13. Holy Spirit is representing God/Messiah -
Luke 6:5; Luke 13:52; Luke 15:28; Luke 16:7.

14. Holy Spirit is expanding conditions for mission
Luke 23:46-47; Luke 24:46-49

What can we learn from this commission of Jesus to present day Christians?

The Acts of the Early Witnesses

1. There is a thoughtful interpretation of the times in relation of the decisive activity of the Spirit. Acts 2:4, 11, 14-40.

There is a relation with “filled with the Spirit” and speaking in “tongues” in this passage. This relationship of Spirit and speech is for sharing the way of God. (See Acts 2 with 1 Corinthians 12 -14).

2. Spirit not only empowers speech but also facilitates action.

a. Holy Spirit “fills” the believer with resources for prophetic eloquence – Acts 2:4; 4:31;

b. Holy Spirit is giving to humanity as a gift. – Acts 10:45; Acts 15:8.

c. Holy Spirit confronts opposition - Acts 5: 3,9.

Spirit as Mission Director

3. Story of Saul’s total turn- around in Acts 9. Read role of Anania in Acts 9:15-18.

What is the significance of the transformation of Saul?

4. Story of Peter’s conversion – Welcoming of Gentiles. (Acts 10: 1-48).

5. Story of Change of Mission Priority – (Acts 16:6-10)

What can we discern from these major activities of the Spirit?

Spirit organizes challenge to ethnic and human made boundaries of God’s purpose to insist on an inclusive “Jesus Way” community – erasing differences between people.

6. Spirit validates within conferencing God’s message accepting “the Samaritans.”
Acts 8:15-17.

7. Spirit welcomes God-worshipping African leader via Philip – Acts 8:26-39.

It took a lot of convincing of Jerusalem leaders –

8. Peter explains the Spirit initiative – (Acts 11:1-18; 15:7-11).
How significant is Acts 11:18 to Christian ministry today?

9. Paul and Barnabas explains the Spirit initiative to the leaders – Acts 15:2-5

James, the brother of Jesus, (a chief leader) quoted scripture as validation of the activity of the Spirit. (Acts 15: 16-18 quoting from Amos 15: 16-18).

Note: Conversations on God’s mission, not only about cultural or doctrinal practices, led by the evidence of the Spirit yields to the priority of God’s direction and reign.

Baptism and the Activity of the Holy Spirit

There is no one pattern of conversion as a sign of distinct activity of Holy Spirit.

10. Acts 2: 37-39 (See Acts 19:1-7)
[Message – believing response – baptism – gifts of the Spirit]
Who is receiving the message? What shift is taking place?

11. Acts 8:12-17
[Message – baptism – delay – gift of the Spirit]
Who is receiving the message? What shift is taking place?

12. Acts 10: 44-48
[Message – gifts of the Spirit (Tongues) – Faith? - Baptism]
Who is receiving the message? What shift is taking place?

Luke/Acts interpretation of the activity of the Spirit suggests urgency and priority of God’s activity that is continual until total transformation of life towards a new world.

13. Compare Joel 2: 28 with Acts 2:17. The “Last Days” represented a significant historical moment. What is this significant moment in relation to this activity of the Spirit?

How are we to understand the work of the Spirit today in light of the above understanding?