

THE SPIRIT MOTIF IN LUKE 4:14-30; ACTS 1:8 AND THE CHURCH TODAY

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Introduction

Luke has been termed the Gospel of the Spirit. This is seen in how he highlights the place of the Spirit in the life and ministry of Jesus in the Gospel and in the early church as recorded in the Acts of the Apostles. The authorship of both books has been unanimously attributed to Luke and many times treated as one two-volume work. Luke 4:14-30 is the key passage in the Gospel with regard to the ministry of Jesus. In the Acts of the Apostles (also dubbed the 'Acts of the Holy Spirit') the power of the Spirit is seen through the activities of the early church especially in preaching and in the working of miracles. Jesus gave the mandate to the disciples to carry out the work He began not through their own power but the Spirit's power (Acts 1:8). The Spirit upon Jesus was for several purposes, some unique to Him alone and others duplicated through the early church as depicted in the Acts of the Apostles. Jesus through the power of the Spirit was prophet and charismatic; proclaimer and demonstrator; and preacher and healer.

The Holy Spirit upon Jesus was first for the purpose of the fulfilment of the functions of the Messiah. Second, it was for proclamation, the working of miracles and other liberating activities. Only in the office of the Messiah is the church not able to duplicate. The Acts of the Apostles record activities of the early church that parallel some of the work Jesus did especially in the area of proclamation and miracles. Just as the Holy Spirit upon Jesus was for the purpose of liberation so was the Spirit upon the members of the early church.

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My argument in this article is that there ought to be continuity in what happened in the ministry of Jesus, which was continued in the early church and what the church is to do today. The church at present is faced with the choice of being biblical and at the same time being relevant. Jesus' mandate has not changed and the nations still need liberation like in the time of Jesus and the early church. Modern problems are even more severe and complex.

The power of the Holy Spirit is needed today if not more. The church needs the empowerment to proclaim and to liberate. Issues faced by the nations now include spiritual, psychological, social, political and physical oppression. The power of the Holy Spirit to liberate is therefore crucial.

Luke's Highlight on the Holy Spirit

Luke in his Gospel highlights the role of the Holy Spirit in the life and ministry of Jesus. Lukan redaction of his sources in the writing of Luke 4: 14-30 reveals his central concern on the role of the Holy Spirit in the life and ministry of Jesus. The Septuagint (LXX) is Luke's main text from which he quotes his Old Testament references.¹ [1] An important aspect is the centrality of the Spirit in the ministry of Jesus for the purpose of carrying out the liberation work; preach the gospel to the poor, announce deliverance to the captives, recovery of sight to the blind, liberty to the oppressed and declaration of the Lord's jubilee (Luke 4:18-19). The scholars who insist on Lukan creativity of his text include Rudolf Bultmann, J. M. Creed, Leaney M. Dibelius, among others.²

James Shelton presumes that the presence of the Spirit in one source of Luke's narrative could have elicited his choice of the source.³ Whatever

¹ Bruce D. Childton, *God in Strength: Jesus' Announcement of the Kingdom* (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1987) 159ff.

² Bultmann, *The History of Synoptic Tradition*. Trans J. Marsh (Oxford: Blackwell, 1972), 31f; J.M. Creed, *The Gospel According to St. Luke: the Greek Text with introduction, Notes and Indices* (London: MacMillan, 1942), 64; A.R.C. Leaney, *A Commentary on the Gospel According to St. Luke* (Londong: Adam and Charles Black, 1966), 50ff. M. Dibelius, *From Tradition to Gospel*. Trans. B. L. Woolf (New York: Scribner's 1965), 110ff.

³ James Shelton, *Mighty in Word and Deed: the Role of the Holy Spirit in Luke-Acts*, (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1991), 64.

conclusion is arrived at regarding Luke's sources, it is evident that his personal contribution is enormous. The centrality of the Spirit in the life of Jesus is so strong in Luke that he mentions the Spirit in the Gospel touching the life and ministry of Jesus. In Luke 4:14, 18-19 the writer states that the Spirit led Jesus to the wilderness for temptation and later Jesus comes out of the temptation in the power of the Spirit and proceeds to declare the Spirit's anointing upon his life. This emphasis is missing in the other synoptic Gospels (Matthew and Mark). Luke seems to have deliberately positioned references to the Spirit in the text.

A closer examination of the text shows that Luke has made personal contribution in several areas to highlight his purpose. He had made changes to the materials he used by first placing the story in the early part of the ministry of Jesus. This is unlike the other Gospels who place the story much later in the ministry of Jesus. By placing the Isaiah declaration at the start of the ministry, Luke ensures that Jesus does his work as recorded in the rest of the Gospel under the anointing of the Spirit. The preaching and the miracles that follow come by the power of the Spirit. Jesus does not enter into the ministry without the anointing of the Spirit. The Isaiah passage authenticates his ministry. Under the power of the Spirit, Jesus announces the Spirit's activity through his life. Luke does not presume that Jesus had not done any public work for his fame had already spread. It is also possible that Luke is anticipating Jesus' empowered work. Fred B. Craddock situates the pericope within the context of the section of Jesus' ministry in Galilee (4:19-9:50). This section comprises stories of Jesus' itinerary preaching around, teaching, healing, exorcism, and meeting challenges.⁴

The second change that Luke has brought about is the rewording of Isaiah 61:1-2. Here Luke made some changes in the message guided by his theological focus. He deviates significantly from the LXX whereas he is known to be generally faithful to the LXX in his citations of the Old Testament. This is the only place in the entire Gospel where he had made alterations. Lukan redaction is of great import in this section as it highlights the Spirit's role. Here Luke seems to be interested in the centrality of the Spirit, the prophetic activity as a result of receiving the Spirit, and the

⁴ Fred B. Craddock, *Luke: Interpretation* ed. James Luther Mays (Louisville: John Knox Press, 1990), 59ff.

liberation by the Spirit. The deviation from the LXX is seen in several areas as adequately summarized by H. J. B. Combrink:

After *apestalken me* [he has sent me] in 4: 18 is omitted *iasasthat toussuntetrimmennous ten kardian* [to heal the brken hearted] (Is. 61:1); at the end of v. 18 is inserted *aposteilai tethraumenous en afesei* [to set the oppressed at liberty] from Is. 58: 6; at the beginning of v. 19 *kalesai* [to announce] of the LXX is substituted by *keruxai* [to proclaim]; and after *dekton* [acceptable] in v. 19 is omitted *kai hemeran antapodoseos* [and the day of vengeance of our Lord] (Is. 61: 2) . . . Note that 24 out of 26 words in the quotation are identical with the LXX.⁵

Many explanations have been given to substantiate the changes in the text. As already stated, Luke made the changes due to his theological position. He places emphasis on the idea of liberation. Luke also wanted to make clear the centrality of the Spirit especially in the work of liberation.

Luke focuses on the salvific dimension of Jesus' work. This is Luke's universalistic liberation by the Spirit. In his understanding, the anointed preaching of Jesus brings about salvation. R. P. Menzies makes an important statement on the anointing upon Jesus:

According to Luke, Jesus' pneumatic anointing, rather than the source of his unique filial relationship to God or his initiation into the new age, was the means by which Jesus was equipped to carry out his

⁵ H. J. B. Combrink, "The structure and significance of Luke 4:16-30," *Neotestamentica* 7 (1973): 34. The changes are significant for instance the difference between *kaleo* and *keruxai* is noteworthy: The root for *kalesai* is *kaleo* and can be translated 'to call', 'to call aloud', 'utter in a loud voice', 'to invite;', 'to call' i.e. 'to name, by name', 'to give a name to,' 'to receive the name of', 'to receive as a name' 'to give some name to one', 'call his name,' 'to be called' i.e. to bear a name or title (among men), 'to salute' one by name.' *Khrzai* (*keruzai*) is the stronger word than *kaleo* in reference to preaching and is mostly used in the NT. The root is *kerussw* (*kerusso*) and translated 'to herald' (as a public crier), especially divine truth (the gospel). It means 'preach', 'proclaim', 'publish'. See W.E. Vine, Merrill F. Unger and Willam White, *Vine's Complete expository dictionary of Old and New Testament words* [computer file], electronic ed., Logos Library System, (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1991, c. 1996).

divinely appointed task. Thus Luke's portrayal of Jesus' pneumatic anointing, which anticipates the experience of the early church, is consistent with his prophetic pneumatology.⁶

When compared with his other writing (Acts), Luke's motif comes into sharp focus. The centrality of the Spirit in the life of Jesus is indisputable. The work that Jesus did was attributed to the power of the Spirit (Acts 10:38).

The Purpose of the Spirit in Jesus' Life

Luke stresses the presence of the Spirit upon Jesus' life by repeating in Acts 10:38 what he had already said in Luke 4:18-19. By doing this, Luke highlights the connection between the Spirit upon Jesus and the miracles, which took place through him. The emphasis on healing resulting from the Spirit's activity is unmistakable in the twin references:

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to preach the good news to the poor. He has sent to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord. (Luke 4:18-19)

How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power; how he went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with him. (Acts 10:38)

Both passages highlight the empowerment of the Holy Spirit upon the life of Jesus. The Spirit in the beginning of the ministry of Jesus is to enable him to reveal and heal (word and deed). The Spirit enables him to perform miracles, to speak and teach with authority. Jesus in Luke's Gospel is anointed to take the good news to the poor while in Acts the church leaders receive the same anointing to do the work that Jesus did but also going another step beyond by taking the message and work to all nations. Luke in both the Gospel and Acts of the apostles emphasizes the work of the Spirit

⁶ Robert P. Menzies, *The Development of Early Christian Pneumatology with Special Reference to Luke-Acts* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1991), 177.

for ministry. Luke indicates that the gift of the Spirit is for all, male and female, young and old (Acts 2:17-18). There is also a note of universalism, which is a characteristic of Luke. The promise of the Spirit will be upon all flesh (Acts 2: 16-18, 38).

The presence of the Spirit in the life of Jesus is also highlighted in that all the major stages in his life are marked by the presence of the spirit right from his conception to his ascension. The spirit at conception is the same one who anointed him for the ministry of liberation (Luke 3:22; 4:18). The major focus in Luke is showing Jesus not merely possessing the Spirit but also, he is subject to the Spirit's leading and empowerment. The public ministry of Jesus from the time of his baptism to the time of his ascension is charged by the presence of the Holy Spirit working through his life. Jesus in his public ministry is the bearer of the spirit not for his own sake but for the sake of the people who are in need, those needing liberation; the sick, the poor and the oppressed. P. H. Alexander supports this view that Jesus expects his divine commission of preaching the good news to the poor to be effected through the power of the Spirit.⁷

Certain scholars have stated that the purpose of the spirit was the establishment of Jesus as the Messiah.⁸ The argument of this paper is that the Spirit upon Jesus was mainly to enable Jesus serve as prophet as well as charismatic preacher.

Jesus as Prophet and Charismatic

Luke presents Jesus as a prophet who teaches and performs miracles as well as suffering rejection. C. H. Dodd has mentioned fifteen characteristics of Jesus the prophet.⁹ He has likened him to the Old Testament prophets in

⁷ P. H. Alexander, "Jesus Christ and the Spirit," in *dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements* eds. Standley M. Burges and Gary B. McGee (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1988), 490.

⁸ Roger Stronstad, *The Charismatic Theology of St. Luke* (Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, 1984), 39.

⁹ Quoted by Barrett in Barrett, *The Holy Spirit and the Gospel Tradition*, 94-5. Barrett summarized them: 1) Jesus spoke with authoritative note, 2) He gave most of his teaching in poetical form, 3) he seemed to have had pneumatical traits associated with prophecy such as vision and audition, 4) made prediction, 5) acted

some areas but in others, Jesus has unique characteristics. According to Arther A. Just, the twofold character of Lukan Christology is Jesus as the prophet and Jesus as the miracle worker.¹⁰ The first image is that of his work as Messiah in the public ministry among the people. The second feature is his work as teacher, miracle worker as well as messianic claims leading to his rejection.

Jesus as prophet, who teaches and performs miracles, is evident in the sermon at Nazareth. As a prophet, he proclaims release (liberation message) and as a miracle worker, he performs deeds of liberation such as healing. Many see this narrative as foundational for the rest of the work of Jesus in the Gospel of Luke. He quotes from Isaiah 61:1-2 outlining his ministry as preaching good news to the poor, setting captives free, giving sight to the blind, deliverance to the oppressed, and announcing the Lord's jubilee. Just elaborates:

In quoting Isaiah 61, Jesus shows that the essence of his proclamation is release: release from the bondage of sin, sickness, and Satan. This proclamation is demonstrated in the miracles that Jesus performs; they testify to the presence of God in Jesus for salvation. Miracles certainly show that Jesus is the Son of God. But at the same time, they show that present in Jesus is the freedom he announced at

out his message e.g. the last supper, 6) supported his teaching often by referring to OT prophets, 7) like the OT prophets his eschatology was of radical ethical nature, 8) announced the rule of God, 9) in the gospels he seems to be a preacher of repentance than an ordinary teacher, 10) he received a special calling attested by pneumatic experience (like the other prophets), 11) his having divine revelation involved a close communion with, a knowledge of God, 12) like the prophets he is a representative of God, to follow his teaching is doing God's will, and so to reject him is tantamount to rejecting God, 13) has a mission to Israel like his predecessors and so whatever he does and says relate to this, 14) "the Hebrew prophets thought of themselves as not merely declaring the Word of God, but playing a part in the fulfilment of that word. . . Jesus frequently speaks as though his own ministry was in fact the critical event in history, and in particular . . . he seems to have expected from his death some momentous consequence." 15) Jesus stands in the line of succession of prophets but goes beyond them as far as his religion is concerned.

¹⁰ Arther A. Just Jr. *Luke 1: 1-9: 50: Concordia Commentary*. (St. Louise: Concordia Publishing House, 1996), 185.

Nazareth, as he casts out demons, heals the sick, forgives sins, and raises the dead. Wherever Jesus is, there is the miracle of God's presence in the flesh for our salvation. Thus, Jesus' teaching and miracles announce that God's salvation is present and active in his ministry to release the creation from its bondage.¹¹

The point Just does not clearly state is the role of the Spirit in Jesus as the prophet, manifesting charismatic qualities especially the ability to perform miracles. The anointing by the Spirit enables him to carry out the work of liberation. The prophet is a man full of the Spirit and is led by the Spirit. The leading words in the text are, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me . . . to preach the good news to the poor." In order for him to proclaim, heal, cast out demons, raise the dead and perform all manner of miracles, the Spirit has to empower him. This is an important point in Lukan Christology; it cannot be separated from pneumatology.

Arther Just also brings out the idea of liberation. He uses the word 'release' to identify the work of Jesus as that of empowerment by the Spirit to release humankind from sin, sickness, and satanic forces. Referring to the Old Testament, we note that Israel had many who were regarded to the Lord's anointed. Examples include the priests (Exodus 28:41), the kings (1 Samuel 10:1) and the prophets (1 Kings 19:16) In Isaiah 45:1, Cyrus, a foreign king was termed 'the Lord's anointed.' Jesus' anointing was unique in some respects. He is called the 'Anointed One,' the 'Christ' (in Greek or 'Messiah' (in Hebrew)).¹²

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Anointing in Scripture means to authorize, or set apart, a person for a particular work or service (Is.61:1). The anointed person belong to God in a special sense. The phrases, "the Lord's anointed," "my anointed," "your anointed," or his anointed" are used of Saul (1 Sam. 26:9, 11), David (2 Sam. 22:51), and Solomon (2 Chr. 6:42). In the New Testament, all who are Christ's disciples are said to be anointed; they are God's very own, set apart and commissioned for service (2 Cor. 1:21).

Priests, kings, and prophets were anointed. Oil was poured on the head of the person being anointed (Ex. 29:7). Kings were set apart through the ritual of anointing, which was performed by a prophet who acted in God's power and authority (1 Sam. 15:1). The OT also records two instances of the anointing of a prophet (1 Kings 19:16; Is. 61:1).

Jesus is described as 'anointed' (Messiah). This description is found in the Psalms of the OT that prophesy the coming of Christ and in the preaching of the apostle Peter in the book of Acts. "Messiah" comes from the Hebrew word for 'anointed' and 'Christ' comes from a Greek word.

The Isaiah passage read by Jesus was understood in prophetic terms in Judaism. The reactions by the crowd in Nazareth suggest that Jesus may have claimed to be a prophet. Stronstad states that Jesus challenged the people to accept him on the basis of being a prophet and not on the basis of being Joseph's son. When Jesus said, "no prophet is welcome in his home town", he was talking of himself as a prophet. In the light of Isaiah 61:1, especially its Targumic rendering, Jesus claims to be the anointed servant/prophet. Recognizing his claim, yet rejecting it, the crowd attempts to kill him."¹³ It is interesting to note that the Targum reads, "The Spirit of prophecy from before the Lord Elohim is upon me."¹⁴ This presents the thought in Judaism of the pre-Christian Palestinian era that the prophets were the anointed servants of Yahweh.¹⁵

There are four possible reasons why Jesus was rejected at Nazareth: 1) Jesus deliberately annoyed the crowd by quoting the two proverbs; 2) Jesus' presumed arrogation to himself of the prophetic title by identifying himself with the prophets Elijah and Elisha; 3) Jesus' universalistic gospel to include the Gentiles as well, and 4) Jesus' ministry in Capernaum, a town

In the NT, anointing was frequently used in connection with healing. The Holy Spirit's activities in a believer's life are pictured in terms associated with anointing. Jesus' disciples anointed the sick (Mk 6:13), and James instructed the elders of the church to anoint the sick with oil (James 5: 14). This anointing was for healing.

Anointing in the NT also refers to the anointing of the Holy Spirit, which brings understanding (1 Jn 2:20, 27). This anointing is not only for kings, priests, and prophets; it is for everyone who believes in the Lord Jesus Christ. The anointing occurs physically with a substance such as oil, myrrh, or balsam. But this is also a spiritual anointing, as the Holy Spirit anoints a person's heart and mind with the love and truth of God. See Youngblood, Ronald R., General editor; F.F. Bruce and R. K. Harrison, Consulting Editors, *Nelson's New Illustrated Bible Dictionary*, (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 1997, c1995).

¹³ Strongstad, *The Charismatic Theology*, 43.

¹⁴ Targum is the Chaldee or more specifically the Aramaic explanations of the Old Testament.

¹⁵ Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *The Gospel According to St. Luke, The Anchor Bible* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Compnay, 1981), 529-530.

predominated by foreigners.¹⁶ The last three are possible reasons, which can be explained in terms of Jesus not meeting the expectation of the people in Nazareth.

The negative response ending the next section at Nazareth indicates that Jesus did not meet the expectations of the Jews (represented here by the Nazareth crowd). He identifies the recipients of God's favour as comprising not only the Jews but also the Gentiles and the outsiders. They are infuriated by this and are ready to kill him. In their reasoning, Jesus not only lets them go but also suggests that they are recipients of God's favour. The crowd is expectant for the fulfilment of the passage. Their main concern is that they are beneficiaries of the messianic message. Jesus seems to anticipate the desire of the crowd that he perform miracles among them which was one of the roles of the expected Messiah. He goes ahead to explain how the ministries of the prophets Elijah and Elisha also benefited the Gentiles. Elijah was sent to the woman at Zarephath while Elisha healed Naaman, the Syrian.

Paul J. Archtmeier suggests that Luke did not model the miracles of Jesus after those of the Old Testament. He states that Luke by designating Jesus as "prophet" does so without his identification of him as a miracle worker supposedly as a prerequisite to the prophetic identification.¹⁷ Miracles were not necessary indicators of a prophetic office. However, we note that Jesus' identity with the prophets Elijah and Elisha is enhanced by referenced to the miracles they performed. The identity is also in three other areas; they were all full of the Spirit, they all ministered to foreigners, and they were all rejected by their people.

¹⁶ According to Robert Sloan, the reason for the negative response was that Jesus in his interpretation of the passage identified himself with messianic figure of Isaiah 61. To the crowd Jesus was an ordinary Jew; one of their own. The problem was not with the message but with the identity of God's messianic agent. See Robert Sloan, *The Favorable Year of the Lord: a Study of Jubiliary Theology in the Gospel of Luke*. (Austin, Texas: Schola Press, 1977), 84-85.

¹⁷ Paul J. Archtmeier, "The Miracles of Jesus: A Preliminary Sketch," in *Perspectives on Luke-Acts* ed. Charles H. Talbert (Danville: Association of Baptist Professors of Religion, 1978), 166.

Jesus' anointing by the Spirit was for charismatic ministry. In identifying himself with the prophets Elijah and Elisha, he is comparing his ministry and theirs and the beneficiaries of his ministry and theirs. It has been pointed out that His ministry seems to be modelled after those of Isaiah, Elijah and Moses. The similarity with Moses is echoed in the transfiguration event (Luke 9:35).¹⁸ Paul S. Minear clarifies that in the Nazareth incident Jesus identifies himself with the mission of Isaiah the prophet as well as with the messenger predicted by Isaiah.¹⁹

The Spirit upon him enabled to proclaim the message to the poor, which was a message of release. His ministry would be to preach the good news to the poor, to heal the sick, preach deliverance to the captives, set at liberty those bruised, and the recovery of sight to the blind. It is significant that it was due to the Spirit's anointing that he was able to carry out these works. The implication is that without the Spirit's empowerment no work of liberation would be possible. Luke records Jesus' activities of preaching and healing as taking place after the Spirit came upon him.

The miracles performed by Jesus earned him the title of 'a great prophet' (Luke 7:16). Among the people some thought of him as John or Elijah because of the miracles he performed as well as the preaching he made (Luke 7:33, cf. Matthew 16:14; Mark 6:14). To the Jews one of the signs of the prophetic office was the working of miracles. When compared with the prophets Elijah and Elisha three major areas of miracles can be noted. They all controlled nature (1 Kings; 2 Kings 2:8, 14, 19ff and Luke 8:22ff). The three also raised the dead (1 Kings 17:17ff; 2 Kings 4:34f and Luke 7:14f). Another area of comparison is the food miracles (1 Kings 17:16; 2 Kings 4:3ff; 4:42f and Luke 9:12f). Elisha and Jesus both cured those with leprosy (2 Kings 5:8f and Luke 5:12f). So like Elijah and Elisha, Jesus is empowered by the Holy Spirit (2 Kings 2:9; 14-15; and Luke 4:14, and they are all rejected and end up ministering to strangers (Luke 4:24-30).

¹⁸ Robert Sloan has discussed at length the implications of Jesus as a prophet like Moses (Dt. 18:15). See Robert Bryan Sloan, *The Favorable Year of the Lord* . . . 68-73.

¹⁹ Paul S. Minear, *To Heal and to Reveal: the Prophetic Vocation According to St. Luke*, (New York: The Seabury Press, 1976), 103.

One significant similarity is Jesus' transference of the Spirit upon his disciples (Acts 2:4, 33) just as the Spirit had moved from Elijah to Elisha. This indicates that the public ministry of Jesus was characterized by the activity of the Spirit. The new community, the church, had prophets as well who were moved by the Spirit though they may not be placed in the category of the Old Testament prophets in every aspect (Acts 21:10 ff).²⁰

The sermon at Nazareth is dominated by the presence and activity of the Spirit. Luke shows that Jesus begins his public ministry under the anointing of the spirit. Jesus comes out of the temptation full of the power of the Spirit. This writer seems to be suggesting a paradigm to be followed by Jesus' disciples. Jesus, according to Luke 24:49, commanded his disciples not to leave Jerusalem until they were empowered by the Spirit (literally 'clothe with power'). The words of Gerald F. Hawthorn give a befitting summary to the Spirit in relation to Jesus and his work:

For Luke the Holy Spirit, who is to be distinguished from Jesus, is that divine power from outside of Jesus which comes down upon Jesus, which stands over him, which is at work within him and through him, which both inspires and empowers him. Jesus thus begins his mission armed with the Spirit and goes forward to accomplish that mission in the power of the Spirit.²¹

²⁰ Prophet comes from the Greek word *prophetes* which means, "One who speaks forth or openly," "a proclaimer of a divine message," denoted among the Greeks as an interpreter of the oracles of the gods. In the LXX it is the translation of the word *roeh*, "a seer"; 1 Sam. 9:9, indicating that the "prophet" was one who had immediate communication with God. It also translates the word *nabhi*, meaning "either one in whom the message from God springs forth" or "one upon whom anything is secretly communicated." Hence, in general, "the prophet" was one upon whom the Spirit of God rested, Num. 11:17-29; one, to whom and through whom God speaks, Num. 12:2; Amos 3:7, 8. In the case of the OT prophets their messages were very largely the proclamation of the divine purposes of salvation and glory to be accomplished in the future; the "prophesying" of the NT prophets was both a preaching of the divine counsels of grace already accomplished and the foretelling of the purposes of God in the future. W. E. Vine, Merrill F. Unger and William White, *Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words* [computer file], electronic ed., Logos Library System, (Nashville: Thomas Nelson) 1997, c1996.

²¹ Gerald F. Hawthorne, *The Presence and the Power* (Dallas: Word Publishing, 1991), 148.

Jesus did his work under the influence of the Holy Spirit. The question as to whether he resorted to his power as the Son of God on occasion or not is a complex theological subject and beyond the scope of this article. What is clear is that the Spirit's presence in his life is connected to the activities of liberation he performed in both declaration and demonstration. If it was by the power of the Spirit that he carried out his ministry then his disciples did the same work under the anointing of the Spirit paralleling Jesus' experience. Luke in the Acts of the Apostles highlights this aspect.

Luke 4: 14-30 as Programmatic and Paradigmatic Functions

The inaugural sermon at Nazareth is paradigmatic as well as programmatic. The Spirit's anointing upon Jesus is programmatic for his entire ministry. Luke is pointing out that the entire ministry of Jesus from baptism to his ascension is to be characterized by the activity of the Spirit for liberation. The ministry of Jesus is also paradigmatic in that just as the Spirit anointed him at the start of his ministry so his disciples' ministry and that of the church must also be characterized by the activity of the Spirit (Acts 1:8). Just as Jesus was charismatic, so his disciples are to be charismatic. He left behind a charismatic community empowered to liberate. Luke establishes a universal pattern in the inaugural sermon not just for the immediate disciples but also for the entire church. This then applies to the African context in particular the church.

Jesus as the Christ the Son of God cannot be likened or equated to any human being. However, from the Nazareth pericope and his ministry certain universal aspects of the life of Jesus can be noted. These aspects find continuity in his disciples and in all those called by God to serve. The continuity of miracles done by Jesus was seen in the early church. For instance, some miracles of Jesus find parallels in the ministry of Peter. This thread of continuity is seen in Peter's miracles, which paralleled those of Jesus in the healing of the sick, the lame and raising of the dead (Luke 7:22; 5:18-56; Acts 3:1-16; 9:32-35; 9:36-42).²²

²² See Youngblood, Ronald R., General Editor; F. F. Bruce and R. K. Harrison, consulting Editors, *Nelson's Illustrated Bible Dictionary* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 1997, c1995).

The foregoing discussion has indicated that the emphasis of the passage is Jesus as prophet and charismatic. As prophet, he proclaims liberation and as charismatic he demonstrates liberation by the power of the Holy Spirit. The proclamation for liberation is emphasized by two words euaggelisasthai (preach) and khrucai ('proclaim' mentioned twice). In his preaching to the crowd in anticipation of rejection he states, "No prophet is accepted in his own town" (Luke 4:24). He likens himself to the prophets Elijah and Elisha (Luke 4:25-30). Jesus places his experience in the category of other well-known prophets of Israel.

The Qumran document 11Q M Melchizedek dated 1st century BC has an account parallel to that of Luke. The passage depicts a heavenly deliverer by the name of 'Melchizedek' who will bring judgment and set the captives free mentioned in Isaiah 61. The term 'Jubilee' is used to emphasise this freedom.

It has been suggested that the quotation from Isaiah (Is. 61:1, 2) reflects Davidic Messiah in Judaism.²³ D. L. Tiede presents a more plausible view pertaining to the above passage that the anointing of Jesus does not present overtones of royal-Davidic or prophetic-Mosaic images.²⁴ If such categories were the central though here then Jesus' experience would be unique and thus could not be taken as paradigmatic. The messianic images seem to be present only in relation to the baptism and temptation of Jesus and cannot be duplicated. Both the anointing he received at Jordan and the temptation he underwent are applicable only to him and no one else.

Jesus' anointing in the Jordan is a confirmation of his messianic sonship and foreshadows the servant ministry leading to the redemption of Israel. However, this is only one aspect of his mission. It is more reasonable to

²³ In Judaism the predominant thought concerning the coming Messiah was that of Royal Davidic. He was expected to establish an earthly kingdom for the Israelites and would banish the enemies of Israel. He would be a political as well as a religious leader and was to bring economic prosperity in the Land of Israel. It has been suggested that the function rather than the person of the Messiah was stressed. See Donald Guthrie, *New Testament Theology* (Leicester: Intervarsity, 1981), 2360252, n.35.

²⁴ D. L. Tiede, *Prophecy and History in Luke-Acts* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1980), 46.

suppose that though the church cannot claim entire parallels with the experience of Jesus yet it can nevertheless follow his example. John Michael Penney brings out both unique as well as universal aspects of Jesus and the church, "anointing of Jesus, exemplary in many respects, is nonetheless unique in constituting him as the eschatological prophet in order to fulfil the mission of messianic servant."²⁵

Jesus told his hearers that the passage he had just read was fulfilled in their hearing. Understanding the meaning of 'fulfil' (peplhrwtai) can shed further light on whether Jesus in ministry is a paradigm for the church or not. The passage quoted is an Old Testament text applicable to the writer in his own context. I. H. Marshall makes a comprehensive assessment of possible understanding of the word 'fulfil' as discussed below.²⁶

1. The passage is prophetic so it refers to Jesus himself as the fulfilment meaning that his person and work is described in the prophecy. The coming of Jesus would then be an eschatological event. The word 'today' in the text means the end of time, which began at the time of Jesus and continues to the present. This points out that the era of salvation began with Jesus Christ.

2. Fulfilment refers to the time of salvation. This highlighted by the omission of the vengeance clause from the Isaiah passage read by Jesus. Salvation comprises all those actions of liberation performed by Jesus to alleviate human suffering; preached the gospel to the poor (Luke 6:20), opened blind eyes (Luke 7:21; 18:35-43). He made the lame to walk (Luke 5:17-26, cf. Acts 3:1-10; 8:7; 14:8-10), he cleansed the lepers (Luke 5:12-16; 17:11-19). Jesus also unstopped deaf hears (not mentioned in Luke but present in other synoptic gospels, cf. Mark 7:31-37; 9:25), and he brought the dead to life (Luke 7:11-17; 8:40-56). It is the preaching and the performing of the mighty works that comprises the day of salvation. It is a day of liberation.

3. Jesus in person is the fulfilment of the prophecy that precisely he is the one towards whom the prophecy is pointing. The activities of setting free

²⁵ John Michael Penney, *The Missionary Emphasis of Lukan Pneumatology* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997), 46-47.

²⁶ I. H. Marshall, *Luke: Historian and Theologian* (Downers Grove: Inter Varsity, 1970, 1988 3rd ed.), 119ff.

the captives and doing other miraculous activities are inseparable from Jesus. The year of Jubilee which is the year of freedom indicating that liberation has arrived.

It is to be noted that the central concern of the message is that salvation/liberation comes through the person of Jesus Christ. The significance attached to the person of Jesus here is that of the category of prophet. In the text, Jesus classes himself with other prophets as he identifies himself with prophets Elijah and Elisha. He also uses the proverb of a prophet not being accepted in his *patris* (hometown) (Luke 4:24-27).

According to Jewish teaching, there was the idea of the eschatological prophet, for instance the constant expectation of the coming of Elijah and a prophet like Moses. Jesus' actions were identified in a typological manner with the activities of Elijah and Elisha yet he is identified not with Elijah as a person but with the new Moses.²⁷ To say that Jesus is the eschatological prophet is to purport that he is the Messiah.

In Luke 4:18f (cf. 7:19-22) Jesus is described in messianic terms and likened to Moses and the Servant of Yahweh. The Servant of Yahweh is the suffering servant who would die for his people. This is the message of Deutero-Isaiah (Isaiah 40-66). However, this is not the only image of Jesus presented in the passage. To some degree, there exists continuity between Jesus and the disciples.

G. W. H. Lampe notes the continuity between Jesus' experience of the Spirit and that of the disciples especially as mentioned by Peter on the day of Pentecost. He explains:

Through the death and exaltation of the Messiah, the Spirit which operated in him has come to be imparted to his followers, to be bond of union between them and himself and the power by which the divine sovereignty into which he has entered is made effective among

²⁷ Reginald H. Fuller, *The Foundations of New Testament Christology* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1965), 46-49. John the Baptist was the one identified with Elijah.

men through the preaching of the gospel in the Spirit's power and under his guidance.²⁸

Lampe presents the idea that the risen Lord has given the Spirit to his disciples. The accomplished work of the cross is applied to human beings by the power of the Spirit.

The preceding discussion indicates that Luke treats Jesus more than just the Prophet but as the final Prophet, the Servant and Messiah. This shows the tradition, which lies behind Luke's thought regarding the ministry and person of Jesus Christ. We can then assert that the continuity between Jesus as a person and the disciples is lacking in this respect. Jesus in his redemptive work cannot be duplicated by anybody. However, the continuity is noted when it comes to the general activities wrought by Jesus through the prayer of the Holy Spirit. Jesus by comparing himself with the Prophets Elijah and Elisha indicated that he was not elevating himself beyond the reach of his disciples. It is not wrong then to see Jesus' experience as paradigmatic in certain aspects for his disciples and even for the church today.

A closer examination of the passage read by Jesus shows that utterance is prominent in it. Jesus is anointed "to preach good news to the poor," "to proclaim release to the captives," "and to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord." Both the utterances and the activities of the prophet were significant in the identification of the role of the Spirit as liberator.

The discussion so far shows that the Nazareth narrative is both programmatic as well as paradigmatic. Under the influence of the Holy Spirit Jesus makes his kerygmatic announcement.²⁹ It is programmatic in respect to the liberation themes that will characterize Jesus' mission such as the prophetic anointing, ministry to the poor, and healing. His own people

²⁸ G. W. H. Lampe, "The Holy Spirit in the Writings of St. Luke," in *Studies in the Gospels* ed. D. E. Nineham (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1955), 159.

²⁹ Kerygmatic comes from kerygma which means "the proclamation," or "preaching," of the message of the Gospel in the New Testament church. The word is a transliteration of the Greek word that means "proclamation," "preaching," or "message" or "message preached." See Youngblood, Ronald F., General Editor; F. F. Bruce and R. K. Harrison, consulting editors, *Nelson's New Illustrated Bible Dictionary* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 1997, c1995).

would also reject him.³⁰ E. Earle Ellis also sees this periscope in the negative light of rejection as a preview of what would happen later in the ministry of Jesus.³¹ I propose that the incident be seen more in a positive sense. Jesus is anointed with the Holy Spirit and power to enable him minister liberation to those in need. The inclusion of the Gentiles in liberation is also announced though rejected by the Jews who were represented by the Nazareth congregation.

It is paradigmatic in the sense of prefiguring the Holy Spirit coming upon the disciples starting from the Day of Pentecost in the Acts of the Apostles (Acts 2: 1ff). The same Spirit that anointed Jesus for the work of ministry is the same one who descended upon the disciples to carry out the work of preaching the gospel and carry out liberation work. The same miracles of release that occurred in the ministry of Jesus were noted through his disciples. A note of universalism is seen in Luke's second volume. The promise of the Spirit is to be upon all flesh. Peter elaborated that the promise is for all including those yet to believe also (Acts 2: 39ff). The same process is to be expected today. The church could take up the pattern and expect the Spirit to operate in and through them.

The Church and the Holy Spirit Today

The forgoing discussion has show that Luke presents the centrality of the Spirit in the life and ministry of Jesus and that of the early church. The church today needs the empowerment of the Holy Spirit as depicted by Luke in his Gospel and the Acts of the Apostles.

I have already established above that it was through the Spirit's power that Jesus and the early church confronted the issues affecting their communities. Luke presets the universal gospel of liberation through the power of the Holy Spirit. The same problems persist today and thus the church needs the same Spirit that Jesus and the early church had. Our contemporary situation seems to be more critical than the New Testament times. It is to be noted that issues that require the attention of the church

³⁰ William H. Shepherd, *The Narrative Function of the Holy Spirit as a Character in Luke-Acts* (Atlanta: Georgia, 1994), 135.

³¹ E. Earle Ellis, *The Gospel of Luke: New Century Bible* (London: L. Marshall, Morgan and Scott, 1974, rev ed.), 96.

include physical, psychological, sociological, economic, political, and spiritual nature. These can be effectively confronted through the empowering presence of the Holy Spirit. The Institute for Contextual theology has proposed that the church particularly in Africa will only be effective in her mission if she has the fullness of the Spirit.³²

Jesus and the early church experienced the empowerment of the Holy Spirit to carry out liberating work. The church today must set free the captives in various contexts. Modern challenges are enormous and thus the need for the power of the Holy Spirit for liberation. To play both the prophetic and charismatic roles, the church needs the inspiration and anointing of the Spirit.

Allan Anderson argues that the African Independent Churches were formed and continue to thrive particularly because they satisfy the need by Africans for a practical religion.³³ Anderson however argues from the perspective of similarity between the traditional African worldview and that of the Bible. My argument in this article is first from the perspective of the paradigm set by Jesus and emulated by the early church. Second is the need for liberation of humankind from oppressive situations. As already indicated the Holy Spirit upon Jesus was for declaration of the good news and deliverance of people. The early church followed suite and so could the church of today.

The prophetic role of the church is to declare the good news of the Kingdom of God. The Holy Spirit will enable her to speak authoritatively to the modern situations particularly touching the political and the social issues. Liberation is one of the main agendas for the church today. Liberation encompasses spiritual, psychological, social, political, economic,

³² Institute for Contextual Theology, *Speaking for ourselves* (Braamfontem: ICT, 1985), 27.

³³ Allan Anderson, *Moya*, 9. See also Mika Vahakangas, "Doctrinal Relationship between Protestantism and Charismatic Renewal" in *Charismatic Renewal in Africa: A Challenge for African Christianity* eds. Mika Vahakangas and Andrew A. Kyomo (Nairobi: Acton Publishers, 2003), 66-90. Vahakangas states that traditional African worldview gives prominence to the spirit world much like the biblical attitude.

and physical concerns among others. Like Jesus and the early church, the modern church needs the power of the Spirit to be able to fulfil her mission.

Conclusion

The centrality of the Holy Spirit in Luke's thought is unmistakable when one examines his gospel and the Acts of the Apostles. The gospel has been termed the Gospel of the Spirit. It is my contention that it should be regarded as the universal Gospel of liberation by the Holy Spirit. Jesus empowered by the Holy Spirit is the main character of in the Gospel. He is anointed by the Spirit to proclaim the good news to the poor, and bring liberation to the oppressed. Liberation work is seen in the miracles and healings He performed. Though he is unique in some respects yet he is a paradigm in other areas both for the disciples and the church. The church in our contemporary situation needs the empowerment of the Holy Spirit in order to fulfil her prophetic role as well as the liberation function in all respects.

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