

23rd April 2017 10.30 am.

(PP1) The Jesus we never knew x17. Jesus and the Spirit. ACTS 1: 1 – 5. (PP2)

LUKE's GOSPEL and ACTS: A 2-part work. **Theophilus** is the name or honorary title of the person to whom the Gospel of Luke and the book of Acts are addressed (*Luke 1:3, Acts 1:1*). (A specific person or any person loved by God or friend of God? It is thought that both Luke and Acts were written by the same author, and sometimes argued that the two books were originally a single unified work and circulated together until all 4 Gospels complete and they began circulating them together as the fourfold gospel witness.

Dr Luke wrote his first book "*Luke's Gospel*" after Paul's letters (50's) and Mark the first Gospel (so possibly around AD70 but some argue earlier)

"ACTS" – written by Dr Luke) about 80 - 90 AD (but some argue earlier). Serves as an excellent back drop and scene setter for Paul's Epistles as Acts describes the first 30 years of the Church's mission outwards.

"For a Christian no period in history is more tantalizingly obscure than the mysterious 30 years between the death of Jesus and the publication of the earliest Gospel". P96 James D.G. Dunn, "Jesus and the Spirit".

(PP3) 40 days from resurrection to ascension; Jesus spent time appearing at intervals and establishing his bodily resurrection – even on occasion eating with his disciples. He talked about the Kingdom of God - no doubt referencing many parables, and teachings (e.g. Sermon on the Mount) that he had spoken to them but also relating the Kingdom of God to the Kingdoms of this world. We have I hope established they had needed a lot of help in establishing what sort of Messiah and what sort of Kingdom. (Even here they are still confused v6 thinking that God's Kingdom continues to equate with the Kingdom of Israel).

FF Bruce, "In OT times his kingship (God's) was specifically manifest on earth in the nation of Israel, to whom he made known his will and whom he called into covenant relationship with himself. When human kings arose over Israel, they were looked upon as vicegerents of the Divine King, representing his sovereignty on earth. With the fall of the monarchy and the end of Israelite independence, there arose a new conception of the Kingdom of God as something to be revealed on earth in its fullness at a later date". (cf Daniel 2:44; 7:13 fol) "Acts" p34. HENCE the NT understanding and teaching of Jesus about the Kingdom he introduces.

ACTS 1: v2 says that **this instruction was "by the power of the holy Spirit"** and vv4 & 5 he spoke about the **gift of the Holy Spirit** promised by the Father. *John baptised with water, but in a few days, you will be baptised with the Holy Spirit".*

Last week "Looking closely at Jesus" I asked about the physical appearances of Jesus to his disciples and others. The Gospel accounts and also particularly Paul's account in *1 Corinthians 15* and these verses in *Acts 1* help us to see that these

appearances were many and they didn't stop at the Ascension when Jesus ascended to the heavens. Paul suggests that the physical manifestations had a line drawn under them after his Damascus Road experience 1 C15: 8 "last of all" he appeared to me. That doesn't rule out religious/ spiritual experiences through waking and sleeping visions, revelations and dreams even to the present day.

(PP4) It is Luke alone who removes the rigid dichotomy (being opposed or contrasted) **of the: -**

- **Resurrection appearances of Jesus and the**
- **Experiences of the Spirit**

So, the book of Acts gives evidence of appearances of Jesus over a 40-day period, followed 10 days later by a markedly different (than previous) experience of the Holy Spirit by the Disciples and the crowds on the Day of Pentecost and beyond. The evidence of Jesus' resurrection and the work of the Spirit are bound together by Luke.

The name Jesus and the Spirit are used together: Luke and Paul even refer to the "Spirit of Jesus" and John speaks of the Spirit of Jesus as the Spirit of prophecy. WE SPEAK not just of Jesus' religious experiences (e.g. in prayer rhythm and addressing God as Abba) but of JESUS AS THE OBJECT OF OUR RELIGIOUS/ SPIRITUAL EXPERIENCE. Believers have come to claim to experience not just the Father God but Jesus – God the Son. Truth worship is described as – "in the Spirit", John 4: 24. And so developed our understanding of the God who is Trinity: 3 persons in One community of Godhead.

(PP5) Jesus' sense of sonship and having the Spirit was seen in his earthly ministry.

Luke 1: 35 Jesus' conception: Luke describes the unbroken link of Jesus and the Father and the Spirit. *The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and God's power will rest upon you. For this reason, the holy child will be called the Son of God.*

Luke 3. John the Baptist's testimony of Jesus' baptism. *I baptise you with water, but someone is coming who is much greater than I am. He will baptise you with the Holy Spirit and fire.*

Jesus also was baptised. While he was praying, heaven was opened, and the Holy Spirit came down upon him in bodily form like a dove. And a voice came from heaven. "You are my own dear Son. I am pleased with you."

His sense of true sonship enabled him to resist the Evil One during trials in the wilderness. He was convinced of God's anointing and his Messianic mission declared in Isaiah 61: 1 when he stood up in the synagogue in Nazareth:

Luke 4: 18 fol *The Spirit of the LORD is upon me because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovery*

of sight to the blind; to set free the oppressed and announce the time when the LORD will save his people.

“Again, it is perhaps significant that the authority of his preaching can be said to derive from his sense of being Spirit-inspired, but also from his sense of sonship (Matt. 11.27). ‘Father’ as much as ‘Spirit’ spells ‘authority’. So too is authority present in the realized eschatology note so distinctive of Jesus’ ministry. It expressed his consciousness of that power of God reserved for the end-time and manifested particularly in his exorcisms. But it expressed also his consciousness of God as Father, he who had drawn near in forgiveness and healing to deliver the poor. In short, Spirit and sonship, sonship and Spirit, are but two aspects of the one experience of God out of which Jesus lived and ministered.”

(PP6) It is Luke alone who groups together the: -

- **Resurrection appearances of Jesus and the**
- **Experiences of the Spirit**

Luke also records that Jesus continues to teach the disciples about the Kingdom of God for 40 days as they wait the coming of the Spirit and the move out in mission and to see the Kingdom come. (He was continuing to open their minds and hearts about God’s Kingdom – not imparting some secret knowledge as the Gnostics suggested).

Questions to ask: -

Do we talk about the Kingdom of God? With who? We are to share the Good News of the Kingdom so do we understand what that is? (*Jesus opening their minds to understand Scriptures. Luke 24: 45 – 47*).

Do we look closely at Jesus? (Last week) When and how?

Do we experience the Holy Spirit? Individually and in community?

Jesus instructed his disciples not to move out in evangelism and mission until they had received the gift of the Spirit – power from on high. The work and person of the Holy Spirit have been recorded in many places e.g. *John 14 – 16* but in *the first 15 chapters of Acts* much more is described.

Concluding: What is apparent is that the persons and work of Jesus and the Spirit and the Kingdom of God cannot be separated. The prophets had spoken of the coming of God’s Kingdom and the coming of Jesus and the Spirit are the fulfillment.

(Jesus and the Spirit within us bringing in the Kingdom of God: Romans 8:11 – 17 *for if the same Spirit which raised Christ from the dead lives in you...and your children and grandchildren and that is the promise for our children’s children*).