

## Session 2

### Jesus' Mission Announced—Engaging Lk 3.1-4.30

After the opening chapters of the gospel where Luke introduces us to the nature of Jesus—who he is, we now begin to hear Jesus announce his mission. The spirit of God is with him. He is baptised (without the presence of John the baptiser!) (3.21-22), we learn his biblical heritage (3.23-38), he is tempted (4.1-13) and then announces his mission (4.16-30). This announcement shapes the way Luke portrays Jesus in the rest of the gospel: liberator, saviour and healer.

These notes accompany podcasts 12-14.

### Learning Outcomes

As a result of this session you will:

- Locate Lk 3.1-4.30 within the overall schema of Luke's gospel;
- See the centrality of the 'Word', with its particular theological meaning, in this section of the gospel;
- Identify the role of the Spirit in Jesus' mission;
- Understand what Luke means by 'temptation' in Lk 4.1-13;
- Explore Jesus' inaugural announcement of his mission in Lk 4.16-30.



'Bethany-Beyond-The-Jordan', in Jordan. One tradition locates Jesus' baptism here. Early churches were built around this site. Note the steps which candidates for baptism would walk down into the River Jordan.

*Photo: Michael Trainor, used with permission.*

## Situating Lk 3.1-4.30 within Luke's overall Schema

### I. The Beginnings:

#### Session 1

- |  |                |
|--|----------------|
| Prologue and Overview of the Gospel              | (1:1-4)        |
| Introducing Jesus: Birth and infancy             | (1:5-2:52)     |
| Annunciation of the births of JBap & Jesus       | (1:5-45; 1:56) |
| • Canticles                                      | (1:46-55)      |
| • Events surrounding the births of JBap & Jesus  | (1:57-2:40)    |
| • Child Jesus teaches the teachers in the Temple | (2:41-52)      |

### 2. Jesus Mission Announced (3:1-4:30)

#### This Session

- Preaching of JBap (3.1-20)
- Baptism of Jesus, genealogy, temptations, transition (3.21-4.15)
- Jesus' mission proclaimed (4.16-30)

### 3. Jesus' Mission Enacted (4:16-9:50)

#### Session 3

- Exorcisms, healings and call of Simon & other disciples (4:16-6:16)
- Opposition grows, reactions to Jesus (6:17-7:23)
- Jesus' miracles and parables—their effect (7:24-8:48)
- Jesus' identity emerges: Herod, feeding 5000, Peter's confession, 1st & 2nd passion anticipation, transfiguration (9:7-50)

### 4. Jesus Journeys to Jerusalem with his Disciples (9:51-19:27)

#### Session 4

- First part of journey to second mention of Jerusalem (9:51-13:22)
- Second part of the journey to third mention of Jerusalem (13.23-17:10)
- Third part of the of journey (13:23-19:27)

5. Jesus Teaches in Jerusalem (19:28-21:38)

Session 5 Entry into Jerusalem & temple activities (19:28-21:4)

- Eschatological ('End time') discourse (21:5-38)

6. Jesus suffers, dies and is resurrected (22:1-24.35)

Session 6

- Conspiracy against Jesus, Last Supper (22:1-38)
- Prayer & arrest on Mount of Olives; Jewish & Roman trial (22:39-23:25)
- Way of the cross, crucifixion, burial (23:26-56)
- Resurrection, appearances, final teaching and ascension (24.1-53)

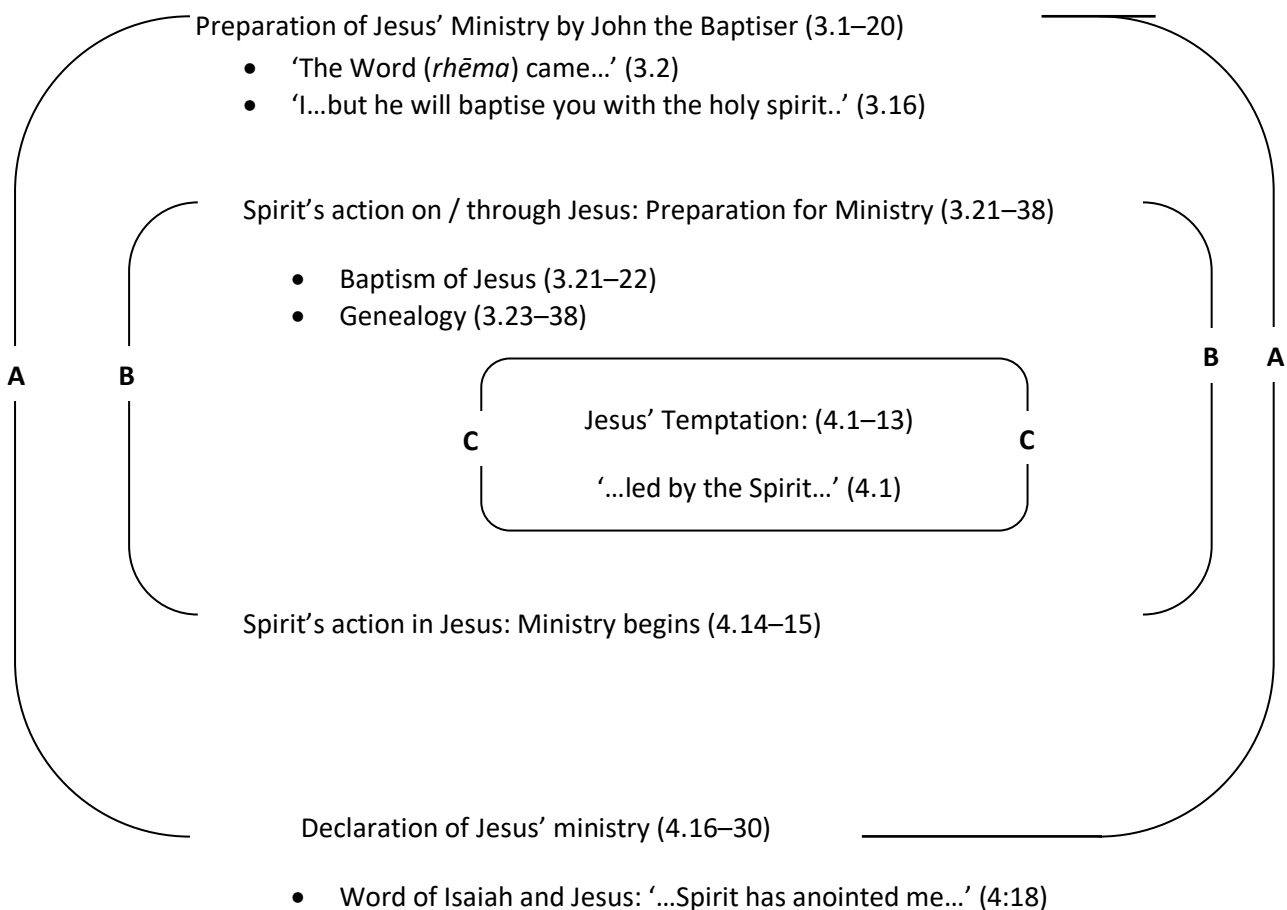
### **Read**

- Now read Luke 3.1-4.30 in light of the above schema

## Engaging Lk 3.2-4.30

Reading Luke's gospel with the following outline in mind reveals several things. Luke has constructed this 'onion' effect (technically called a 'chiasm') to illustrate central points. The outer part of the structure reveals Jesus' future mission which comes to expression in the Nazareth synagogue inaugural announcement (4.1-13).

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The Jordan River as it flows from the southern end of the Sea of Galilee.

*Photo: Michael Trainor, used with permission.*

We shall use the above structure to engage this section of Luke's gospel.

- Central is the role of the 'Word'. Rather than a dictionary understanding of the cognitive concept of Word, so familiar to us, the ancient Israelite appreciation of 'Word' heard it more in terms of 'word-deed'. This word was dynamic; it affected and influenced. This is the Word of God which Jesus bears. What he says and does are the 'Word'.
- The Word acts because of the presence of the Spirit. This Spirit acts through Jesus; Jesus is a bearer of the spirit.
- John the Baptist encounters the 'word' in the desert. From the wilderness the word emerges
- For Luke, Jesus' baptism is an encounter with the Spirit. Luke makes this event a prayer-event. Our study will depend on a redactional study of the scene as we compare Mark's equivalent story with the way Luke reshapes it.
- At the centre of the above structure is Jesus' temptation. How do we understand 'temptation', 'satan' and 'sin' in the light of Luke's exposition? What difference does the story make to our spiritual understanding?

## Jesus' Baptism and Temptation

Take a careful look at the stories of Jesus baptism and temptation in Luke's gospel.

Note the differences across the different gospel traditions.

- How does Luke change or add to Mark in each of these stories?

One obvious addition is the way Luke adds the genealogy of Jesus immediately after his baptism and then this leads to his temptation.

### Jesus' Baptism

Mk 1.9-12	Lk 3.21-22; 4.1...
<p>9 In those days Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan.</p> <p>10 And just as he was coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens torn apart and the Spirit descending like a dove on him.</p> <p>11 And a voice came from heaven, "You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased."</p> <p>12 The Spirit immediately drove him out into the wilderness...</p>	<p>21 Now when all the people were baptized, and when Jesus also had been baptized and was praying, the heaven was opened,</p> <p>22 and the Holy Spirit descended upon him in bodily form (<i>sōmatikos</i>) like a dove.</p> <p>And a voice came from heaven, "You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased."</p> <p>[Lk places the Genealogy here]</p> <p>4:1 And Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit returned from the Jordan, and was led by the Spirit...</p>



The 6<sup>th</sup> Century baptistery from the Basilica of St John, Ephesus, Turkey.

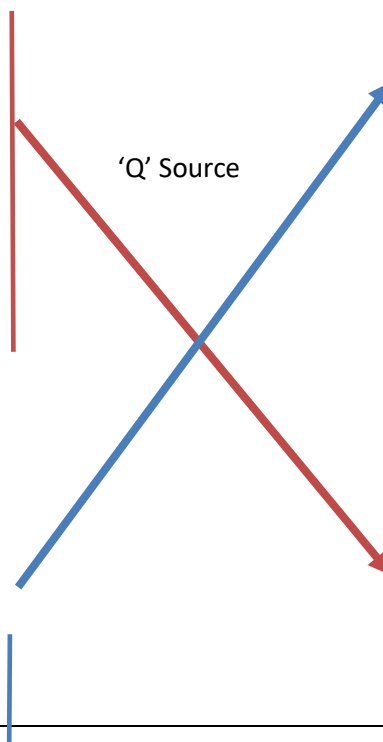
*Photo:* Michael Trainor, used with permission.



## Jesus' Temptation

<b>Mt 4.1-11</b>	<b>Mk 1.12-13</b>	<b>Lk 4.1-13</b>
<p><b>11</b> Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. <b>2</b> He fasted forty days and forty nights, and afterwards he was famished.</p> <p><b>3</b> The tempter came and said to him, "If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread." <b>4</b> But he answered, "It is written, 'One does not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.'"</p> <p><b>5</b> Then the devil took him to the holy city and placed him on the pinnacle of the temple, <b>6</b> saying to him, "If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down; for it is written, 'He will command his angels concerning you,' and 'On their hands they will bear you up, so that you will not dash your foot against a stone.'" <b>7</b> Jesus said to him, "Again it is written, 'Do not put the Lord your God to the test.'"</p> <p><b>8</b> Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendor; <b>9</b> and he said</p>	<p><b>12</b> And the Spirit immediately drove him out into the wilderness. <b>13</b> He was in the wilderness forty days, tempted by Satan; and he was with the wild beasts; and the angels waited on him.</p>	<div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 100%; height: 30px; margin-bottom: 10px;"></div> <p>led by the spirit in the wilderness, <b>2</b> where for forty days he was tempted by the devil. He ate nothing at all during those days, and when they were over, he was famished.</p> <p><b>3</b> The devil said to him, "If you are the Son of God, command this stone to become a loaf of bread." <b>4</b> Jesus answered him, "It is written, 'One does not live by bread alone.'"</p> <p><b>5</b> Then the devil led him up and showed him in an instant all the kingdoms of the world. <b>6</b> And the devil said to him, "To you I will give their glory and all this authority; for it has been given over to me, and I give it to anyone I please. <b>7</b> If you, then, will worship me, it will all be yours." <b>8</b> Jesus answered him, "It is written, 'Worship the Lord your God, and serve only him.'"</p> <p><b>9</b> Then the devil took him to Jerusalem, and placed him on the pinnacle of the temple, saying to him, "If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down from here, <b>10</b> for it is written, 'He will command his angels concerning you, to protect you,' <b>11</b> and 'On their hands they will bear you up,</p>

'Q' Source



to him, "All these I will give you, if you will fall down and worship me." 10 Jesus said to him, "Away with you, Satan! for it is written, 'Worship the Lord your God, and serve only him.'" 11 Then the devil left him, and suddenly angels came and waited on him.

so that you will not dash your foot against a stone.'" 12 Jesus answered him, "It is said, 'Do not put the Lord your God to the test.'" 13 When the devil had finished every test, he departed from him until an opportune time.

Clearly, Luke's story of Jesus' temptation is longer and more intricate than Mark's simple story, and shares much with Matthew—because of their common use of 'Q'. Note how the last two temptation events are transposed, with Luke concluding Jesus' temptation in Jerusalem.

- Why do you think this is so?



The traditional site of Jesus' temptation, with the Orthodox monastery of the Mount of Temptation above the Jericho plain in the centre. *Photo: Michael Trainor, used with permission.*

Daniel Harrington comments on Luke's story of Jesus' temptation. Heard against

the backdrop of first-century Palestinian political upheaval and popular messianic expectation... Jesus eschewed the option of a violent, military, zealot vision of God's kingdom in Israel. [Jesus chose] another than a violent way to be Messiah, who rejected power over nature to serve his appetite, over

humans for the sake of glory, over God for his own survival, in favour of the 'path of peace'.

*Luke* (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1991), 77.

If we listen to Luke's story with ecological attentiveness, three ecological principles emerge from each of the temptations:

- Earth is to be cared for and treated respectfully, not ravaged through covetousness.
- All ecological and environmental engagement is grounded in and enhanced by one's communion with God.
- Earth's resources are to be respected by all and not usurped as a means of power and control by one over another.

### **Read**

- On Luke's story of Jesus' baptism and temptation, read Mikeal C. Parsons, *Luke*. (Baker Academic, 2015) 68-75.

## Jesus Mission Announced—Lk 4.16-30

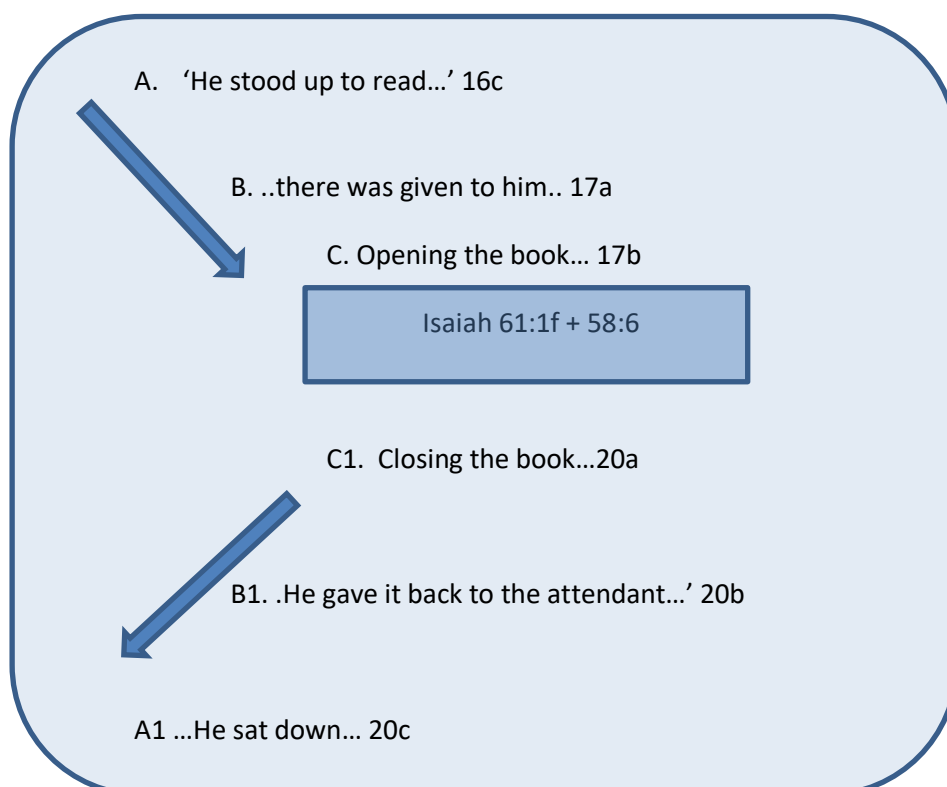
Jesus goes to his hometown synagogue, a very Jewish act, and in the service he stands up to read a passage from the Prophet Isaiah (actually a combination of two texts in reverse order, Is 61.1 and 58.6). Luke's construction of the scene and the words which Jesus speaks from the prophet flag his future ministry which will unfold in the rest of the gospel. It is a ministry that is essentially about release and freedom. As we shall see this a freedom for creation and humanity at all kinds of levels. The healing stories illustrate dramatically how Luke's Jesus exercises this ministry of release.

### Watch

- Watch a (11 min) conversation between Yale Divinity School Dean Harold W. Attridge and Professor Emeritus David L. Bartlett as they discuss the opening chapters of Luke's gospel, including Jesus' baptism, temptation and Nazareth proclamation.

It would not surprise us to see how Luke's literary structure of both the synagogue scene and the words which Jesus uses in the synagogue are instructive of the gospel's Christology.

Luke structures the synagogue event around the prophet Isaiah—and two particular texts about to be actualised in the ministry of Jesus:



## Read

- For a study of Luke's story of Jesus' Nazareth proclamation, read, John T. Carroll, *Luke* (Louisville: Louisville : Presbyterian Publishing Corporation, 2012), 108-117.

Luke's use of Isaiah anticipates Jesus' future ministry. A literal translation is offered:

'...The Spirit of the Lord [is] upon me,  
because of which  
He *has anointed* me (aor) me,  
To preach (aor inf) good news to the poor  
He *has sent* (perf) me,  
To announce (aor inf)  
To the captive ones—a releasing  
And  
To the blind ones—a seeing again,  
To send away (aor inf)  
The having been crushed ones in/by release  
To announce (aor inf)  
A year of the Lord that is acceptable..'



Sign in Nazareth designating the traditional site of the synagogue.

*Photo: Michael Trainor, used with permission.*

## Session Summary

From our engagement with Lk 3-4, we see how Luke:

- Emphasises the action of God's 'word-deed'. This surrounds the whole scene;
- Underscores God's action in history and creation;
- Reveals God's power ('Spirit') acting through Jesus;
- Shows how the Spirit permeates the being of Jesus, enabling him to resist Satan and to proclaim his ministry of liberation;
- Affirms that God's action through Jesus involves humanity and creation. An eco-theological perspective emerges.



Luke Paints the Icon of the Mother of God Hodegetria.

*Attribution:* By Unknown Icon Painter, Russian (early 15th century)

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