

Luke 4:1

<https://thebiblesays.com/commentary/luke/luke-4/luke-41/>

Following Jesus's baptism by John, the Holy Spirit leads Jesus into the wilderness.

The parallel gospel accounts for this passage are Matthew 4:1 and Mark 1:12.

After *Jesus* was baptized by John, and affirmed by His Heavenly Father, and anointed by *the Holy Spirit* as the Messiah, He encounters a time of isolation and temptation (Luke 4:2):

Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led around by the Spirit in the wilderness (v 1).

Luke says *Jesus* was *full of the Holy Spirit* (v 1). The Greek word translated as “full” is πλήρης (G4134—pronounced: “play'-race”). It is commonly translated as being “filled up,” “covered in every part,” or most likely in this instance, “thoroughly permeated with.” After God the Father’s confirmation of *Jesus* in Luke 3:22, *the Holy Spirit* descends on Him “in bodily form like a dove.” Luke is identifying that *Jesus*, while still a physical man, is also uniquely God the Son and in complete unity with the Holy Trinity. Therefore, He can be said to be *full of the Holy Spirit*.

The phrasing: *full of the Holy Spirit* is unique to Luke’s Gospel account. Matthew, Mark, and even Luke later in the verse describe *Jesus* being “led” or “impelled” by *the Spirit* respectively (Matthew 4:1; Mark 1:12). This difference is likely due to Luke’s main purpose in his portrayal of *Jesus* in his Gospel. Remember, Luke was writing to Greek Gentiles who were concerned with a better way to live (1 Corinthians 1:22b). Describing *Jesus* as “thoroughly permeated with” *the Holy Spirit* shows that He was living the perfect physical life, one worthy enough to be in unity with God and completely *Spirit*-filled. Because the Greek Gentiles were seeking to live life in the best possible way, they should look to *Jesus* as their example because He was approved and anointed by God the Father (Luke 3:22) and one with *the Holy Spirit*.

Luke says *Jesus* returned from the Jordan and was led around as a way of informing the reader that *Jesus*’s path into the wilderness was an uphill journey from the Jordan River where He was baptized. We do not precisely know where or which wilderness *Jesus* was led by *the Spirit* to go into, but tradition places it in the Judean wilderness, northwest of Jericho. Its rolling hills are scarred by deep canyons and jutting cliffs. It is a dry and rugged terrain. This wilderness is not a place anyone would choose to go to without a specific purpose.

The distance between Jerusalem and one of the probable sites of *Jesus*’s baptism is only about 20 miles. The space between the Jordan Valley to the east and Jerusalem to the west is filled by the Judean Wilderness. *Jesus*’s ancestor King David spent substantial time in the Judean wilderness hiding from King Saul, who sought to murder David because Saul perceived him as a threat to his throne. The incident at the Wilderness of En Gedi where David spared Saul’s life in a cave is roughly 50 miles south from where *Jesus* may have been baptized (1 Samuel 24).

Jesus follows *the Spirit's* leading. In John's Gospel, *Jesus* repeatedly confesses that His purpose is to do His Father's will; that He does nothing of His own volition; that He only speaks what His Father tells Him. In following *the Holy Spirit*, *Jesus* is repeating a similar pattern. *Jesus* probably did not choose of His own accord to go and spend time in *the wilderness*, but He obeyed the will of the Third Person of the Trinity. It is interesting to note that in one verse God the Father declares that He is well pleased with His Son to this point (Matthew 3:17), and in the very next verse the Father leads His Son to the wilderness to be tested (Matthew 4:1).

It is a consistent pattern throughout scripture that God leads those He prepares for service into *the wilderness*. A few examples include Moses, who spent many years as a shepherd in *the wilderness* before he was called to lead Israel out of Egypt. David also spent time *in the wilderness* hiding from Saul. The nation of Israel wandered *in the wilderness* for 40 years prior to entering the Promised Land. The principle here is that times of testing can be a sign of God's approval. It can rightly be viewed as preparation for a great work. Any activity is great, when done as unto the Lord (Colossians 3:23).

Biblical Text

Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led around by the Spirit in the wilderness