

The Holy Spirit in the Pulpit Does Unction=filling?

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Metaphorical Uses of *Pimplemi* in reference to Unction

<i>Text</i>	<i>Greek Use of Πίμπλημι</i>	<i>Exegetical Comments and Observations</i>
Luke 1:15	πλησθήσεται Future passive indicative third person singular	Of the eight special uses of πίμπλημι, this is the only occurrence that is not in the aorist passive. The use of the future is due to the nature of the prophecy of John the Baptist, who is not yet conceived. It is obvious that John had not asked for this special filling of the Spirit, and Scripture is silent as to a special prayer by Elizabeth or Zechariah on behalf of their unborn son John.
Luke 1:41	ἐπλήσθη Aorist passive indicative third person singular	The special occurrence here is marked by the dual activity of the unborn John leaping in the womb of Elizabeth at the sound of Mary's voice (Luke 1:44) and the filling of Elizabeth with the Holy Spirit accompanied by special revelation regarding the news of the holy conception of Mary prior to her revelation of it to Elizabeth (Luke 1:42-45). The passive voice makes evident the fact that this filling was not brought about by anything that Elizabeth did (for how could she have known of anything prior to the Spirit's intervention?).
Luke 1:67	ἐπλήσθη Aorist passive indicative third person singular	The passive points to the unexpected filling of Zechariah with the Spirit, which led to his prophesying. ¹ The Spirit sovereignly acted on Zechariah. Scripture gives no evidence of this occurring before or after in his life, but its special nature is consistent with the unfolding drama of redemption that was occurring around the birth of Jesus.
All three of the above uses of πίμπλημι in Luke's Gospel are in reference to John the Baptist's role as the forerunner of Jesus Christ. They lay out the special ministry that John would have and the special power that would be related to his distinct purposes.		
Acts 2:4	ἐπλήσθησαν Aorist passive indicative third person plural	On the use of the πίμπλημι in this verse, Daniel Wallace writes: "The Spirit-filling (with πίμπλημι) in Acts is never commanded, nor is it related particularly to sanctification. Rather, it is a special imbuing of the Spirit for a particular task (similar to the Spirit's ministry in the OT). Furthermore, every time the case used to indicate the content of the filling is the gen., never the dative." ² In Acts 2:4; 4:8, 31; and 13:9-10, the filling of the Spirit is for the purpose of speaking boldly the Word of God. In each case, there is no evidence of the speakers praying for the filling (πίμπλημι) of the Spirit. The activity of the Spirit in Acts 2:4 seems to be God's sovereign response to the role that the apostles were to play in the evangelization of the world, as given to them in Acts 1:8 by Jesus. Although this commission is shared by all Christians today, the immediate effect on the Day of Pentecost was unique in its effect to spread the gospel to men of differing tongues in one location.
Acts 4:8	πλησθεῖς Aorist passive participle,	Couch notes that if Luke had in mind a state of ongoing filling when he penned Acts 4:8 or 13:9, he would have used the perfect or imperfect tense, but instead he chose the aorist tense. ³ This fact, along with the consistent use of πίμπλημι

¹ Mal Couch, ed., *A Bible Handbook to the Acts of the Apostles* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Kregel Publications, 1999), 162.

² Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics*, 94.

³ Couch, 162.

	masculine singular nominative	as a special filling in each context, gives further evidence that the understanding of <i>πίμπλημι</i> should not be paradigmatic. Peter is declaring before the temple officials the name of Jesus Christ as the name by which they healed the lame man in Acts 3. Although both Peter and John are present (cp. Acts 3:11; 4:3) before the officials, and <i>both</i> are said to be bold (Acts 4:13), it is only Peter who is distinguished as being “filled with the Holy Spirit” (v. 8). Peter’s filling was for his testimony spoken to the officials, although both were perceived as being bold.
Acts 4:31	ἐπλήσθησαν Aorist passive indicative third person plural	Having survived a short imprisonment and questioning along with threats (Acts 4:3, 18, 21), John and Peter were released and reported their encounter to the brethren (v. 23). The response from the gathered church was to praise the Lord in prayer and to request continued boldness for preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ (v. 31). It should be noted that the group <i>did not</i> pray for the filling of the Spirit that they did receive, but rather that they prayed for boldness (<i>παρρησίας</i>). As a result, God shook their gathering place (a result not accompanied by Peter’s filling in Acts 4:8). They were all filled with the Spirit and <i>continued</i> “to speak the word of God with boldness.” This suggests that they already were speaking the Word with boldness, but that the shaking of the room accompanied by this special filling was for the continued spread of the gospel, which could have been squelched had the apostles been filled with dread from the threats.
Acts 9:17	πλησθῆς Aorist passive subjunctive second person singular	Acts 9 gives the reader the background for Paul’s salvation experience and his calling as an apostle. Seeing that Paul’s experience of salvation and calling were unique, it is fitting that the empowerment given to him would be unique as well. Richard Fairman has suggested that “the duration of ones filling coincides with its purpose. Thus a long-term purpose would suggest long-term enablement with or without immediate results.” ⁴ If this is the case, then Paul’s experience of <i>πίμπλημι</i> filling was unique not only in its enablement, but also in its extent. Paul, who here has experienced the <i>πίμπλημι</i> form of Spirit filling, interestingly does not go on in Ephesians 5:18 to suggest that Christians ought to seek this same filling. Instead, he uses <i>πληρώω</i> , given both as an imperative as well as in the passive voice, pointing to the need to continue being filled (<i>πληρώω</i>) as a metaphor for continuing spirituality. More will be said regarding Ephesians 5:18 under the heading of <i>πληρώω</i> below.
Acts 13:9	πλησθεῖς Aorist passive part., masculine singular nominative	Although Barnabas is mentioned first by the Holy Spirit in Acts 13:2 when Paul and Barnabas were set apart for mission work, the sovereign Spirit here filled Paul for the special task of confronting Elymas the magician as he sought to lead the proconsul astray (vv. 8, 10). Paul did not pray for this special filling; neither was the filling accompanied with tongues speaking, the sound of rushing wind, cloven tongues (Acts 2:4), or the shaking of the ground (4:31).

⁴ Richard Gary Fairman, “An Exegesis of ‘Filling’ Texts Which Refer to the Doctrine of Filling,” (Th.D. Diss., Grace Theological Seminary, 1986), 213.