

New Testament Survey:
The Gospel of Luke

Source: Craig Blomberg, *Jesus and the Gospels*. Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1997.

Major Themes of the Gospel

1. Jesus' humanity and Compassion for the Outcasts of Society. Luke does not use titles such as "Son of God" or "Lord" as often as the other Gospel writers. Jesus' humanity receives more prominence in this Gospel. Luke also has more to say about Jesus' treatment of social outcasts:
 - A. Samaritans and Gentiles. Luke alone records the parable of the Good Samaritan (10:25-37). Of the 10 lepers cleansed, only the Samaritan gives praise to Jesus (17:11-19).
 - B. Tax collectors and sinners. Luke alone records the parable of the Pharisee and the publican (18:9-14) and the story of Zaccheus' conversion (19:1-10). Luke also records the "sinner" in the Prodigal Son (15:11-32).
 - C. Women. Luke records far more women than the other Gospels. Elizabeth and Mary both give their birth accounts. Anna appears in the Temple to bless Jesus. Luke records the parable of the lost coin (15:3-10). Luke also tells us that women funded Jesus' ministry (8:1-3) and traveled with Him.
 - D. The Poor. Luke records the parable of the rich man and Lazarus (16:19-31), telling Jesus' attitude toward the poor. Luke also quotes Jesus quoting Isaiah in bringing good news to the poor (Luke 4:18).
2. Jesus as Savior. Luke uses the title "Savior" to refer to Jesus in 2:11 (the angel's announcement to the shepherds) and 8 other times throughout the book. No other Synoptic Gospel uses this term to refer to Jesus.
3. Prophet. Luke alone tells us of Jesus' revivification of the widow's son in Nain, reminding us of Elisha's revivification of the Shunammite woman's son in 2 Kings 4. Luke quotes Jesus as referring to Himself as a prophet in 13:33.
4. Teacher of Parables. 28 of the 40 parables appear in Luke, and 15 of them appear exclusively in this Gospel.
5. Stewardship of Material Possessions. Luke's inclusion of the parable of the rich man and Lazarus, along with the parable of the unjust steward, point out the folly of using riches only for improving our own lifestyles. Not all Christians are called to give up everything as was the rich young ruler (19:18-30), but everyone is called to give everything to Christ.
6. Writing Christian History. Luke alone wrote a sequel to his Gospel (Acts) to record the experiences of the early Church.

Circumstances

Using Acts for the dating of the Gospels, Luke must have been written prior to A.D. 62 to a predominantly Gentile community. Luke states in Luke 1 that he researched his book using eyewitness testimony and testimony from "ministers of the word" (1:1-3). Luke addresses his books to "Theophilus." The name means "lover of God," so we don't know if Theophilus is actually an individual or to anyone who truly loves God.

In an interesting historical note, DNA tests on a body in Padua, Italy in 2000 confirmed that the body likely was that of Luke the Physician. The head of the body was found in Prague.

Outline

- I. Introduction to Jesus' Ministry (1:1-4:13)
 - A. Preface (1:1-4)
 - B. Introduction of John the Baptist and Jesus (1:5-2:52)
 - C. Preparation for Jesus' Ministry (3:1-4:13)
- II. Ministry in and around Galilee (4:14-9:50)
 - A. Preaching in Nazareth (4:14-30)
 - B. An Introduction to Jesus' Healing Ministry (4:31-44)
 - C. Calling the First Disciples (5:1-11)
 - D. A Series of Controversies with the Jewish Leaders (5:12-6:11)
 - E. The Call to Discipleship Formalized (6:12-49)
 - F. Focusing on the Question of Jesus' Identity (7:1-8:3)
 - G. Hearing the Word of God Correctly (8:4-21)
 - H. Illustrations of Jesus' Authoritative Word (8:22-56)
 - I. The Christological Climax (9:1-50)
- III. Jesus' Teaching "En Route" to Jerusalem (9:51-18:34)
 - A. Discipleship Eyeing the Cross (9:51-62)
 - B. The Mission of the 72 (10:1-24)
 - C. The Double Love Command (The Good Samaritan) (10:25-42)
 - D. Teaching about Prayer (11:1-13)
 - E. Controversy with the Pharisees (11:14-54)
 - F. Preparation for Judgment (12:1-13:9)
 - G. Kingdom Reversals (13:10-14:24)
 - H. Cost of Discipleship (14:25-35)
 - I. Seeking and Saving the Lost (15:1-32)
 - J. The Use and Abuse of Riches (16:1-31)
 - K. Teachings on Faith (17:1-19)
 - L. How the Kingdom Will Come (17:20-18:8)
 - M. How to Enter the Kingdom (18:9-30)
 - N. Conclusion and Transition (18:31-34)
- IV. Jesus in Judea: Ministry Near and in Jerusalem (18:35-21:38)
 - A. From Jericho to Jerusalem (18:35-19:27)
 - B. Entry into Jerusalem (19:28-48)
 - C. Jesus' Teaching: The Final Week (20:1-21:38)
- V. The Climax of Jesus' Life (22:1-24:53)
 - A. Passover (22:1-71)
 - B. Crucifixion (23:1-56)
 - C. Resurrection (24:1-53)

Specific Passages for Class Discussion

1. Birth of John the Baptist, the Annunciation: chapter 1
2. Birth of Jesus: chapter 2
3. Healing of the centurion's servant and revivification of widow's son: chapter 7
4. Forgiveness of the sinful woman: 7:36-50
5. Cost of discipleship: 9:23-37
6. Samaritan rejection: 9:51-56
7. Martha and Mary: 10:38-42
8. Sign of Jonah: 11:29-32
9. Parable of the rich fool: 12:13-21
10. Parables of lost and found: chapter 15
11. Dishonest Manager: 16:1-13
12. Rich man and Lazarus: 16:19-31
13. The 10 lepers: 17:11-19
14. Zacchaeus: 19:1-9
15. Sadducees and the resurrection: 20:27-40
16. Institution of Holy Communion: 22:14-23
17. Crucifixion: chapter 23
18. Resurrection, the Emmaus Road: chapter 24