

THE BIG READ (3)

Jesus in Luke

A. Introduction

1. Every book of the Bible has one dominating theme – Jesus is the Christ.

Jesus is the Christ who will suffer and die.

Jesus is the Christ who will rise from the dead on the third day.

Jesus is the Christ who will forgive the sins of all who repent.

Jesus is the Christ who will be preached to the nations.

“Then he opened their minds so they could understand the Scriptures. He told them, This is what is written: The Christ will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, and repentance and forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.” (Luke 24:45-47)

2. The New Testament begins with the four Gospels – Matthew, Mark, Luke and John.

These four books tell the story of Jesus’ earthly life.

Whilst they all focus on different aspects of Jesus’ life and ministry, each account has the same basic themes about the identity, mission, and message of Jesus.

Together they paint a beautiful portrait of who Jesus is.

3. Luke’s Gospel, along with Matthew and Mark are sometimes known as the synoptic gospels because they include many of the same stories, often in the same sequence, and with similar wording.

Whilst that is true, Luke’s Gospel is also unique because it has a part 2 in the book of Acts.

4. Luke’s Gospel was written to someone called Theophilus.

Theophilus was a person of rank who appears to have contributed money to sponsor Luke’s research and the cost of publishing Luke and Acts.

Luke’s Gospel was probably written no later than AD62 and like Mark’s Gospel initially had a Gentile audience in mind.

Luke’s Gospel is the longest book in the New Testament.

B. Luke the Man

1. A Gentile.

Luke is listed among the Gentile companions of Paul in Colossians 4.

“My fellow prisoner Aristarchus sends you his greetings, as does Mark, the cousin of Barnabas. (You have received instructions about him; if he comes to you, welcome him.) Jesus, who is called Justus, also sends greetings. These are the only Jews among my fellow workers for the kingdom of God, and they have proved a comfort to me... Our dear friend Luke, the doctor, and Demas send greetings.” (Colossians 4:10-12, 14)

Early church tradition says that Luke came from Antioch in Syria.

Luke was the only Gentile to contribute to the New Testament.

1. The structure of Luke's gospel follows 5 journeys that Jesus made.ⁱ

Chapters 1:1-4:13 – Jesus' journey to earth.

Chapters 4:14-9:50 – Jesus' journey throughout Galilee.

Chapters 9:51-19:44 – Jesus' journey to Jerusalem.

Chapters 19:45-23:56 – Jesus' journey to the cross.

Chapter 24:1-53 – Jesus' journey back to heaven.

2. The pivotal verse of Luke's Gospel is Luke 9:51.

"As the time approached for him to be taken up to heaven, Jesus resolutely set out for Jerusalem."

3. Unlike Matthew and Mark, Luke provides a fuller account of what happened after the resurrection.

Luke records Jesus' ascension and this bridges the gap between the ending of Luke and the beginning of Acts.

D. Jesus in Luke

1. There is one dominating theme that runs through the whole of Luke's Gospel.

Matthew shows Jesus to be the son of David, the true Israel, and offspring of Abraham.

Mark shows Jesus to be both the Son of Man and the Suffering Servant.

Luke shows that Jesus is the Saviour of the World.

2. Jesus is the Saviour.

Luke uses the language of salvation more than any of the other Gospel writers - 'salvation', 'saviour', 'save' appear 17 times throughout the Gospel.

"And Mary said: "My soul glorifies the Lord and my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour." (Luke 1:46-47)

"And you, my child, will be called a prophet of the Most High; for you will go on before the Lord to prepare the way for him, to give his people the knowledge of salvation through the forgiveness of their sins." (Luke 1:76-77)

"But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. Today in the town of David a Saviour has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord." (Luke 2:10-11)

"Simeon took him in his arms and praised God, saying: "Sovereign Lord, as you have promised, you now dismiss your servant in peace. For my eyes have seen your salvation." (Luke 2:28-30)

"For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me will save it." (Luke 9:24)

"For the Son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost." (Luke 19:10)

Salvation involves both the forgiveness of sins and the gift of the Spirit.

"Which is easier: to say, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Get up and walk'? But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins..." He said to the paralyzed

man, "I tell you, get up, take your mat and go home." Immediately he stood up in front of them, took what he had been lying on and went home praising God." (Luke 5:23-25)

"Then he turned toward the woman and said to Simon, "Do you see this woman? I came into your house. You did not give me any water for my feet, but she wet my feet with her tears and wiped them with her hair. You did not give me a kiss, but this woman, from the time I entered, has not stopped kissing my feet. You did not put oil on my head, but she has poured perfume on my feet. Therefore, I tell you, her many sins have been forgiven—for she loved much. But he who has been forgiven little loves little." Then Jesus said to her, "Your sins are forgiven." The other guests began to say among themselves, "Who is this who even forgives sins?" Jesus said to the woman, "Your faith has saved you; go in peace." (Luke 7:44-50)

"The son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son.' "But the father said to his servants, 'Quick! Bring the best robe and put it on him. Put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. Bring the fattened calf and kill it. Let's have a feast and celebrate. For this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.' So they began to celebrate." (Luke 15:21-24)

"If you then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!" (Luke 11:13)

"He told them, "This is what is written: The Christ will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, and repentance and forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things. I am going to send you what my Father has promised; but stay in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high." (Luke 24:46-49)

3. Jesus is the Saviour of the World.

Luke has a particular concern for the universal scope of the salvation Jesus brings.

"But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. Today in the town of David a Saviour has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord." (Luke 2:10-11)

"For my eyes have seen your salvation, which you have prepared in the sight of all people, a light for revelation to the Gentiles and for glory to your people Israel." (Luke 2:30-32)

"And all mankind will see God's salvation." (Luke 3:6)

Luke traces Jesus' genealogy back to Adam (Luke 3:38).

He has a concern for the poor and the sick.

"Then Jesus said to his host, "When you give a luncheon or dinner, do not invite your friends, your brothers or relatives, or your rich neighbours; if you do, they may invite you back and so you will be repaid. But when you give a banquet, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind, and you will be blessed. Although they cannot repay you, you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous." (Luke 14:12-14)

He has a concern for the marginalised.

"Now the tax collectors and "sinners" were all gathering around to hear him. But the Pharisees and the teachers of the law muttered, "This man welcomes sinners and eats with them." (Luke 15:1-2)

He has a concern for women.

"As Jesus and his disciples were on their way, he came to a village where a woman named Martha opened her home to him. She had a sister called Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet listening to what he said." (Luke 10:38-39)

"On a Sabbath Jesus was teaching in one of the synagogues, and a woman was there who had been crippled by a spirit for eighteen years. She was bent over and could not straighten up at all. When Jesus saw her, he called her forward and said to her, "Woman, you are set free from

your infirmity." Then he put his hands on her, and immediately she straightened up and praised God." (Luke 13:10-13)

He has a concern for children.

"People were also bringing babies to Jesus to have him touch them. When the disciples saw this, they rebuked them. But Jesus called the children to him and said, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. I tell you the truth, anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it." (Luke 18:15-17)

He has a concern for Samaritans.

"Now on his way to Jerusalem, Jesus travelled along the border between Samaria and Galilee. As he was going into a village, ten men who had leprosy met him. They stood at a distance and called out in a loud voice, "Jesus, Master, have pity on us!" When he saw them, he said, "Go, show yourselves to the priests." And as they went, they were cleansed. One of them, when he saw he was healed, came back, praising God in a loud voice. He threw himself at Jesus' feet and thanked him—and he was a Samaritan. Jesus asked, "Were not all ten cleansed? Where are the other nine? Was no one found to return and give praise to God except this foreigner?" Then he said to him, "Rise and go; your faith has made you well." (Luke 17:11-19)

He has a concern for Gentiles.

"He was not far from the house when the centurion sent friends to say to him: "Lord, don't trouble yourself, for I do not deserve to have you come under my roof. That is why I did not even consider myself worthy to come to you. But say the word, and my servant will be healed. For I myself am a man under authority, with soldiers under me. I tell this one, 'Go,' and he goes; and that one, 'Come,' and he comes. I say to my servant, 'Do this,' and he does it." When Jesus heard this, he was amazed at him, and turning to the crowd following him, he said, "I tell you, I have not found such great faith even in Israel." (Luke 7:6-9)

Luke shows that Jesus is for all sorts of people – not just the religious and the respectable.

E. Conclusion

1. Luke wants his readers to know that Jesus is the Saviour of the world so that they regardless of who they were would turn to Him and put their trust in Him to save them from their sins.

"When one of those at the table with him heard this, he said to Jesus, "Blessed is the man who will eat at the feast in the kingdom of God." Jesus replied: "A certain man was preparing a great banquet and invited many guests. At the time of the banquet he sent his servant to tell those who had been invited, 'Come, for everything is now ready.' "But they all alike began to make excuses. The first said, 'I have just bought a field, and I must go and see it. Please excuse me.' "Another said, 'I have just bought five yoke of oxen, and I'm on my way to try them out. Please excuse me.' "Still another said, 'I just got married, so I can't come.' "The servant came back and reported this to his master. Then the owner of the house became angry and ordered his servant, 'Go out quickly into the streets and alleys of the town and bring in the poor, the crippled, the blind and the lame.' "'Sir,' the servant said, 'what you ordered has been done, but there is still room.' "Then the master told his servant, 'Go out to the roads and country lanes and make them come in, so that my house will be full. I tell you, not one of those men who were invited will get a taste of my banquet.'" (Luke 14:15-24)

2. Come to the feast, there is room at the table!

ⁱ Taken from Rodger Crooks, One Lord, One Plan, One People