

# *Mount Pisgah A.M.E. Church*

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**Bible Study, Wednesday, June 10, 2015**

**Survey of the Bible**

**Lesson 44: The Gospel According to Luke**

## **The Book of Luke**

The book of Luke is the first section of a two volume work, the second being The book of Acts) that carefully documents the ancestry and life of Jesus, his rejection, his death, his resurrection, and the consequent activities of his followers after his ascension. It is evident from the prologues, style, language, and similar themes of both that the two were intended to be considered together, that they tell one story. The author writes with compassion and warmth as he documents the perfect humanity of "The Son of Man," Jesus Christ.

## **Author**

Luke, a physician (Colossians 4:14) writes with the precision and historical diligence of a researcher as he carefully builds a case that Jesus modeled perfect manhood with compassion and grace for his reader *Theophilus* ("friend of God"), apparently a high ranking Greek nobleman who some have suggested was Luke's publisher). In Luke may have been a Greek speaking Jew, but it is more likely that he was a Gentile (in Colossians 4 Paul includes Luke's name, but *excludes* him from the list of "the only Jews with him" at the time). Paul refers to him as a doctor, so it is thought that he may have been a Greek doctor to a Roman family who at some point was set free and given Roman citizenship.

## **The Times of Luke**

Luke was not an eyewitness of the events in his gospel, but he relied upon the testimony of eyewitnesses and written sources (1:1-4) including Mark. He carefully investigated and arranged his material and presented it to Theophilus. During Paul's 2 year Caesarean imprisonment (Acts 24), Luke may have traveled into Palestine to gather information from eyewitnesses of Jesus' ministry. He was with Paul during his first Roman imprisonment (Colossians 4:14), and apparently came to see him during his second Roman imprisonment (2 Timothy 4:11). The writing of his gospel probably took place during these times, most likely before the eventual destruction of The Jerusalem Temple in 70 AD. Most scholars place the dating during the early 60's, perhaps approximately 63 AD.

## **Overview**

Luke builds the gospel narrative on the platform of historical reliability. His goal is to give a true and complete story of Jesus' life. As with the other gospels, he paints a picture of the Christ being progressively revealed, and growing faith building side by side with growing opposition. Luke emphasizes the beginnings of Jesus' ministry being among the Gentiles in Galilee, but with the focus and direction of his ministry being his movement toward his purpose in Jerusalem. While Matthew's gospel emphasizes rabbinical teaching, then demonstration, then response, (appealing to a Jewish audience) Luke's gospel begins with a clearly stated purpose, demonstrations of his power, followed by explanatory teaching.

## **Outline**

- I. The Introduction of the Son of Man (1:1-4:13)**
  - A. Purpose and Method of Luke's Gospel (1:1-1:4)
  - B. The Event's Preceding Christ's Birth: Mary and Elizabeth (1:5-1:56)
  - C. The Events Accompanying Christ's Birth (1:57-2:38)
  - D. Christ's Childhood (2:39-2:52)
  - E. Preparation for Ministry (3:1-4:13)
  
- II. The Presentation and Galilean Ministry of The Son of Man (4:14-9:50)**
  - A. Jesus' Mandate and Agenda (4:14-4:30)
  - B. The Power and Impact of The Son of Man Demonstrated (4:31-5:28)
  - C. Teaching Ministry and Controversy (5:29-6:16)
  - D. Jesus' Great Sermon (6:17-6:49)
  - E. Ministry in Response to Human Needs (7:1-9:17)
  - F. Climax of Galilean Ministry (9:18-9:50)
  
- III. Jesus' Movement Toward Jerusalem and Rejection of The Son of Man (9:51-19:27)**
  - A. New Direction of Jesus' Ministry (9:51-10:24)
  - B. Pre-Jerusalem Teachings (10:25-11:13)
  - C. Growing Opposition (11:14-11:54)
  - D. Teaching on Times of Crisis and Judgment (12:1-13:35)
  - E. Further Teaching on Urgent Issues (14:1-18:30)
  - F. Final Approach to Jerusalem (18:31-19:44)
  
- IV. At Jerusalem: The Crucifixion of The Son of Man (19:45-24:53)**
  - A. Monday: Cleansing The Temple (19:45-19:48)
  - B. Tuesday (20:1-21:38)
    1. Public Ministry with Pharisees, Herodians, Scribes (20:1-21:4)
    2. Olivet Discourse Signs of the End (21:5-21:38)
  - C. Wednesday: Betrayal (22:1- 22:6)
  - D. Thursday (22:7-22:53)
    1. Passover Meal (22:7-22:38)
    2. Gethsemane and Arrest (22:39-22:53)
  - E. Friday (22:54-23:55)
    1. Denial (22:54-22:62)
    2. Trial (22:63-23:25)
    3. Crucifixion (23:26-23:55)
  - F. Saturday: The Grave (23:56)
  
- V. The Son of Man is The Christ (24:1-24:53)**
  - A. The Resurrection (24:1-24:12)
  - B. Christ Appears on The Road to Emmaus (24:13-24:35)
  - C. Christ Appears to the Disciples (24:36-24:49)
  - D. The Ascension (24:50-24:53)

## **Some Keys to understanding Luke**

- Luke refers to Jesus as "The Son of Man." The humanity and compassion of Jesus are repeatedly stressed in Luke's Gospel. Jesus is depicted as the perfect man - both empowered and also caring and

personable. In Luke, Jesus reaches out to those "on the fringe" (including foreigners, women, the broken, and those considered "less than" by mainstream society).

- Jesus' mission is clear in Luke: the "seeking out and saving of those who are lost." Salvation is means eternal life, but also includes saving the "whole person." (Luke 9:56, 19:10)
- In both Luke and Acts, the notion of the intentional PLAN (divine destiny) of God for those who believe is emphasized. Luke emphasizes that things that take place "must take place" in order to fulfill divine objectives. Those things that get in the way of the divine plan either overcome, or taken captive for God's use in bringing about God's purposes.
- Luke shows a definitive and intentional movement toward Jerusalem. All of his activities early in the book are focused on Galilee, but there is then a decisive point where he begins to move toward Jerusalem with an intention to fulfill the divine purpose there. Acts, on the other hand, has everything moving *out from* Jerusalem.
- Luke also emphasizes the power and benefits of prayer. We often see Jesus getting away to pray in the book of Luke, and teaching about prayer.
- The Holy Spirit is emphasized in both Luke and Acts as God's executor - the overshadowing of Mary, the filler of John and Elizabeth, the informer of Simeon, the One who led Jesus to into the desert to be tempted, and the one who imparts to Jesus his divine purpose. Of course, the Holy Spirit is also the focus of Acts as One who empowers the church.

### **Some Lessons From Luke's Gospel**

- Luke brings us comfort in the fact that Jesus intentionally came to earth to *pursue* the broken, the lost, and "sinners" (those who are outside of what society considers acceptable). Even from the cross we see Jesus in Luke pardoning sinners.
- It is clear from Luke that it is only through the Holy Spirit overshadowing believers that they are able to fulfill the purposes for which God created them. Often we try to do things in our own strength and wisdom, but God clearly never intended this.
- Luke, more than the other Gospels, shows the preparation that Jesus had to go through (30 years) before stepping out and initiating his ministry (or preaching his "initial sermon" in Luke 4). Jesus only did ministry on earth for 3 years after that. How much more must we intentionally give God the freedom to prepare us for the purposes for which God created us, and not feel bad about the time lost before we knew Christ. God is able to redeem time and work all of our experiences, even our mistakes, together for the good of those who LOVE the Lord, and are CALLED according to GOD'S PURPOSES.
- Jesus shows in Luke the importance of FOCUSING on goals that God has prepared for us. Jesus could have gotten bogged down in other people's agendas for him, but he was focused on his purpose. God would have us to be clear, resolute, and determined to reach our purpose, even when others don't see it (no matter how well meaning).
- Luke reminds us that the power of God to both bring deliverance and to break through spiritual and social boundaries is only available through prayer. If Jesus needed to interrupt his busy schedule to get away to a quiet place and pray, who are we to think that we can do without doing so. Are we busier than Jesus?
- Only when God "opens our understanding" will we get a clear revelation of God's will in our lives. That "opening" can only take place through welcoming Jesus into our affairs, spending time with him, walking with him moment by moment. and allowing Him to speak to us. God will show us amazing things if we give God space to do so!