

The Gospel of Luke

Preparing for the e-conference 2009

HOLY

BIBLE

JORDANCE

Luke was written for a community in transition - from Jewish to Jews and Gentiles. The great Council of Jerusalem was some years in the past but the aftershocks still continued.

Luke's Christians needed assurance that the message that they received and celebrated was God's word.

In the midst of a variety of views Luke had to show that what the Church had become was intended by God.

Luke 1:1 Since many have undertaken to set down an orderly account of the events that have been fulfilled among us, Luke 1:2 just as they were handed on to us by those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and servants of the word, Luke 1:3 I too decided, after investigating everything carefully from the very first, to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus, Luke 1:4 so that you may know the truth concerning the things about which you have been instructed.

Questions need to be addressed

- How was it that Jesus died rejected by his own people?
- What does it mean to be Church?
- How do we take the teaching of Jesus and live it today?
- Can we be Roman citizens and Christians?
- Can Jews and Gentiles form one community?

- Unlike the other Gospel writers Luke could not tell the story of Jesus without telling the story of the early church.
- Luke-Acts is one third of the New Testament and extends from the annunciation of the birth of John the Baptist to the house arrest of Paul in Rome in Acts 28.

- In the space of fifty years the message of Jesus had spread from Judea to Syria, Cilicia, Galatia, Greece and to the very heart of the Roman Empire.
- The story of Jesus was essentially a Jewish story that was now finding universal acceptance.
- It was necessary to find new language to proclaim the message of Jesus that would make sense to many cultures within the Roman Empire.



Who was Luke?

- Companion of Paul - no - but certainly someone most concerned to protect his memory.
- Knows the Jewish scriptures in their Greek translation (LXX)
- Well educated and able to imitate various styles - Jewish and Hellenistic.



Luke draws on others

- Luke draws on the already well respected Gospel of Mark (16 chapters)
- @ 233 verses are shared by Luke and Matthew's communities
- Luke's own special materials (some written, some oral, some composed by Luke)

Lukan Themes

- Wealth and how it should be used
- Prayer – persisting till Jesus' return
- Openness to outsiders (banquets)
- Compassion –the heart of God
- The need to change our ways of seeing others (spirit of reversal)

ke's special material is quite extensive

Prayer

Compassion

Endurance

Sharing

Gospel of REVERSAL - not only that God acts but
that we are to act in the same way

Openness to the outsider



How is the Gospel structured?

- Introduction 1:1-4
- Infancy Narrative 1:5-2:52 and preparations for ministry 3:1-4:13
- Galilean Ministry 4:14-9:50
- Journey to Jerusalem (10 chapters) 9:51-19:44
- Jerusalem Ministry 19:45-21:38
- Passion Narrative and Resurrection 22:1-24:53

does it present?

- Jesus is compassionate - with a care for the outsider (special parables)
- Jesus has a firm resolve to bring his mission to completion (bringing fire on the earth Lk 12:49).
- Jesus is inclusive and challenging

the scene

- Joy as the messianic age begins
- Lk 1:14,41-44,57,63; 2:10,13f,20
- c.f. Lk 7:22-23; 18:35-43; 19:6,37-38; 24:53
- Acts 5:41; 8:39; 11:23; 13:48
- Being inspired by the Holy Spirit
- Lk 1:15,35,41,67,80; 2:25,26,27 c.f. Lk 4:1,14,18

- Trust in the word of God
- Lk 1:20,37,45; 2:20,29 (47)c.f. Lk 4:32; 5:5,15; Ch 8; 11:28 Acts 4:4; 6:7; 12:24
- Universal nature of salvation
- Lk :48; 2:31f c.f. Lk 3:6; 13:28-30; 24:47
- Acts 2:17,21; 10:43; 11:18; 13:47-48



- Jesus' fate is tied to Jerusalem and its Temple
- Lk 1:9; 2:22,41-51 c.f. Lk 9:31,51; 18:31; 24:53
- Acts 2:46; 5:5; 21:26
- Jesus as the Teacher
- Lk 2:47 c.f. Lk 19:47; 20:1; 21:37

- Mercy and compassion
- Lk 1:54,72,77,78
- c.f. Lk 6:36; 7:13, Ch 15; 17:13; 18:13
- Jesus as the point of decision for Israel
- Lk 1:35 c.f. 4:16-30; 19:41-44
- Acts 13:47; 18:6

Galilean ministry

- The mood is basically triumphant and positive with Luke keeping many of the questions found in Mark's gospel that focus on the identity of Jesus. Lk 4:18-19 delivers Jesus' manifesto declaring his commitment to proclaim God's year of favour.
- Jesus preaches Good News to the poor, freedom to captives and sight to the blind.
- Even John the Baptist will ask the question as to whether Jesus is the long awaited one.

- Luke 7:20 -23 When the men had come to him, they said, “John the Baptist has sent us to you to ask, ‘Are you the one who is to come, or are we to wait for another?’” Jesus had just then cured many people of diseases, plagues, and evil spirits, and had given sight to many who were blind. And he answered them, “Go and tell John what you have seen and heard: the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, the poor have good news brought to them. And blessed is anyone who takes no offense at me.”

Some emphases

- Jesus at prayer
- The positive response of the people (Lk 4:15; 5:25,26; 7:16) contrasted with the religious authorities (see Lk 5:17-6:11)
- Focus on the word of Jesus (see Lk 4:32,46; 5:1; 8:21; 9:35)
- Emphasis on the power of Jesus - the majority of Jesus' miracles are found in this

Journey to Jerusalem

- The travel document is used by Luke to address a number of critical issues:
 - The identity and mission of Jesus who must suffer in Jerusalem
 - The nature of his kingship
 - What is needed to be an authentic disciple.

- The travel document functions in a similar fashion to the farewell discourses of John's gospel (John 14-17). The Lukan community is instructed regarding:
 - Being prepared for persecution Lk 12:11
 - Reminded of the need for constant and hopefilled prayer 11:1-13; 18:1-14 (L)

- Challenged regarding the proper use of temporal goods

- Rich Fool 12:13-21 (L)

- Possessions and almsgiving 12:22-34 (Q)

- Rich Man and Lazarus 16:19-31 (L)

- Days of the Son of Man 17:22-37

- Difficulty of entering the kingdom of God for the rich 18:18-30.

- Luke uses the 10 chapters of the journey to take the disciples and reader on their own journey into the mission of Jesus and the Church. As Jesus journeys to the city of his destiny the disciples see it as a triumphal procession but Jesus' teaching about the kingdom requires humility, persistence, openness and courage.

Journey

- The theme of salvation
- Jesus as the source of division
- Jesus the one who must be rejected
- The lack of understanding of the disciples
- Jesus' exodus will be completed in Jerusalem.

Resurrection

- Jesus as the model of faith
- Jesus as God's Son
- Jesus' power to save
- The prophetic ministry continues
- Jesus the one in right relationship/innocent
- The compassion of Jesus
- The role of Satan

Prayer

- In Luke's Gospel Jesus models Christian prayer. He prays at significant moments of his own life.
- Baptism 3:21 (L)
- Prior to choice of the Apostles 6:12 (L)
- Prior to Peter's confession of faith 9:18 (L)
- Transfiguration 9:28 (L)
- Prayer of thanksgiving 10:21-22 (Q)
- Lord's Prayer 11:1 (L introduction)
- Jesus prays for Peter and the disciples in 22:32 (L)
- On the Mount of Olives 22:40

- Luke has special parables on prayer
 - Friend at midnight 11:5 (L)
 - Unjust judge 18:1-8 (L)
 - Pharisee and Publican 18:9-14 (L)

- 1:14 the disciples prepare for gift of the Spirit
- 1:24 prayer is made in discerning the replacement for Judas
- 2:42-47 prayer is the context in which care for others/generosity can develop
- 4:23-31 prayer is made in the midst of continuing opposition from the Jewish authorities
- 6:6 the appointment of the deacons for the distribution of bread

discernment, embarking on new enterprises, decision making

- ii) Is a means of encounter with the Father and the mystery of the in-breaking of the Kingdom
- iii) Prayer is a source of power for ministry
- iv) Intercessory - a means of bringing others to the Lord
- v) The proper context for commissioning others to undertake their ministry

- vi) Prayer is the means for overcoming opposition, difficulties, persecution and rejection
- vii) Prayer is the means by which we can come to terms with the unexpected and unsettling ways in which God can call us to change, grow and adapt
- viii) Prayer calls us to not lose heart, to continue with patient endurance



Parables of Luke

An invitation into Jesus' inclusive vision of the world

● During the year of Luke a number of Lukan parables are presented to us:

— Rich Fool Lk 12:16-21

— Good Samaritan Lk 10:29-37

— Rich Man and Lazarus Lk 16:19-31

— Prodigal Son Lk 15:11-32

— Dishonest steward Lk 16:1-8a

— Persistent widow and the judge Lk 18:1-8

— Pharisee and the Publican 18:9-14

A still life photograph featuring a large, round, golden-brown loaf of bread on the left and a white ceramic chalice filled with red wine on the right. The bread has a textured, slightly cracked surface. The chalice has a simple, elegant design with a cross embossed on its base. Both items are placed on a light-colored, possibly white, cloth or paper. The background is dark and out of focus.

Banquet scenes

Invitations to come into a bigger world

- Banquet scenes are found throughout Luke's Gospel and they provide settings in which Jesus invites the readers into a world where God reigns.
- They shed light on the nature of the eschatological community
- They clarify who will sit at table with the messiah
- The fact that salvation is universal

- Lk 5:27-39 The Feast in Levi's house - new wine needs new wineskins
- Lk 7:36-50 the scandal of the well known sinner in the house of a Pharisee
- Lk 11:37-52 being clean on the inside
- Lk 14 challenges about charity, humility and generosity

- Lk 15:1 The setting for Jesus' great parables of mercy
- Lk 19 Dining with Zaccheus
- Lk 22:14-38 Last supper - humility and service, true reward
- Lk 24:14-35 Learning to recognise Jesus in the breaking of the bread and the scriptures.

Some Critical Texts in understanding Luke.

- 1) Prologue Lk 1:1-4
- 2) Simeon's prediction Lk 2:34
- 3) Preaching at Nazareth Lk 4:16-30
- 4) Sermon on Plain Lk 6
- 5) Transfiguration – exodus Lk 9:28-36
- 6) Prophet dies in Jerusalem LK 13:31-33
- 7) Lk 24 (review and launching pad into Acts)