

Read the Bible in a Year

Week 42 –March 20-26

Read on Your Own this Week:

Psalm 120-122

Luke 1-4

Readings in Class:

Jeremiah 21-36

Introduction to Luke

Luke's Gospel is in two parts: Luke and Acts (notice how both are addressed to Theophilus). He was a doctor and historian who was with Paul on many of Paul's missionary journeys. Just as Paul was the apostle to the Gentiles, the Gospel of Luke was written with Gentiles in mind (Luke himself was probably a Gentile). His intent was to present an orderly account of the life and ministry of Jesus.

While perhaps not a direct eyewitness to most of what he wrote down, he had access to eyewitnesses (such as the disciples and, based on the detailed birth narrative, probably Mary, the mother of Jesus) and wrote down what he was told. He focuses quite a bit on Jesus as healer and also asks the question: "Who are God's people?"

A brief summary of Luke

- Prologue and Purpose (1:1-4)
- The infancy narratives (1:5-2:52)
- The preparation of Christ (3:1-4:13)
- Ministry of Jesus in Galilee (4:14-9:50)
- Journey to Jerusalem (9:51-19:27)
- Ministry of Jesus in Jerusalem (19:28-21:38)
- The Passion of Jesus Christ (22:1-23:56a)
- The Resurrection of Jesus Christ and His Appearances (23:56b-24:53)

Jesus as Healer

We find out in Colossians that Luke is a doctor, which perhaps explain why he focuses a lot on Jesus' healings. In this Gospel we get Jesus cleansing lepers, healing paralytics and withered limbs, and people with demons. He even raises a couple of people from the dead. Salvation is portrayed as more than just forgiveness of sins. It's holistic. Jesus' healings are part of salvation (see the debate when Jesus heals a paralytic in chapter 5).

Feasting in God's Kingdom

Food plays a major role in the events of this Gospel and is important to God's Kingdom. Just think about the parable comparing God's Kingdom to a wedding feast (and other parables about food), the institution of the Lord's Supper, or the fact that the disciples at Emmaus recognized Jesus when He broke bread. Fellowship usually happens around food.

Who are the People of God?

A major question in Luke's Gospel is "Who are the people of God? Who belongs in the kingdom?" Since he was writing to a Gentile audience, this would be an important question and one that also gets debated in Acts and a few of Paul's letters. Simeon in chapter 2 says that Jesus would be a light to the Gentiles. In chapter 3 we get John the Baptist saying that God can raise of children of Abraham from the stones (a phrase that Jesus repeats when he rides into Jerusalem). Jesus heals a centurion's servant in chapter 7 and after his Resurrection sends the disciples out to all nations.

We also see how the Kingdom comes to those rejected by society: the poor, the widow, the 'sinner.' This is seen clearly in the parable in the Great Banquet in chapter 14. Those who had been invited to the banquet turned down the invitation, so the master sent his servant to gather up the poor, crippled, blind, and lame. Mary's song (Magnificat) also has this theme as does the whole Christmas story (the angels go to the shepherds, Jesus was laid in a manger). The people of God are those who He has chosen. It doesn't have anything to do with your lineage or your circumstances. "He has brought down the mighty from their thrones and exalted those of humble estate."