

The Gospel of Luke

Class 6

"In the Gospel of Luke Jesus promises his disciples three things—that they would be completely fearless, absurdly happy, and in constant trouble."

- William Barclay, *The Gospel of Luke*

The Genesis Restored & The Covenant Expanded

Luke's Gospel provides an account of Jesus' life and teaching that relates to universal mission. This is what makes the Gospel of Luke the most 'catholic' (little c) in nature. Luke's gospel shows that the Gospel message is not limited to any one culture or people, the story of Jesus and salvation history now belongs to all peoples. In the gospel pattern of showing that the covenantal history of the Jewish people is fulfilled, Luke makes it his primary point to reach back to Genesis and restore the covenant the God made with Adam and Eve. Unlike the Gospel of Matthew which reaches back primarily to the Abrahamic covenant to show the Jesus is the restoration and fulfillment of Jewish history, Luke showing Jesus came to save not only the Jewish people, but the entirety of mankind. The gospel demonstrates the universality of God's love, it stresses the fact that Jesus reached out to all sorts of people, even to those who seemed to have no chance at salvation. In Luke's gospel everyone has the potential to be saved! The debt that was racked up by our first parents, Adam & Eden, has been paid by the new Adam, Jesus. Sin has now power of Christ.

Author Source Point of View: A Greek Doctor

Luke tells us that he was not an eyewitness to the events of Jesus' ministry. This is because Luke is not a Jew, Luke is the only gospel writer that was a gentile that converted to Christianity. Luke therefore is not only a gentile, he is also writing to address other gentiles in explaining that the salvation that comes Christ is not only for the Jews, but for everyone. Matthew was a Jew writing to Jews, Mark was a Jew writing to gentile romans, Luke was a gentile writing to other gentiles, and John was a Christian-Jew writing to other newly converted Christians. There is a distinct element of joy that is present in Luke's gospel, in fact Luke's Gospel is where we get all of the joyful mysteries of the rosary. Luke was probably so joyful because he grew up a Greek pagan and later in life heard the good news about Jesus Christ from the apostle Paul. Paganism didn't have a lot of joy in it, because the pagan gods were cruel and unpredictable. Luke a universal message in Paul's preaching that God loved human beings so much that he had become one of them., he even had to suffer and die to prove his love for all mankind. Jesus of Nazareth was God in the flesh!

Luke is also considered to be a well-educated Greek trained physician and therefore has a unique perspective of Jesus' miracles. Jesus heals in both a physical and spiritual way. Luke also brings in the harmony of that Adam and Eve shared as our first parents by giving special focus to women in the Gospel. Luke gives us a much more developed story of the Blessed Mother, and the role of women in Luke's gospel shows the Jesus came to fix to Eve broke.

An Introduction of Song: The Canticles

Luke's gospel has a very distinct four chapter introduction. Luke is clear that this is not an eye witness account, but that he has done due diligence in investigating everything accurately. Although Luke's primary audience is not the Jewish people, he establishes Jesus' credibility with the birth John the Baptist the last old testament prophet. Luke is making the jump from John to Jesus, which is the jump from salvation being only for the Jewish people to salvation being open to everyone. This jump is joyful, and therefore gospel opens up with three great songs. The Cantic of Mary (The Magnificat), The Cantic of Zechariah (The Benedictus), The Cantic of Simeon (The Nunc Dimittis). These are Joyful exclamations of God's glory, splendor, and power.

The introduction moves on with an extended Christmas narrative and the presentation of Jesus and the finding of the Jesus in temple. The introduction ends with the genealogy of Jesus, that starts at Jesus and

moves backwards to Adam. This is in contrast to Matthew's genealogy that starts with Abraham and moves forward to Jesus.

Sermon on the Plane

Unlike the Gospel of Matthew, Luke is not necessarily worried so much in proving that Jesus has a high level authority. Luke is writing to leave common people, non-jewish people, in awe of who Jesus is. Matthew's has a theme of mountains and valleys that alludes back to the Old Testament with Moses' authority being shown on Mt. Sinai. Luke doesn't do that. Jesus, Luke presents a boots-on-the-ground image of Jesus' teaching, preaching, and healing. Luke is addressing the poor and oppressed showing that Jesus will bring freedom and peace. His healing miracles are centered around the blind, the lame, the crippled, and the dumb. If the mountain represents authority, the plane represents commonality.

The Journey to Jerusalem

In chapters leading up to Jesus' entry into Jerusalem the gospel is filled with parables, healing stories, and Jesus encountering the poor, the down trodden, and the outcast. In Luke's gospel the parables are usually much greater in length and Luke does an awful lot of the leg work explaining what they mean and gives incredibly detail and character development. Jesus spends extra time around the blind, the sick, the Samaritans, the social outcasts, and the poor. Luke uses Jesus' journey towards Jerusalem to again show the universal nature of his salvation and his teaching. Luke's emphasis on this idea of justice to the forgotten enables him to establish an enhanced idea of mercy that is present in Luke's passion narrative. Luke shows the Jesus himself was treated unjustly by the righteous and powerful religious leaders and that even the Romans, although not in good favor with Jesus, were not necessarily the ones who hated him the most. The chapters leading up to the return to Jerusalem are laid out with many and multiple testimonies. In some ways these chapters could be re-arranged in different order and the overall story that Luke is trying to tell would not change much at all.

Death and Resurrection

Of the four gospel writings and the four passion narratives, Luke's comes closest to a dispassionate Passion. That is to say he shows Christ's death in a heavenly way, as if rising above all human emotions. He is describing a cosmic or heavenly drama, conveying events beyond the events, as if from the other side of human flesh. It is in this way that he so eloquently builds up Jesus' mercy. In Luke's gospel Peter looks at Jesus eye to eye after denying him, it is Luke that writes about the repented thief, and it is Luke that shows Pilate really isn't in favor of killing Jesus. In Luke's Passion, one feels most aware of the inevitability of what is unfolding, in the fulfillment of the ancient sacrifice that started in the garden.

This elevated concept of mercy that is given from a restoration of the Adamic covenant is shown post-resurrection. Luke has the longest post-resurrection account of the three synoptic gospels and shows that salvation, the risen Lord, is out to gather all people, even those who do not recognize him. During the Road to Emmaus Jesus asks them "why are you so sad?" inferring that they should be joyful. They do not recognize him at first until they recount the breaking of the bread. Luke is going out of his way to explain to the gentiles that Jesus Christ risen from the dead is the most joyful and salvific action that has ever occurred on earth.

Luke continues his post-resurrection account in the Acts of the Apostles.