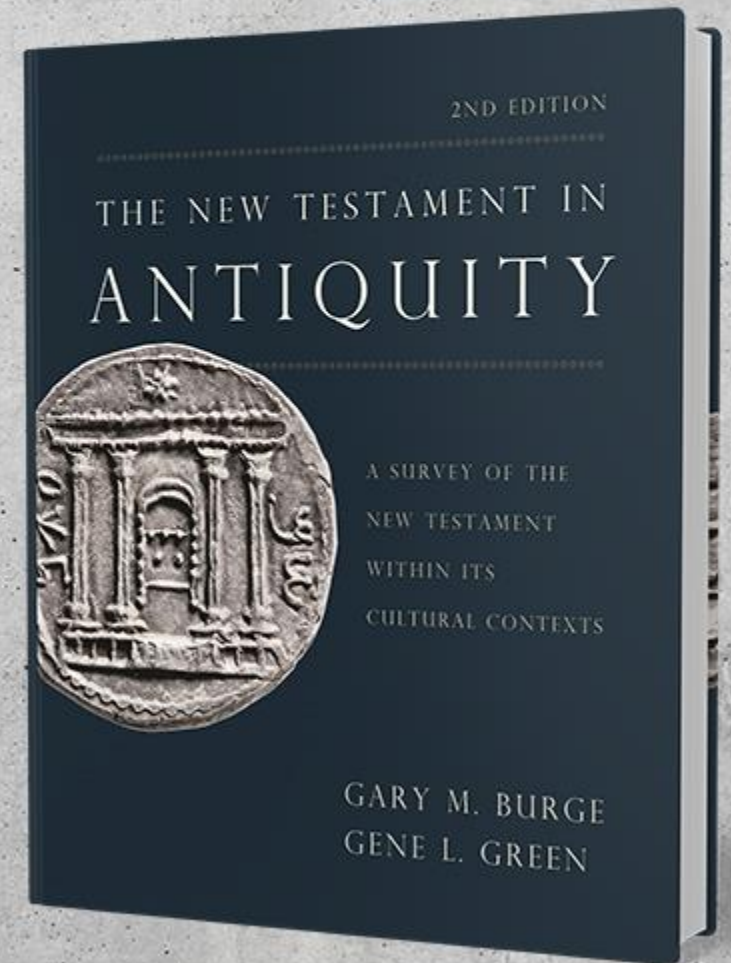


Chapter 10

The Gospel According to Luke



THE SETTING OF LUKE'S GOSPEL

- Luke-Acts makes up about a quarter of the New Testament.
 - Both are addressed to Theophilus and are read as a single narrative about Jesus and his disciples.
 - This “most excellent Theophilus” (Lk 1:3; Acts 1:1) is likely someone of a higher social class, perhaps the equestrian order or a literary patron who financed the copying of these scrolls.
- Luke-Acts is generally directed toward gentiles.
 - Jewish customs, such as Passover, are explained (Lk 22:1) or translated (“scribe” in Matthew becomes “lawyer” in Luke).
 - Theophilus and the others need to “know the certainty of the things they have been taught” (Lk 1:4).

LUKE'S STORY ABOUT JESUS

- God's salvation for all is revealed in Jesus Christ.
- This salvation includes many senses:
 - Healing from disease (17:19; 18:41–42)
 - Liberation from demonic control (8:36)
 - Restoration of life to the dead (8:50)
 - Rescue from disaster (6:9)
 - Forgiveness of sins (7:49–50)
 - A response to faith (7:50; 8:48)
- Another theme in Luke-Acts is the Holy Spirit (Lk 4; Acts 2).
- Acts presents the fulfillment of the events predicted in Luke.



THE PROLOGUE (1:1–4)

- Luke clarifies his methodology in giving an account of Jesus.
 - Luke is concerned with how Jesus has fulfilled God's plan about which many have written (1:20; 4:21; 9:31; 21:22, 24; 24:44–47).
 - Luke's sources are eyewitnesses and servants of the word (1:2).
- Luke adds that he investigated everything (1:3–4).
 - This is to give Theophilus and others an accurate and “orderly account” to confirm them in their faith.

THE INFANCY NARRATIVE (1:5–2:52)



- Luke begins with the birth of John the Baptist (1:5–25).
 - Zechariah and Elizabeth are blameless, though childless (1:6–7).
 - The angel Gabriel announces to Zechariah, who serves in the temple, that his son will be filled with the Spirit of God and prophetically make ready the way of the Lord (1:13–17).

- Gabriel then visits Mary in Nazareth (1:26).
 - Mary will have a son named “Jesus” (1:31) and he will be called the Son of God (1:32), a royal title that would challenge both Jews and Romans.
 - Son of God is also linked to Adam (3:38).
 - As she has never had sexual relations (1:34) she wonders how this can be, and Gabriel answers through divine intervention (1:35), for with God nothing will be impossible (1:37).
 - Mary agrees: “Behold I am the handmaid of the Lord. Let it be to me according to your word” (1:38).
- Luke juxtaposes the birth of Christ with political history (2:1–2).
 - Augustus Caesar planned to inaugurate a new era of peace through administrative reform, taxes, and the census.
 - Mary and Joseph traveled back to Bethlehem where Jesus is born and laid in a manger.
 - An angel announces Jesus's birth to shepherds who represent the lowly and humble to whom God offers salvation (2:10–11).
 - Angels break into a royal chorus of praise over the birth (2:14).

THE BEGINNINGS: JOHN AND JESUS

(3:1–4:13)

- John announces and precedes the coming of the Lord (Lk 3:2–6; Isa 40:3–5); his message will usher in God's salvation (3:6).
 - John's message is that judgment is near and all are called to true repentance (3:8) and conversion, which results in compassion and justice (3:10–14).
 - John baptizes in the Jordan River as a sign of conversion but points to one mightier than him bringing salvation and judgment (3:21–22).
 - Baptism transforms the ritual washing of Jews in a *mikveh*.



- Jesus is baptized by John in the Jordan.
 - The Spirit empowers him for ministry (4:18), and the Father's voice affirms Jesus's divine Sonship, kingly rule, and identity with Isaiah's Suffering Servant.
- Luke recounts Jesus's ancestry (3:23–28) back to Adam.
 - In his genealogy, Luke, a gentile, underscores Jesus's role as “the new Adam” who brings salvation to all of humanity.
- Jesus is tempted in the wilderness by the Devil.
 - He was “led by the Spirit” (4:1) from the Jordan for forty days.
 - Luke's account of the temptation is thorough like Matthew's rather than elliptic like Mark's.

THE GALILEAN MINISTRY (4:14–9:50)

- Luke introduces and summarizes Jesus’s Galilean ministry (4:14–15) as done in the power of the Spirit engaging in vigorous teaching and resulting in praise by all.
- Jesus reads from Isaiah (61:1–2; 58:6) in the synagogue.
 - “The spirit of the Lord is upon me because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor.... He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord.” (4:18–19)
 - He says this is fulfilled in their hearing (4:21) because he is the one who brings salvation, which is not well-received (4:29).

- Jesus begins his ministry by calling his disciples (5:1–6:49).
- He demonstrates his authority to heal and forgive (7:1–50).
- He proclaims the message of his kingdom (8:1–9:17).
- He commissions his apostles to share this ministry (9:1–6).
- The climax comes with Peter's confession that Jesus is the promised Messiah (9:18–20).
 - Jesus surprisingly declared that the Messiah must suffer, be killed, and be raised on the third day (9:21–22).
 - His disciples likewise will suffer for the kingdom (9:23–27).



THE JOURNEY TO JERUSALEM (9:51–19:44)

- This section contains the most unique elements of Luke.
 - Jesus denounces the leadership of the Pharisees and scribes (11:37–54) and focuses on discipleship (14–18).
- In Jericho, Jesus is recognized as “the son of David” (18:38).
- His reception in Jerusalem is more divided.
 - Jesus enters on a colt, and people welcome him with Psalm 118.
- Jesus does not silence the praise (19:40) but weeps over Jerusalem and her coming judgment (19:41–44).
 - They will not truly recognize the time of their “visitation from God” (19:44; cf. Gen 50:24–25; Job 10:12; Isa 23:17).

JERUSALEM MINISTRY (19:45–21:38)

- The conflict between Jesus and the leaders of the nation
 - They try to trap him especially in reaction to his dramatic moves of the cleansing of the temple and question the authority of him and John the Baptist.
 - Jesus responds with with the parable that Jewish leadership is on the way out (20:9–19), a teaching about paying taxes (20:20–26), and of teaching about the resurrection (20:27–40).
- In these controversies Jesus responds with such wisdom that the opposition is silenced (20:7, 19, 26, 40, 44).

THE CRUCIFIXION, RESURRECTION, AND ASCENSION OF JESUS (22:1–24:53)

- Jesus's innocence is affirmed throughout his arrest and death by both Pilate (23:1–5) and Herod (23:6–12).
 - This is important for Theophilus and other Christians who need to see how the crucifixion was a travesty of justice.
 - Crucifixion was considered the most “cruel and disgusting penalty” (Cicero, *Against Verres* 2.5.165), and no Roman citizen could be executed on a cross.

- The women hear the witness of the two angels (24:7–8) that he is risen, but the apostles say it is nonsense (24:11).
 - Jesus appears to two disciples on the road to Emmaus (24:13–35) and corrects their understanding before he ascends into heaven (24:36–43; Acts 1:1–11).



AUTHOR AND DATE

- While we do have clues about the first reader(s) of Luke-Acts, the author is unnamed.
 - The author was well-educated, wrote in literary Greek, and thoroughly and accurately integrated the Septuagint.
 - Either a Greek or a Hellenized Jew who traveled with Paul throughout his travels in Acts (16:8–10; 20:3–5; 27:1–28:17)
 - It cannot be Silas, Timothy, Mark, Barnabas, or others, because the author refers to them in the third person.
- Luke was named by Paul as a companion on his travels ending in Rome (Col 4:14; Phlm 24).
 - There are other unnamed companions as well.

- The church was unanimous in crediting this book to Luke.
 - Clement of Alexandria, Tertullian, the Muratorian Fragment, and Jerome all refer to this as Luke's gospel.
 - Jerome: "Luke, a physician of Antioch as his writings indicate, was not unskilled in the Greek language. An adherent of the apostle Paul, and companion of all his journeying, he wrote a Gospel" (*De viris illustrious* 7).
 - Thus, Luke is the only gentile author in the New Testament.
- The earliest date for Luke-Acts is AD 62.
 - Its abrupt ending suggests it is two years after Paul's arrival in Rome as a prisoner (Act 28:30), while the deaths of no major figures is mentioned.

LUKE AS HISTORIAN

- Luke writes as a participant in the early history of the church.
 - He traveled with Paul in his missionary work with early churches.
 - As a gentile convert he relied on sacred tradition (1:2) and the accounts of others in Jesus's life, such as Mary (1:5–2:52).
- Luke used great care in his research.
 - He “followed” or “investigated” everything (1:3–4) in order to give “certainty” to the teachings received as the Christian faith moved into a period of hostility (Acts 17:6; 28:22).