

The Gospel of Luke, Week One – The Birth of Jesus Christ

Introduction and Prologue

A. Context

1. Genre – Gospel

- a. one of four Gospels (Greek, *euangelia*, “good news”) that recount the life and ministry of Jesus Christ – one of the three *Synoptic* (“general synopsis”) Gospels, along with Matthew and Mark
- b. first volume of a two-volume work – followed by the Acts of the Apostles

2. Author – Luke

- a. Companion of Paul (Colossians 4:14; 2 Timothy 4:11; Philemon 1:24; “we” sections of Acts 16-28)
- b. Physician (Col 4:14 – “beloved physician”)
- c. Gentile (?) – early tradition, born in Antioch (place where disciples first called “Christians” – Acts 11:26) – only known Gentile author of a biblical book
- d. Tradition holds Luke settled down in Philippi
- e. Historian – Luke 1:1-4; Acts 1:1-5 – importance of geography and chronology

3. Place and Date

- a. likely written between 60 – 70 AD (during the latter part of Paul’s ministry)
- b. possibly written to Christians in Macedonia (and larger Aegean region)
- c. written to Theophilus (“God lover”) – perhaps individual; perhaps larger community

B. Purpose – an “orderly account” based on “eyewitnesses,” written after “investigating everything” – “so that you may know the truth about the things which you have been instructed” – present an accurate account of the life of Jesus Christ

C. Themes in Luke

1. The Holy Spirit (e.g., 1:45; 4:18; 12:12)
2. Angels (e.g., 1:19; 1:26; 2:10; 22:43; 24:4)
3. Prayer & Solitude (e.g. 6:12; 9:28; 18:1)
4. Songs of Praise & Joy (e.g. 1:46-55; 1:67-79; 2:29-32)
5. Jesus Fulfills the Messianic Promise (e.g. 1:1; 2:11; 4:18-19; 9:18-20)

6. the Temple in Jerusalem (e.g., 1:8; 2:46; 24:56)
7. People on the Margins (e.g., 2:8; 8:1-3; 10:38-41)
8. "Great Reversal" (e.g. 2:51-53; 4:21-27; 16:19-31)
9. Parables – 28 total; 16 unique in Luke

D. Outline of Luke

1. Jesus' Birth and Childhood (Luke 1-2)
2. Jesus' Ministry in Galilee (Luke 3-9:50)
3. Jesus' Journey to Jerusalem (Luke 9:51-19:27)
4. Jesus' Death, Resurrection, and Ascension (Luke 19:28-24:53)

Luke Chapters 1-2 – Jesus' Birth and Childhood

A. Luke 1:1-4 – Prologue

B. Luke 1:5-25 – Promise of the Birth of John the Baptist (unique to Luke's Gospel)

1. Setting
 - a. "In the days of King Herod of Judea" (1:5) – 'Herod the Great' ruled 37-4 BC; time is likely 5 or 6 BC
 - b. the Temple in Jerusalem (1:8)
2. Zechariah and Elizabeth (1:5-24)
 - a. reflects the story of Sarah and Abraham (Genesis 12:1-3; 15:1-6; 21:7)
 - b. the birth of their son John parallels the birth of Mary's son Jesus
 - i. Gabriel announces a miraculous birth, saying the child born will be great, and gives the name of the child
 - ii. the recipient of this news is terrified and asks how this can be
 - iii. they respond differently – Zachariah doubts and Mary believes
 - c. Elizabeth rejoices that God "looked favorably" on her

C. Luke 1:26-38 – Promise of the Birth of Jesus – "The Annunciation"

1. Setting
 - a. "In the sixth month" (1:26) – of Elizabeth's pregnancy
 - b. "town in Galilee called Nazareth" – village near Sea of Galilee, hometown of Jesus
 - c. Mary's perspective – Gospel of Matthew tells story from Joseph's perspective (Matt 1:18-25)

2. Mary and Joseph (1:26-38)

- a. Mary is a virgin engaged to Joseph, a descendant of David (1:27)
- b. Gabriel announces Mary has “found favor with God” (1:30) and her Son...
 - i. will be named Jesus (1:31), which means “the Lord saves” (Hebrew *Yeshua*) – Isaiah 7:14, child named Immanuel
 - ii. will be great and given “the throne of his ancestor David” (1:32) – fulfills the God’s promise to David of an eternal lineage (2 Samuel 7:12-16; Isaiah 9:6-7; Psalm 132:11) – Jesus is the Messiah, the Christ, the “anointed one”
 - iii. will “reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end” (1:33) – the Kingdom of God
 - iv. conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit and called the Son of God (1:35) – Jesus is fully human and fully divine, the miracle of the incarnation of God in Christ, God our Creator joined with us in our humanity
- c. “for nothing will be impossible with God” (1:37)
- d. Mary responds, “Here am I, the servant of the Lord” – the response of prophets in Scripture (Samuel, Isaiah, Jeremiah) – Mary is also a prophet

D. Luke 1:29-56 – “The Visitation” & Mary’s Song (“The Magnificat”)

1. Mary visits Elizabeth in the time both are pregnant (1:39-45)
 - a. Elizabeth blesses Mary for her faith (1:45) and for her Son (1:42) – the basis of the “Ave Maria” prayer
 - b. Elizabeth acknowledge Mary as “the mother of my Lord” (1:43), and her baby John “leaped for joy” in the womb at the arrival of Mary and her Son (1:44)
2. Mary sings her “Magnificat” (“my soul magnifies”) in response (1:46-56)
 - a. reflects the song of Hannah, the mother of Samuel (1 Samuel 2:1-10)
 - b. song of praise and joy – “my spirit rejoices in God my Savior” (1:47)
 - c. proclaims the “Great Reversal” theme of Luke (1:50-53) – “scattered the proud”; “brought down the powerful...lifted up the lowly”; “filled the hungry with good things...sent the rich away empty”

E. Luke 1:57-80 – the Birth of John the Baptist and Zechariah’s Song

1. John is born and named, to great renown (1:57-66)

2. Zachariah's voice returns and he sings a song of praise and joy
 - a. God has "looked favorably on his people and redeemed them" (1:64)
 - b. God has "raised up a mighty savior" (1:69) – Jesus Christ fulfills the promise of God to the people
 - c. John will "prepare the way" for Jesus Christ – John compared to the prophet Elijah (1:17; Malachi 4:5-6; Isaiah 40:3-5)
 - d. Jesus will bring light and peace (Isaiah 9:2)

F. Luke 2:1-20 – the Birth of Jesus Christ and the Angels' Song

1. Setting
 - a. "first registration," census to access taxes, under Roman Emperor Augustus and while Quirinius was governor of Syria (2:1-2) – 6 BC
 - b. Mary and Joseph travel to his ancestral home of Bethlehem (2:3-5) – "city of David," small town about six miles from Jerusalem
2. the birth of Jesus – God humbles himself for us
 - a. takes place in a stable, "no room in the inn" (2:6-7)
 - b. is announced by angels to shepherds (2:8-14) – who visit the Holy Family and are amazed (2:15-18)
 - c. is "good news of great joy for *all* the people" (2:10)
 - d. is the birth of "a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord" (2:11)
3. Mary "treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart" (2:20) – source for Luke?

G. Luke 2:21-52 – the Childhood of Jesus and the Songs of Simeon and Anna

1. Jesus is circumcised on the eight day (2:21)
2. Jesus is presented at the Temple (2:22-38)
 - a. "time for purification" – offering made to the Lord in the Temple 40 days after the birth of a son (80 days after the birth of a daughter), "law of Moses" (Leviticus 12) – two turtledoves (2:24), indicating the family was not wealthy
 - b. the Song of Simeon (2:25-35)
 - i. Simeon is righteous and devout and the "Holy Spirit rested on him" (2:25) – Spirit revealed he would see the Messiah before his death (2:26)

- ii. Simeon sees Jesus, takes him in his arms, and praises God, because his “eyes have seen your salvation...a light for the revelation to the Gentiles and for glory to your people Israel” (2:31-32) – Jesus Christ came for the salvation of *all* people (Isaiah 42:5-6)
- iii. Simeon blesses the Holy Family, and warns Mary of the suffering to come (2:33-35)
- c. the “prophet Anna” – praises God and speaks of Jesus “to all who were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem” (2:36-38)
- 3. the Holy Family returns to Nazareth and Jesus grows (2:39-40)
- 4. the Holy Family visits the Temple (2:41-52)
 - a. Jesus is twelve, one year before his Bar Mitzvah, when the family goes to the Temple to celebrate Passover, a week-long festival (2:41-42)
 - b. the family leaves – in a large, multi-generational caravan – and Jesus remains in the Temple, speaking with the teachers (2:43-47)
 - c. Mary and Joseph are “astonished” when they return and find him (2:48), and Mary “treasured all these things in her heart” (2:51)
 - d. Jesus tells them that he “must be...about his father’s business/ in his father’s house” (2:49) – Jesus’ affirmation God is his Father and a preview of Jesus’ adult ministry

The Gospel of Luke, Week Two – The Ministry of Jesus Christ

Jesus Begins His Ministry

A. Luke 3:1-38 – the Baptism of Jesus (*see also Matt 3:1-17; Mark 1:1-11; John 1:19-28*)

- 1. Setting (3:1-2) – approx 28 AD – Jesus “about 30 when he began his work” (3:23)
 - a. “In the fifteenth year of the reign of Emperor Tiberius” (ruled 14-37 AD); Pontius Pilate, Governor of Judea (26-36 AD); Herod Antipas, son of Herod the Great, tetrarch of Galilee (ruled 4 BC – 39 AD); Annas, high priest deposed by Rome, replaced by Caiaphas (18-36 AD)
 - b. John the Baptist “in the wilderness,” goes to the region around the Jordan River (3:3)
- 2. John the Baptist...
 - a. proclaims a “baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins” (3:4)

- i. calling people to repentance, *metanoia*, “change mind” and heart, turn from sin and turn to God
- ii. (unique to Luke) John offers instructions for repentance (3:7-11): share what you have with those in need and do your job with integrity
- b. prepares the way for Jesus Christ (3:3-6) – Isaiah 40:3-5, ‘clear the highway’ for King
- c. is a prophet (3:7-14; 18-20)
 - i. called “a prophet” by Jesus (Luke 7:24-30) and popular as a prophet among the people (Luke 20:6)
 - ii. jailed, and eventually executed (9:7-9), by Herod Antipas for speaking against Herod’s immorality
- d. is not the Messiah – as some thought he might be (3:15-17)
 - i. John baptizes “with water” (3:16) – practice for Gentile converts to Judaism, daily purification rituals, Essenes – John connects baptism with the forgiveness of sins
 - ii. *in contrast to* Jesus baptizes “with the Holy Spirit and with fire” (3:16) – illuminated, refined, empowered for witness (Acts 2)

3. Jesus’ Baptism (3:21-22)

- a. Identity of Jesus – “You are my Son, the Beloved, with you I am well pleased”
 - i. “Son of God” – Messiah, Suffering Servant, Savior (2 Sam 7:12-14, Ps 2:7, Isa 42:1)
 - ii. Second Person of the Trinity – Father, Son, Holy Spirit, divine relationship of love
- b. Solidarity with humanity – baptized even though he was without sin
- c. Move into public ministry – affirmed in God’s love, empowered by the Holy Spirit

4. Jesus’ Genealogy (3:38) – in contrast to Matthew (Matt 1:2-17) who lists from Abraham to Jesus – Luke lists from Jesus to Adam, “son of God,” Jesus is the divine Savior of *all* people

B. Luke 4:1-13 – the Temptation of Jesus (*see also Matt 4:1-11, Mark 1:12-13*)

- 1. Test of Jesus’ identity and mission – devils asks “If you are the Son of God...”
 - a. tempted by “the devil,” also called Satan, *slanderer, accuser, adversary* – representative of that which opposes God
 - b. contrasts with story of Adam and Eve – Adam & Eve gave into temptation (Genesis 3:1-24) – Jesus does not

c. three temptations: 'stone to bread'; 'all the kingdoms of the world'; 'throw yourself down from the Temple' – break trust with God the Father and use power for himself

2. Jesus overcomes temptation

a. Jesus remains faithful, the one to lead the people from the wilderness into a new Promised Land – rebukes the devil with quotes from Moses: 'not bread alone' (Deuteronomy 8:3); 'worship and serve only God' (Deuteronomy 6:13); 'do not put the Lord to the test' (Deuteronomy 6:16)

b. devil departs "until an opportune time"

C. **Luke 4:14-30 – the Launch of Jesus' Public Ministry** – *the (approx) three years Jesus Christ spent in ministry in the Holy Land, in contrast to eternal and universal ministry of Jesus Christ*

1. Jesus, "filled with the Holy Spirit," returns to his hometown of Nazareth and begins to teach in the synagogues (4:14-15)

2. Jesus reads from the prophet Isaiah (Isaiah 61:1-2) and says "today, this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing" (4:16-21)

3. Jesus' mission statement

a. articulates the 'Great Reversal' – "the year of the Lord's favor," indicates Year of Jubilee (Lev 25)

b. "good news" of salvation in Jesus Christ – Christ brings healing, then and now

c. *Jesus' interpretation of Scripture – leaves off "and the day of vengeance of our God"*

4. Jesus' ministry is for all people (4:22-30) – Elijah (1 Kings 17:8-24) and Elisha (2 Kings 5:1-19) ministered to Gentiles, and so will Jesus – Jesus' embrace of 'outsiders' brings him into conflict with 'insiders'

Jesus Heals, Teaches, Disciples – in Galilee

Setting – Jesus "went down to Capernaum, a city in Galilee" (4:31) – home base for Jesus and his disciples

A. **Jesus Heals** – amazing the people (4:36-37; 5:26; 7:16-17) and infuriating the religious authorities (5:23; 6:11; 7:33-34)

1. a man with an "unclean spirit" in the synagogue on the Sabbath (4:31-37) – the demons recognize Jesus is the Messiah, "the Holy One of God"

2. Simon Peter's mother-in-law (4:38-43) – in Peter (and Andrew's) home

3. a man with leprosy (5:12-16) – after which he withdraws to a deserted place to pray
4. a man who was paralyzed (5:17-26) – and recognized the faith of his friends – and forgives his sins, demonstrating his divine authority
5. a man with a withered hand (6:6-11) – lawfully doing good on the sabbath
6. the Centurion's servant (7:1-10) – publicly affirms the faith of the Roman military commander, and heals his servant
7. the widow's son (unique to Luke) – two processions meet each other at Nain, Jesus has compassion for the widow and brings her dead son back to life, restores them both
8. a "woman in the city," a "sinner," who anoints him with oil in the home of Simon the Pharisee, who silently judges her and Jesus – Jesus defends the woman with a parable about gratitude, and forgives her sins – Gospel of John identifies her as Mary of Bethany, two different events? (*see also Mark 14:3-9 & Matt 26:6-13, John 12:1-8*)
9. the disciples, calming a storm at sea (8:22-25) – 'even the winds and the water obey him,' Jesus has authority over all forces that would threaten us
10. a man in Gerasene possessed by a "Legion" of demons (8:26-39) – brings freedom to a man in Gentile territory and commissions him to share the good news in his hometown
11. & 12. the daughter of Jarius and the woman suffering from hemorrhages (8:40-56) (*see also Matt 9:18-26, Mark 5:21-43*)
 - a. Jesus is on his way to heal the twelve year old daughter of the leader of the Synagogue, Jarius...
 - b. a woman pushes through the crowd, 'touched the hem of his garment,' and is healed – Jesus publicly acknowledges her with the word, "Daughter, your faith has made you well, go in peace" – physically healed and restored to community
 - c. ...Jesus finally arrives at the home of Jarius, whose daughter has died, and brings his daughter back to life

B. Jesus Teaches

1. in the synagogues and to "other cities" (4:42-44)
2. about fasting, "new wine in old wineskins" (5:33-39) – first parable in Luke, spoken when asked why Jesus and his disciples don't fast, Jesus is doing a new thing that won't fit in the old ways

3. about the Sabbath (6:1-5) – Jesus is “the lord of the Sabbath,” sabbath about rest, not rules
4. The Sermon on the Plain (Jesus “stood on a level place”) (6:17-49) – *see also “The Sermon on the Mount,” Matt 5-7*
 - a. Beatitudes & Woes (6:20-26) – the ‘Great Reversal’ theme in Luke
 - i. Beatitudes – “blessed” are the poor, hungry, weeping, persecuted – like prophets, great is your reward in heaven
 - ii. Woes (unique to Luke) – woe to the rich, full, laughing, well received – like false prophets
 - b. “Love your enemies” (6:27-36) – “turn the other cheek” – ‘give to those who ask’ – “do unto others as you would have them do unto you” *The Golden Rule* – “be merciful as your heavenly Father is merciful”
 - c. “Do no judge” (6:37-42) – forgive and give – parable, “the blind leading the blind” – ‘remove the log in your eye before the speck in your neighbors’
 - d. ‘Knowing a tree by its fruit’ (6:43-45) – Martin Luther, “good works do not make a person good, but a good person does good works”
 - e. Building your house on the rock, not the sand (6:46-49) – Jesus asks, “Why do you call me ‘Lord, Lord’ and do not do what I tell you?”
5. about John the Baptist (7:18-35)
 - a. the assurance that Jesus is the Messiah is demonstrated in his healing and teaching, bringing good to people
 - b. John was a prophet, and more, he prepared the way for Jesus the Messiah (prophecy of Zachariah 1:76-77, Malachi 3:1, Isaiah 40:3-5)
 - c. John called for repentance and Jesus calls for celebration – and some do not accept either, compared to children playing games at both funerals and weddings
6. the Parable of the Sower (8:1-15) and the Lamp under a Jar (8:16-18) (*see also Matt 13:1-9, 18-23, Mark 4:3-8,11-15*)
 - a. Jesus speaks in parables – speaks to people where they are (Isaiah 6:9-10), truth for those willing to hear it
 - b. Jesus sows the Word of God, which some hearts receive and others don’t

c. “pay attention to how you listen”

7. about his family (8:19-21) – everyone who hears and does his Word

C. Jesus Disciples

1. Jesus calls Simon Peter (and Andrew) and James and John (5:1-13) – fishing partners who will “fish for people” after catching an abundance of fish – lake of Gennesaret, another name for the Sea of Galilee (*see also Matt 4:18-22, Mark 1:16-20; John 1:35-51 and John 21:1-14*)
2. Jesus calls Levi/Matthew (5:27-32) – a tax collector – Jesus eats with sinners; he has come “come to call not the righteous but sinners to repentance” – the author of the Gospel of Matthew (*see also Matt 9:9-13, Mark 2:13-17*)
3. the Twelve Apostles (6:12-16) – (*see also Matt 10:1-4, Mark 3:13-19, Acts 1:13*)
 - a. chosen by Jesus after he spends the night in prayer
 - b. (Simon) Peter, Andrew, James and John (“sons of Zebedee”), Matthew (Levi), Thomas (“the twin”), Philip, Bartholomew, James (“son of Alphaeus”), Simon (“the Zealot”), Thaddeaus/*Judas (son of James)*, and Judas Iscariot (“who betrayed him”)
4. the Women who accompany Jesus, and fund his ministry “out of their resources” (8:1-3) (unique to Luke) – including Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Susanna, and many others

The Gospel of Luke, Week Three – The Journey of Jesus Christ

Jesus Heads to Jerusalem

A. Jesus is the Suffering & Triumphant Messiah (9:18-36)

1. **Peter's Confession** (9:18-20) (*see also Mark 8:27-33, Matt 16:13-23, John 6:67-71 – and John 11:17-27, where Martha makes this Confession*)
 - a. Setting
 - i. pivotal point in the Gospel narrative, begins Jesus' journey to Jerusalem – Jesus “set his face to go to Jerusalem” (9:51)
 - ii. height of Jesus' public ministry
 - iii. in Caesarea Philippi – city named after Roman emperor and Herodian king

b. Identity of Jesus – Jesus is “The Messiah of God” – in Greek, *Christ*, means “anointed one,” king in the line of David who will restore the people

2. **Jesus's Foretells His Passion** (9:21-27) (*see also Matt 16:21-23, Mark 8:31-33*)

a. first of three foretellings in the Synoptic Gospels of his suffering, rejection, death, resurrection (second, 9:43-45; third, 18:31-34)

b. Jesus clarifies his anointing – Savior of *all* people – not through military conquest, but through sacrificial, triumphant, life-giving love

c. Jesus calls his followers to do the same, “deny themselves, take up their cross, and follow me” (9:23)

3. **The Transfiguration** (9:28-36) (*see also Matt 17:1-9, Mark 9:2-10*)

a. Context

i. “about eight days” after Peter's Confession

ii. with Peter, James, and John – Jesus' inner circle

iii. likely Mount Hermon, north of Caesarea Philippi

b. Identity of Jesus – “This is my Son, the Chosen, listen to him!”

i. Jesus is the Messiah – affirmation of Peter's Confession

ii. Jesus is the fulfillment of God's promises – Moses (see Deuteronomy 18:15) and Elijah (see Malachi 4:5-6), “the law and the prophets”

iii. Jesus is the Second Person of the Trinity

B. **Jesus Heals** – amazing the people and infuriating the religious authorities

1. a boy with an unclean spirit (9:37-42)

2. a woman who had a back ailment for eighteen years, on the Sabbath (13:10-17)

3. a man with dropsy [edema, swelling], lawfully doing good on the Sabbath (14:1-6)

4. *in a region between Samaria and Galilee*, ten men with leprosy (17:11-19) – only one of whom, a foreigner, returns to thank him – Martin Luther, asked about the nature of true worship, answered, “the tenth leper turning back”

5. welcomes the children (18:15-17) – and calls us to enter the kingdom of God as “a little child”

6. *near Jericho*, a man who had been blind (18:35-43) – calls, “Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me”

7. *in Jericho, a city near Jerusalem*, Jesus calls Zacchaeus (unique to Luke), a wealthy tax collector, out of the tree and invites himself over for dinner (19:1-10) – Zacchaeus is a child of God, like the woman who touched his garment (8:40-56), Jesus “came to seek out and to save the lost”

C. Jesus Teaches

1. *in Parables (see below)*
2. about what it means to follow him (9:46-62) – true greatness is welcoming children – “whoever is not against you is for you” – we are not to “command fire to come down” on those who reject Jesus – we need to be truly dedicated, “no one who puts a hand to the plow and looks back is fit for the kingdom of God”
3. the Lord’s Prayer (11:1-6) (*see also Matt 6:9-15*) – in the context of Jesus’ praying (unique to Luke), and then telling a parable about prayer
4. “Do not worry” (12:22-32) because God knows your needs and cares for you (*see also Matt 6:25-34*)
5. as he nears Jerusalem...
 - a. about his refining fire (12:49-53)
 - b. understanding the times (12:54-56)
 - c. settling with your opponent before things escalate (12:57-59)
 - d. no one is exempt from suffering in this broken world (13:1-5)
 - e. enter through “the narrow door” (13:22-30)
 - f. the good news transcends the law (16:14-18)
 - g. about the coming of the Kingdom (17:20-37) – eschatological (“end times”) / apocalyptic (“revelation”) discourse

D. Jesus Disciples

1. Jesus sends out the seventy (10:1-12, 17-24, unique to Luke)
 - a. in full dependence on God to complete their mission to teach and heal and free people from demonic forces
 - b. reminding them to be humble in their ministry
2. Jesus visits with Martha and Mary (10:38-42, unique to Luke) (*see also John 11:1-12:11*) – gently corrected Martha and affirms the discipleship of Mary
3. Jesus warns disciples against hypocrisy and calls them to fearless confession (12:1-12)

4. Jesus warns the disciples about causing others to stumble (17:1-4) and calls them to have faith, even “the size of a mustard seed” (17:5-6)

E. Jesus Faces Opposition

1. refuting those who claim he is acting with the power of Satan (11:14-26) and stating that “true blessedness” is hearing and obeying the word of God (11:27-28)
2. telling this “evil generation” that they will only receive “the sign of Jonah,” who called the Ninevites to repentance (11:29-32)
3. declaring woe on the Pharisees for neglecting “justice and the love of God” (11:37-44) and woe on the lawyers for not helping people and sharing wisdom (11:43-54)
4. lamenting over Jerusalem, the “the city that kills the prophets” (13:31-35)

The Parables of Jesus

A. Jesus taught in many different ways~ Brian McLaren, *We Make the Road by Walking*

- a. “signs and wonders” - healing, feeding, freeing
- b. “public lectures” - Sermon on the Mount/Plain
- c. “impromptu moments” - addressing people in context
- d. “field trips with his disciples” - private training
- e. “public demonstrations” - actions for social justice
- f. “parables” - “finely crafted works of short fiction”

B. The Parables of Jesus - found in the Synoptics

A. Greek, *parable* - from *para*, alongside, and *bale*, to throw - a rhetorical figure of speech, setting one thing beside another to form a comparison or illustration - a simple story used to illustrate a moral or spiritual lesson - by definition open to interpretation

B. Context

- a. “The kingdom of heaven is like...”
- b. in response to challenge or question
- c. explained to his disciples

C. *The Parable of the Prodigal Son* (Luke 15:1-32)

- A. perspectives based in context - Mark Allen Powell, *What Do They Hear?* -
- B. who is God? ~ Timothy Keller, *The Prodigal God*
- C. who are you?

Luke Chapters 19-24 – Jesus' Death, Resurrection, & Ascension

Jesus in Jerusalem – ca 30 AD

A. Luke 19:28-47 – Jesus Enters Jerusalem during the Festival of Passover (also known as Feast of Unleavened Bread)

1. Triumphal Entry (19:28-40) (*see also Matt 21:1-9, Mark 11:1-10*)
 - a. Sunday of Passion Week (**Palm Sunday**)
 - b. Jesus rides into the city on a young donkey, not a warhorse (Zechariah 9:9)
 - c. he is greeted with Psalm 118:26 – part of the Hallel sung during Passover Season
 - d. expresses the people's expectation of the Messiah, descended from King David – and the concern of the religious authorities, threat of rebellion against Rome and its consequences
2. Lament over Jerusalem (19:41-44, *see also 13:31-35*) – Siege of Jerusalem in 70 AD, destruction of the Temple by Roman forces
3. Cleansing of the Temple (19:45-47) (*see also Matt 21:10-17, Mark 11:15-19, John 3:13-17*)
 - a. Temple is “house of prayer” (Isaiah 56:7) for all peoples, not a “den of robbers” (Jeremiah 7:11) where the vulnerable are excluded and exploited
 - b. Jesus overturns the entire sacrificial system

B. Luke 20:1-21:38 – Jesus Teaches in Jerusalem

1. about his authority (20:1-19)
 - a. questioning the chief priests and scribes on the baptism of John
 - b. the Parable of the Tenant Farmers – quotes Psalm 118:22
2. about paying taxes (20:20-26) – “render to Caesar things that are Caesar's and to God things that are God's” – everything is God's
3. about the resurrection (20:27-40) – God is the God of the living; “for to him all of them are alive”
4. about the Messiah (20:41-43) – the Messiah is greater than David (Psalm 110:1, Acts 2:32-36)
5. warning about the scribes (20:45-47) – who covet esteem, while harming the vulnerable – “devour widow's house,” seize their property due to default
6. about giving (21:1-4) – the ‘Widow's Mite’

C. Luke 21:5-38 – the Eschatological/ Olivet Discourse (see also Matt 24:1-25:46; Mark 13:1-37)

1. Siege of Jerusalem in 70 AD
2. Parable of the Fig Tree – “this generation will not pass away until all these things have taken place”
3. “Be on guard” – call to faithfulness in the midst of trials

The Suffering and Death of Jesus

Passion of Jesus Christ – “Passion” from Latin *suffering* – com-passion, *with suffering*

A. Luke 22:1-38 – the Last Supper (see also Matt 26:26-29, Mark 14:22-225)

Maundy Thursday – from Latin, *mandatum*, “commandment” – Jesus gives the New Commandment to love each other (John 13:31-35)

1. the plot to kill Jesus (22:1-6) – Judas Iscariot confers with the religious authorities about betraying Jesus
2. Jesus prepares for the Passover (22:7-13)
3. The Last Supper (22:14-38)
 - a. Jesus institutes Communion / Eucharist (Greek, *thanksgiving*) / the Lord's Supper – his presence in the bread and wine of the Sacrament
 - b. the disciples argue about greatness, and Jesus calls them to servanthood
 - c. Jesus prays for Peter's restoration after he will deny Jesus three times
 - d. Jesus is the Suffering Servant (Isaiah 53:1-12) – “by his wounds we are healed”

B. Luke 22:39-62 – Betrayal & Arrest (see also Matt 26:36-75, Mark 14:32-72, John 18:1-27)

1. Prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane (22:39-46)
 - a. on the Mount of Olives at night
 - b. Jesus prays in agony, ‘remove this cup, yet not my will but yours be done’
2. Betrayal and Arrest (22:47-53)
 - a. Judas Iscariot leads the soldiers to Jesus, approaching to betray him with a kiss
 - b. one of Jesus' disciples (*Peter*, John 18:10) wounds the servant of the high priest; Jesus chastises (*Peter*) and heals the servants – ‘all who live by the sword will die by the sword’ (Matt 25:62)
3. Peter's Denial (22:54-62) – as Jesus said he would, Peter denies Jesus three times, then “Jesus turned and looked at Peter,” and Peter left and “wept bitterly”

Good Friday

C. Luke 22:63-25:25 – Trials (see also *Matt 27:1-31, Mark 15:1-20, John 18:28-19:16*)

1. by the Council (22:63-71) – early Friday morning, before the Sanhedrin, 70 member governing body in Jerusalem – accuse him of blasphemy
2. by Pontius Pilate, first time (23:1-5)
 - a. Pilate asks, “Are you the king of the Jews?” Jesus answers, “You say so” – Jesus’ kingdom is not of this world (*John 18:36*)
 - b. Pilate initially finds no case against him
3. by Herod Antipas, who had killed John the Baptist (23:6-12) (unique to Luke) – Herod sends him back to Pilate
4. by Pontius Pilate, second time (23:13-25) – Pilate, still believing Jesus is innocent but giving in to pressure from others, sentences Jesus to death

D. Luke 23:26-56 – Crucifixion (see also *Matt 27:31-66, Mark 15:20-47, John 19:17-43*)

1. Crucifixion (23:26-43)
 - a. Jesus is beaten and carries his cross, until Simon of Cyrene is pressed into service to carry it for him
 - b. Jesus warns the “Daughters of Jerusalem” not to weep for him but for themselves and their children (unique to Luke) - Siege of Jerusalem in 70 AD
 - c. Jesus is crucified at the “place called the Skull” (Greek); Aramaic, *Golgatha*
 - i. Jesus says, “Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing”
 - ii. two criminals crucified with him – one mocks him – the other asks Jesus to remember him, and Jesus responds, “today you will be with me in Paradise”
 - iii. the soldiers divide his clothes (*Psalm 22:18*) and mock him
 - iv. the religious authorities mock him, “If you are the King of the Jews, save yourself” – the Temptation throughout his ministry
 - v. the people stand by and watch
2. Death (23:44-49)
 - a. darkness covers the land from 12 pm to 3 pm
 - b. the curtain in the Temple is torn in two – Jesus gives us immediate access to God
 - c. Jesus says, “Father, into your hands I commend my spirit” (*Psalm 31:5*) and breaths his last

- d. a Roman Centurion recognizes that Jesus was innocent
- e. the women disciples of Jesus watch from a distance
3. Burial (23:50-65) – Joseph of Arimathea (*and Nicodemus, John 19:39*) and the women disciples bury Jesus in the Garden Tomb

Holy Saturday – Sabbath rest

The Resurrection and Ascension of Jesus

Resurrection Sunday - 1st day – and also 8th day, new creation – of the week; Lord's Day

- A. **The Empty Tomb (24:1-12)** (*see also Matt 28:1-15, Mark 16:1-11, John 20:1-18*) – the women disciples – including Mary Magdalen, Joanna, and Mary the mother of James (8:1-3) – find the tomb empty and are told by angels that Jesus Christ has risen from the dead
- B. **The Road to Emmaus (24:13-35)** (*see also Mark 16:12-13*) – Jesus walks alongside disciples Cleopas and his friend/relative/wife? – they recognize him after they eat with him and he has explained the Scriptures to them – Jesus revealed in Word and Sacrament
- C. **Jesus Appears to the Disciples (24:36-49)** (*see also Matthew 28:16-20, John 20:19-21:25*)
 1. says “Peace be with you” to his terrified disciples
 2. invites them to touch him and see he is not a ghost, and eats a piece of fish in front of them – Jesus rose bodily from the dead
 3. opens their minds to understand the Scriptures about him – he is the suffering and triumphant Messiah, and “repentance and forgiveness of sins is to be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem”
 4. tells them, “You are witnesses of these things” (Acts 1:8)
 5. promises to send them the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:1-13)
- D. **Jesus Ascends into Heaven (24:50-53; Acts 1:6-11)** (*not specifically in Matt, Mark, John*)
 1. Forty days after his Resurrection (Acts 1:3), Jesus takes his disciples to Bethany (two miles east of Jerusalem; home of Martha, Mary, and Lazarus, John 11:18), blesses them, and is carried up into heaven (like Elijah, 2 Kings 2:1-18)
 2. the disciples return to Jerusalem “with great joy” and worship in the Temple – ending the Gospel of Luke where it began

