

The Gospel of Luke

October 1, 2023

Opening Prayer

Blessed Lord, who caused all holy Scriptures to be written for our learning: Grant us so to hear them, read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest them, that we may embrace and ever hold fast the blessed hope of everlasting life, which you have given us in our Savior Jesus Christ; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen. (Collect for Proper 28, BCP 236)

Bible Study Basics

The world behind the text, the world of the text, and the world in front of the text.

Behind the Text in Luke – Historical Context

(Most Bible scholars think ...)

- The author of Luke was very well-educated Christian who also wrote the Acts of the Apostles
- Luke wrote for a culturally diverse audience throughout the Roman Empire.
- Probably written about the same time as the gospel of Matthew. Luke had access to the Gospel of Mark, another resource scholars call “Q,” and a third collection of oral or written stories about Jesus, known as “L material.”
- Tradition suggests either Antioch or Rome as the place of origin. Both are large cities with an educated populace.

Of the Text – Literary Markers

- Luke is the longest book of the New Testament; about half of Luke is content that isn't found anywhere else
- Language is formal and refined; in keeping with a well-educated citizen of the Roman Empire
- Poetry and hymns: Ave Maria, Magnificat, Benedictus, Gloria, Nunc Dimittis
- Luke includes historical/ cultural markers (Luke 3:1-2)
- Themes of worship and prayer, table fellowship, ministry to excluded or disadvantaged
- Luke focused on what Jesus **felt**.

In Front of the Text – Our own context and experience

- Many of our favorite Bible stories come from Luke: the Annunciation, the Nativity, the Good Samaritan, the Prodigal Son, Mary & Martha, the Road to Emmaus
- Luke is used in our liturgy

Working with the Text – The Baptism of Jesus (Luke 3:21-22; 4:1-2a) (skip 3:23-38)

Luke 3:21 Now when all the people were baptized, and when Jesus also had been baptized and was praying, the heaven was opened, ²² and the Holy Spirit descended upon him in bodily form like a dove. And a voice came from heaven, “You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased.”

Luke 4:1 Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit in the wilderness, ² where for forty days he was tempted by the devil.

Behind the Text

- John: proclaiming baptism of repentance + “brood of vipers” (“Q” source – this part is very similar to what happens in Matthew and is absent from Mark)
- Jesus: The reader/listener already knows who Jesus is.
 - birth narrative
 - Anna and Simeon
 - child at the Temple

Of the Text

- Emphasis on prayer. The Holy Spirit descends when Jesus *prays*.
- “bodily form like a dove” Luke is clarifying here – this isn’t a metaphor, it was like an actual dove
- “full of the Holy Spirit” another emphasis on prayer
- What word or phrase stands out to you? If we read it in a different translation, what word or phrase stands out?

In front of the Text

- How does this text bring to light, challenge, broaden, or reinforce our working theological convictions? (Where is God? What does this text say about God?)
- How does this passage challenge and nurture the spiritual life? What spiritual practices are explicitly or implicitly suggested by the text?
- How does this text relate to contemporary social and political realities and ideologies?