

Unlocking the Gospel of Luke

A Spiritual Resource of the Holy Spirit Catholic Community

Digging Deeper

Explore the riches of Luke's Gospel with introductory to advanced commentaries
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Mary: New Ark of the Covenant

See how Luke links the Blessed Virgin Mary with the Ark of the Covenant into his narrative of his Gospel.
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A Novel Idea

Although Taylor Caldwell authored 40+ books, many consider her novel on Luke to be her greatest work.
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Coming Soon

Mark your calendar for our future lineup of speakers, and how you can provide us feedback for our ongoing adult education at HSCC.
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Luke Basics

Author

From the earliest extant manuscripts (AD 200s), Luke's authorship has been attached to the Gospel that continues to bear his name. Additionally, early Christian writers, including St. Irenaeus (AD 180), Tertullian (AD 200), and St. Clement of Alexandria (AD 200) confirm that Luke, Paul's companion (2 Tim. 4:11; Phil 24), authored the text. Finally, the Muratorian Fragment (AD 170) also supports Lukan authorship. Absent an autograph and original document, we have strong historical evidence that St. Luke authored the Gospel.

Dating/Place of Composition

There is no consensus on the dating of the Gospel. Scholars suggest dates that range from AD 60s-80s. Those who argue for an earlier dating point to the abrupt ending of his sequel, Acts of the Apostles (around AD 62), which he wrote after the gospel.



Location of composition is unknown, although some traditions propose Antioch.

Audience

Luke addresses his Gospel and Acts to a man named "Theophilus" who "had been taught" about Jesus (Lk. 1:4). He was likely a new Gentile Christian. The broader audience of Luke is also likely Gentile believers in Jesus that he wishes to confirm them in their faith. They already know the words and works of Jesus (possibly from earlier texts or oral traditions), and he wishes to assure his

readers of the certainty of that message and those events.

Basic Structure

There are many ways to structure the Gospel but for simplicity here are the four major movements of the Gospel:

His Birth/Early Life **1:1-4:13**

His Ministry in Galilee **4:14-9:50**

His Journey toward Jerusalem **9:51-19:44**

His Passion & Resurrection **19:45-24:53**

Themes

Luke's Gospel has many powerful themes, including joy, mercy, prayer and the work of the Holy Spirit. One of the most important ones is the theme of "The Kingdom of God." In fact, the phrase is used 32 times in Luke's Gospel. It is the restored kingdom of David (1:32-33), the crux of Jesus' mission (4:43; 8:1; 9:11), the heart of the disciple's mission (9:2; 10:9), ushered into reality by Christ (17:20-21), and growing organically like seed and leaven (13:18-21).

He was revealed in the breaking of the bread - Luke 24:30-31



Digging Deeper: Books on the Gospel of Luke

These resources were chosen because they represent the latest scholarship on the Gospel of St. Luke (within last 15 years), for their readability (authors are passionate about their topic and interesting to read) and their value for those creating a theological library (each of the resources can be purchased online for under \$20).

Introductory

Mission of the Messiah, Tim Gray

Ignatius Catholic Study Bible: The Gospel of Luke

Intermediate

The Theology of the Gospel of Luke, Joel B. Green

The Navarre Bible: St. Luke: Texts & Commentaries

The Way According to Luke, Paul Borgman

Advanced

Sacra Pagina: Gospel of St. Luke, L.T. Johnson

Mary: Ark of the New Covenant

Luke is a master of parallels who connects the story of salvation history in the Old Testament with its fulfillment in the New in beautiful and powerful ways. One of the interesting parallels he subtly builds into his narrative, links the Blessed Virgin Mary with the Ark of the Covenant.



OT: The ark is overshadowed by God's presence as his dwelling place on earth (Ex. 40:34-35) **NT:** Mary is overshadowed & becomes dwelling place of Christ (Lk. 1:35).

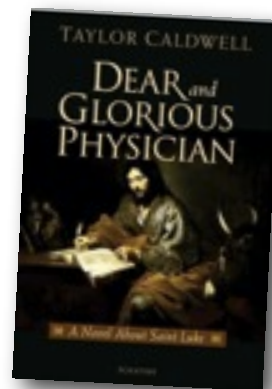
OT: Ark travels to the hill country of Judah to the house of a priest and remains 3 months (2 Sam. 6:1-11) **NT:** Mary travels to the hill country of Judea, where she stays at the house of a priest for 3 months (Luke 1:39,56).

OT: David leaps for joy at the presence of the Ark (2 Sam. 6:14) **NT:** John the Baptist leaps for joy in Elizabeth's womb as Mary approaches (Luke 1:43).

There are at least 10 connections between Mary and the Ark of the Covenant. Can you discover the other ones? (see 2 Samuel 6, Heb. 9:4; Rev. 12:1)

A Novel Idea

Taylor Caldwell's own travels through the Holy Land and years of meticulous research make her novel, *Dear and Glorious Physician*, a fully developed portrait of a complex and brilliant man and a colorful re-creation of ancient Roman life as it contrasted in its decadence with the new world Christianity was bringing into being. Here is a story to warm, to inspire, to call forth renewal of faith and love lying deep in each reader's heart. "A portrait so moving and so eloquent I doubt it is paralleled elsewhere in literature. It is Caldwell's greatest novel!" — Boston Herald



"Alive with the bustle of ancient times . . . Movingly reconstructs St. Luke's search for God."
— The New York Times

"Magnificent! Taylor Caldwell, who has splendid powers of narration, unleashes them all in this, her finest novel. She has made St. Luke a real and believable man and recreated on a vast canvas the times and people of his day. You see as large as life all the glory and decadence of Rome and all the strife, turmoil and mysticism of Africa. . . . A glowing and passionate statement of belief!"
—Columbus Citizen (quotes from back cover)

Parallels, Promises & Praise

John the Baptist	THEME	Jesus
1:5-7	(A) The Introduction of Parents	1:26-27
1:8-23	(B) The Annunciation	1:28-38
1:24-25	(C) The Mother's Response	1:39-56
1:57-58	(D) The Birth	2:1-20
1:59-66	(E) Circumcision & Naming	2:21-24
1:67-79	(F) Prophetic Response	2:25-39
1:80	(G) Growth of the Child	2:40-62

The presence of parallelism is no accident. It is designed to invite the reader to view the two narrative cycles together. It is not however a juxtaposition of equals. John will be the "prophet of the Most High" (1:76), while Jesus is introduced as the "Son of the Most High" (1:32).

Luke 1-4 is marked by a **Promise-Fulfillment-Praise-Response** pattern highlighted in the three songs of praise that begin the Lukan narrative:

Character	Promise	Evidence of Fulfillment	Praise Response
Zechariah	wife will bear a son	John is born	<i>Benedictus</i>
Mary	conceive a son	Jesus is born	<i>Magnificat</i>
Simeon	see the Messiah	Sees Jesus	<i>Nunc Dimittis</i>

On the Jubilee



We have had more Jubilee years in the last 60 years of Church history than all the previous centuries combined. What is the Holy Spirit trying to communicate to the Church in our age by offering us so many remembrances of Jubilee?

In the readings today (January 24th), Jesus reads a Jubilee text from Isaiah. He, as the Messianic King, is announcing a new and definitive Jubilee for the people of God - both Jew & Gentile. Commenting on this event, John Paul II said, "[t]he long-expected "time" was beginning in him. The day of salvation had come, the "fullness of time." All Jubilees point to this "time" and refer to the Messianic mission of Christ, who came as the one "anointed" by the Holy Spirit, the one "sent by the Father." It is he who proclaims the good news to the poor. It is he who brings liberty to those deprived of it, who frees the oppressed and gives back sight to the blind (cf. Mt 11:4-5; Lk 7:22). In this way he ushers in "a year of the Lord's favor," which he proclaims not only with his words but above all by his actions. The Jubilee, "a year of the Lord's favor," characterizes all the activity of Jesus; it is not merely the recurrence of an anniversary in time" (*Tertio Millenio Adveniente*, No. 11).

Theology for Grownups Online

Thomas has created a special page for the "Theology for Grown-ups" series online at www.gen215.org/Site/TFG/TFG.html You can find more information of the topics mentioned in this resource, and on upcoming topics.

Coming Soon!

February 28th— "Lent and Prayer" Scott Pearhill

March 28th — "Luke & The Mass" John MacLerran & Bill O'Brien

April 25th — "Jesus Ministry in Luke/Acts" -

Bruce Olenick & Thomas Smith

May 28th —"Mary" -Jennifer Wise

Each event is on Sunday afternoon from 3:30-5:30 pm at St. Paul's Chapel. Adults only please, refreshments will be served.

Feedback

Please email Bruce at: HSCC_theology4grownups@q.com

You may or may not finish discussing the questions within the allotted time. The purpose of the small group experience is to reflect more deeply upon the material presented and to share additional insights group members may have regarding the Gospel of Luke. Please be prepared to share some of the group's thoughts/questions with the larger gathering (time permitting).

1. What is your favorite Gospel and why? What are some of the challenges we face in fully entering into the Gospels?
2. How does understanding both the Jewish and Greco-Roman context of the word "gospel" change the way you may hear this word from now on?
3. Given Luke's use of Jubilee language and the Church's consistent inauguration of Jubilee years in our lifetime, what may the Holy Spirit be speaking to the universal Church and to our world?
4. Throughout Luke's Gospel, Jesus is revealed as a different kind of Messiah than the one expected. How has your idea of Jesus changed over your life?
5. Luke's Gospel is filled with feasting, banquets, and hospitality. Biblical hospitality is "making room" for the other, whether that is God or fellow human beings. What are some of the practical ways we can "create a space" of openness and care for others in the very ordinary moments of our day?
6. Today we learned that Jesus's version of the parable of the Prodigal Son was radically different from how similar stories were told in the first-century. What is the "take away" that God desperately wants us to understand and how do we concretely carry that message to others?