



**THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO
LUKE**

**BACKGROUND FOR SMALL GROUP
STUDIES**

ADVENT 2018 TO EASTER 2019

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Introduction

From Advent Sunday 2018 through to Low Sunday 2019 we will read our way through the gospel of Luke. We will not have the time to preach from every passage in the gospel but will work through the gospel sequentially over that time. The challenge to us all is to do our homework each week (see Christ Church Reading Plan below) and read the parts of the gospel from which the preached passage will come.

These notes are written to help our weekly studies in small groups. They contain background information on the gospel as a whole; an indication of some of the key themes, some hints on how to read (especially the parables); a map of the gospel's narrative; the reading plan; and a glossary of people, places and things that will be encountered during our reading. The glossary is intended to help us bridge the cultural gap between 1st century Palestine and 21st century Winchester.

I want to start by considering the question 'What is a Gospel?'

What is a gospel?

Imagine you are a first century librarian and you have been given four scrolls containing the texts of what we have come to call Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. You have been told to file them in the library. Where do you put them?¹

Maybe biography. They all tell the story of someone's life – a person called Jesus. Yet they are pretty evasive about large chunks of the key character's life – two of them make some reference to his birth, only one of them touches on his childhood (and then only in a paragraph or so); all of them spend an inordinate amount of time describing the last week of his life. So much of a normal biography is left unsaid – there's no physical description of the key character, it is assumed we (as readers) know the political and religious background of the times; and some of the friends of the key character are simply known by name with no other detail.

Maybe history. After all, the texts are set in a particular place – Palestine, at a particular time – during the Herodian dynasty and when Pontius Pilate was the chief Roman official in Jerusalem. And yet why would anyone be interested in what appears to be the narrative of an itinerant preacher and healer in a backwater of the Roman Empire, a place of no real significance to those in power in Rome? How can such a history merit being kept in the library which needs space for the annals of the Emperor?

Maybe theology. The writer of the third scroll says that he wrote his text so that his implied reader (someone called Theophilus) 'might know the certainty of what he had been taught' (Luke 1:4). As you look at the other texts you notice that there are elements of theology in them too 'these are written so that you may believe' says the fourth text (John 20:31).

You scratch your head. You think about creating a new category called 'Gospels' in which to file them. You have taken this word from the second scroll which starts 'the beginning of the gospel about Jesus the Messiah' (Mark 1:1). But you get worried at this point. Words like 'gospel' are only used in your culture in connection with the activities of the Emperor or important military battles that the empire has won. Is 'gospel' an appropriate category to use or will that mean you are subverting the Empire?

¹ Building on Motyer 1997:73

In the end you play safe and file them under 'Ephemera'!

We have become so used to 'the gospels' that we can readily lose sight of what they are and why they were written. They span all of the categories above and more – probably the most helpful description I have found is that they are 'portraits' of Jesus. Our gospel writers were, in many respects, creating a new form of literature.

They were interested in biography – Jesus was a real person, who lived a real life, in a real place, in a real time. They were interested in history – Jesus lived at a real time, amid real rulers and powers, as part of a history which (for his original hearers) stretched back to the covenant with Abraham. They were interested in theology – Jesus is seen as the fulfilment of all that God had already promised, in his teaching Jesus brings to life in concrete ways what it means to be living under the reign of God (the 'kingdom of God' or 'kingdom of heaven'). The disputes Jesus has with the religious leaders are generally around issues of theological understanding. Above all, the lengthy narratives at the end spell out how God has stepped decisively into human history, has died, was raised to life and ascended – this is theology built on historical events.

Sometimes we may prefer to focus on the epistles – 'our text book and lecture-oriented educational system places a high value on factual data, logic, objective thought and rationalistic prose. It is no wonder that the Gospels often seem like books from an alien world, shrouded in mystery...'². The epistles can give us tables of behaviour, doctrinal statements to adhere to. The gospels are more nebulous – we have to do some of the work. We are called to inhabit the story, to be shaped by the story, to be shaped by the teaching of Jesus – perhaps no more so in Luke's gospel than through the parables. We are called to follow the actions of Jesus.

Joel Green again: 'In the Gospels the message of redemption appears as no ivory tower philosophy. Good news is presented as no mere set of ideas, no list of propositions. It breathes, it walks and talks, it is a man, Jesus of Nazareth. Here God intervenes in this-worldly history'³.

Green's comments highlight something which Tom Wright has so often emphasised in his writings over recent years: the life of Jesus (what he did and said in his earthly

² Green 1986:16

³ Green op cit 15

ministry) is as important as the death and resurrection of Jesus⁴. We can be tempted doctrinally to jump straight to the Passion narratives – yes they are critical for our understanding of how we can enter into a relationship for eternity with God (these events are critical for the theology, say, of Hebrews 10). But the way Jesus lived, his sayings, his actions also teach us of what it means to live out a life shaped by God's sovereign power – to live in the kingdom of God.

Luke hints at this in his preface to Acts: 'In my former book ... I wrote about all that Jesus *began* to do and teach' (Acts 1:1 – my emphasis). We are called as kingdom disciples to continue the kingdom work that is evidenced in the deeds and words of Jesus' life.

Enough of a general introduction, let's move to 'Luke'.

⁴ E.g. in *Surprised by Hope*

Luke – Authorship, Sources, Purpose and Date

As for all our gospels, we do not have a signed copy! By the late second century our third gospel is being referred to as ‘the Gospel according to Luke’. This is a similar date to the earliest existing (partially incomplete) text of the gospel. We know from the opening of Acts that this gospel narrative is the first part of a two-volume work with Acts as Volume Two. The two books are about the same length and both would have taken most if not all the space available in a large scroll. The passages in Acts where Luke says ‘we’ suggest that he is the likely author of both books (see the commentaries for more information). If this assumption is correct, Luke is not a direct eye-witness of Jesus’ life, but he will have been around many who were.

In the preface to the gospel Luke clearly lays out what he has done, his implied audience and why he has written:

Many have undertaken to draw up an account of the things that have been fulfilled among us, just as they were handed down to us by those who from the first were eyewitnesses and servants of the word. With this in mind, since I myself have carefully investigated everything from the beginning, I too decided to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus, so that you may know the certainty of the things you have been taught. (1:1-4)

Luke indicates that he has carefully researched his work, both from the eye-witnesses and other material he could lay his hands on. His sources probably included:

- Mark’s gospel
- Some material which seems to have been available to Matthew too (so-called Q) – although some commentators question the extent of this
- His own sources that he has talked to
- Collections of the sayings of Jesus

Luke says he has used his sources to create ‘an orderly account’. By this he probably means that he has ordered his material in such a way as to create a readable narrative which tells a story – a story which comprises both the words and deeds of Jesus⁵. This suggests three things in reading this gospel:

⁵ Nolland 1989:xxxii; Green 1997:11

- To get the full benefit of what Luke has done we need to read the whole story, not just pick and choose pieces – hence our encouragement to do the weekly reading
- To understand particular passages we need to understand their context within Luke’s story – what comes before and what comes after the passage in question
- We need to let Luke speak in his own voice and be wary of jumping to the other gospels to ‘fill in the gaps’

Luke addresses the gospel to ‘Theophilus’ (‘lover of God’). It is not clear whether this is a generic term, a real name, or a pseudonym. Such an ascription reminds us that each of the gospels was written to help a particular community understand and grow in the faith. For Luke, that community probably comprised ‘God-fearers’ – Greeks who had been attracted to Judaism by its ethical standards, who worshipped in the synagogues and even attended the major festivals in Jerusalem (Acts 2:5). Maybe it was written at a time when such converts, or would-be converts, were being challenged by Jews keen to ensure they stayed within Judaism⁶. The gospel then forms an apologetic course for them to defend their faith. Many commentators suggest that the gospel had its original home in Syrian Antioch. All these factors make Luke an ideal introduction for friends who have become attracted to the Christian faith and want to know more.

Luke then states his purpose: ‘so that you may know the certainty of what you have been taught’. Christianity is an historic religion in that it stands or falls by certain historic facts. Paul puts it succinctly with regard to the resurrection: ‘If Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless and so is your faith’ (1 Corinthians 15:14). Luke, perhaps more than the other gospel writers, anchors his story with particular people and places. This is his way of giving assurance to Theophilus. In addition, the sayings and actions of Jesus in the gospel bring assurance to the sayings and actions of those believers who Theophilus has met. This is no invented faith, but a faith that has grown out of an encounter with a real person living in a real place at a real time. It speaks of people’s encounters with one who brings salvation – with the implied invitation to ‘join in’. Luke’s emphasis on ‘fulfilment’ (e.g. in the nativity songs) also points to the longer story of God’s dealings with his people from Abraham onwards⁷.

Although the experts are divided over the date when the gospel was written, the general consensus is that this was done towards the end of the 60’s or early 70’s of the first century.

⁶ See Nolland 1989:xxxii

⁷ Marshall 1984:56

Luke – Key Themes

Both Marshall and Green focus on two primary themes – fulfilment and salvation; while the role of the Spirit also has a strong claim to be a primary theme.

The life, death, resurrection and ascension of the God-man Jesus are a fulfilment of all that God had intended over the years⁸. The promises in our Old Testament find their fulfilment in Jesus (seen especially in the untold Bible study on the Emmaus road (24:25-27)). It is a fulfilment which Jesus applies to himself. As you read the gospel notice the way Jesus says that he ‘must’ do things (from 2:44 in the temple as a child through to the recurring ‘must go to Jerusalem to suffer, die and be raised’ (e.g. 9:22)). This is not just fulfilment for fulfilment’s sake, but fulfilment which brings in God’s reign and the possibility of salvation – ‘to make ready a people prepared for the Lord’ (Luke 1:17).

Another key theme is salvation – both in terms of who it is offered to and also its nature. Green helpfully puts it this way:

[Viewing Luke-Acts on a broad canvas] we see the working out of God’s purposes to bring salvation in all its fullness to all people. This aim is *anticipated* by God’s messengers (1:5-2:52), then made *possible* by the birth and growth of Jesus and John ... the realisation is made *probable* [through the suffering and passion of both].⁹

The offer of salvation is unrestricted. It is available ‘in all its fullness’ to ‘all people’. As you read through the gospel note the sort of people that accept the salvation that is offered. By and large they are the marginalised and outcast – women, children, the poor, the disreputable, the ‘unclean’, the Samaritan, the Gentiles. Such an open door approach nearly cost Jesus his life right at the start of his ministry in Nazareth (4:28). Jesus throws the doors off their hinges when he tells his disciples: ‘you shall be my witnesses in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria and to the ends of the earth’ (Acts 1:8).

In Jesus teaching salvation is not restricted to spiritual matters. It is a salvation which resembles the year of Jubilee promised centuries before (Luke 4:19). It is a salvation which covers ethics and politics (see Mary’s song in Luke 1:46-55).

⁸ Marshall 1978:35; Green 1997: 9

⁹ Green 1997:9

The theme of salvation also runs alongside a call to discipleship. As Marshall puts it:

Those who respond to the message of Jesus receive the blessings of the kingdom of God, and they are called to a strenuous life of self-denial and perseverance as they await the Lord's return ... Luke underlines the call of Jesus to whole-hearted discipleship, especially over against the temptation to acquire riches and to settle down into the life of the world.¹⁰

So, this gospel will continue to challenge us in our going deeper with God, going deeper with each other and going deeper with the world.

Underpinning all of the activities across both Gospel and Acts is the work of a Trinitarian God – Father, Son and Holy Spirit. All three coming together at Jesus' baptism (Luke 3:22).

¹⁰ Marshall 1978:36

Reading Luke

As noted above, Luke states that he has written an 'orderly account'. This should challenge us to read through the gospel rather than picking out particular stories or themes. By reading in this way we can see the context of what Luke has written to aid us in our understanding of what he was wanting to say as he wrote the gospel.

We will indicate each week the chapter/chapters to read in preparation for the following Sunday. We will preach from part of it the following Sunday. The parts to be read will also be available in audio on the church website (with many thanks to Clare Carson). Please do your homework – it will help all those who are preaching.

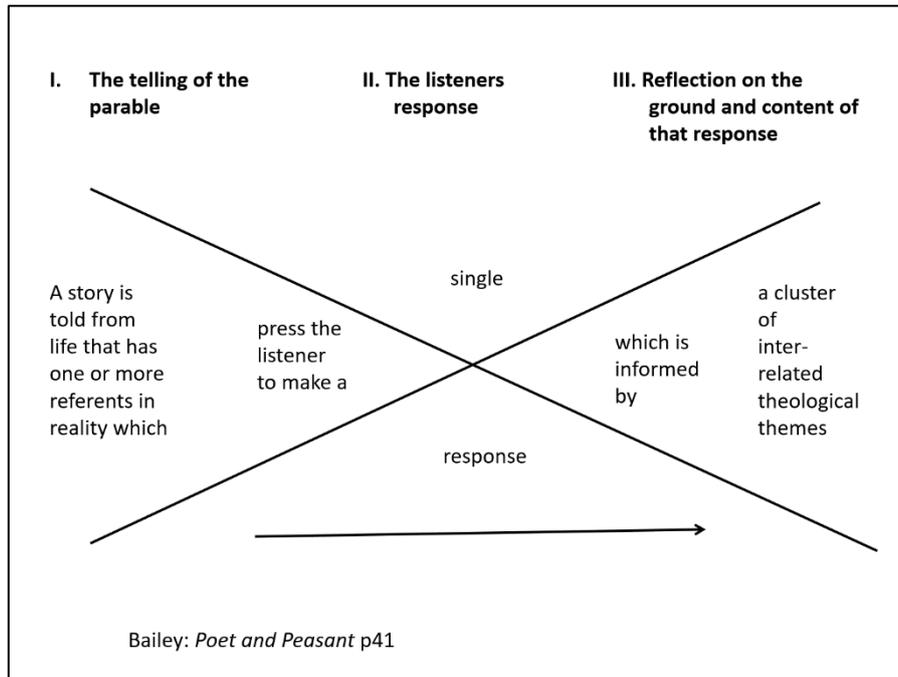
You may like to set time aside two or three times during the series to read the whole gospel through at a sitting.

If you want to read the gospel on a daily basis then Tom Wright's *Luke for Everyone* will take you through in about three months – this has his own translation and daily reflection on each passage.

You will not get far through Luke before encountering Jesus' love of the use of parables in his teaching. Just let the story live with you and see what comes. We looked at a number of the parables when we studied together with our friends in Kisoro in summer 2018. The first task we gave the groups was to write the titles of parables that they could remember – the list was quite long. That's one of the secret strategies of Jesus' teaching in parables – if he had just told facts you'd probably quickly forget; but tell a story and you hang on every word to see how it will work out. Often in the parables the ending is not what you expect – and in that discordance will often lie Jesus' teaching point.

Don't feel constrained in interpreting them, parables will not always have *one* point – although always measure what you think against the rest of your understanding of scripture. Don't worry if there are some you really puzzle over – in the case of 'The Shrewd Manager' (16:1ff) you will be in good company.

If you want to investigate parables further, then Ken Bailey is probably the best person to turn to¹¹. He worked for many years as a mission partner in places like Egypt and Lebanon so writes out of the study of the culture. When needed in the small groups we will look to include some of his work to help you in your understanding. He summarises the ways parables ‘work’ with this diagram:



Eugene Peterson sums up the power of parables like this:

Jesus' favourite speech form was subversive. Parables sound absolutely ordinary: casual stories about soils and seeds, bandits and victims, farmers and merchants. And they are wholly secular: of his forty or so parables recorded in the Gospels, only one has its setting in church, and only a couple mention the name of God. As people heard Jesus tell these stories, they saw at once that they weren't about God, so there was nothing in them threatening their own sovereignty. They relaxed their defences. They walked away perplexed, wondering what they meant, the stories lodged in their imagination. And then, like a time bomb, they would explode in their unprotected hearts. An abyss opened up at their very feet. He was talking about God; they had been invaded!¹²

¹¹ See *Poet and Peasant* and *Through Peasant Eyes* in the bibliography.

¹² Peterson 1989:32,33

To help in your reading, three other sections are included below:

- A narrative structure for the gospel. This will be of help in identifying the context of the passages we will read each week.
- The reading plan for our preaching series, including the homework reading for each week (this will also appear on the weekly news sheets)
- A select glossary of the peoples and places and things that you will come across

Luke's Narrative Structure¹³

- 1:1-4 Preface
- 1:5-2:25 The birth and childhood of Jesus
- 3:1-4:13 John the Baptist and Jesus
- 4:14-9:17 Ministry in Galilee
 - 4:15-5:11 The Good News of the Kingdom
 - 5:12-6:11 Beginning of controversy with the Pharisees
 - 6:12-49 Teaching the disciples
 - 7:1-50 The compassion of the Messiah
 - 8:1-21 Jesus teaches in parables
 - 9:1-17 Jesus and the twelve
- 9:18-50 Jesus and the 12 – a new direction (fulcrum of the gospel)
- 9:51-19:10 Progress towards Jerusalem
 - 9:51-10:24 Duties and privileges of discipleship
 - 10:25-11:13 Characteristics of disciples
 - 11:14-54 Controversies with the Pharisees
 - 12:1-13:21 Readiness for the coming crisis
 - 13:22-14:35 The way of the kingdom
 - 15:1-32 The gospel for the outcast
 - 16:1-31 Warnings about wealth
 - 17:1-10 Teaching for the disciples
 - 17:11-18:8 The coming of the Son of Man
- 19:11-21:38 The ministry in Jerusalem
 - 19:11-27 Parable of the pounds
 - 19:28-40 Jesus approaches Jerusalem
 - 19:41-48 The fate of Jerusalem
 - 20:1-21:4 Teaching in the temple
 - 21:5-38 The coming of the end
- 22:1-24:53 The Passion and Resurrection of Jesus
 - 22:1-38 The last supper
 - 22:39-23:25 The arrest and trial of Jesus
 - 23:26-49 The crucifixion of Jesus
 - 23:50-24:53 The resurrection of Jesus

¹³ Adapted from Contents page of Marshall 1978

Christ Church Reading Plan

Advent and Christmas

Sunday/Date	Preach from
Dec 2 nd	Luke 1:1-25 Zechariah told of John's coming
Dec 9 th	Luke 1:26-38 Annunciation
Dec 16 th	Luke 1:39-56 Magnificat
Dec 23 rd	Luke 1:57-66 Birth of John the Baptist
Dec 24 th	Luke 1:67-79 Zechariah's song
Midnight	John 1:1-14
Christmas Day	Luke 2:1-21 Birth of Jesus and visit of shepherds
Dec 30 th	Luke 2:22-39 Simeon and Anna
Jan 6 th Epiphany	Matthew 2:1-12 Epiphany Sunday

From January

Sunday	Preaching from	To read in readiness for <i>following Sunday</i>
Jan 6 th Epiphany	Matthew 2:1-12	Chapters 3 and 4
Jan 13 th	Luke 4:14-30 Jesus and the Spirit	Chapter 5
Jan 20 th	Luke 5:1-11 Jesus calls us	Chapter 6
Jan 27 th	Luke 6:27-36 Jesus the Teacher	Chapters 7 and 8
Feb 3 rd	Luke 8:40-56 Jesus the Healer	Chapter 9
Feb 10 th	Luke 9:18-36, 43b-51 Jesus the God-Man	Chapter 10
Feb 17 th	Luke 10:25-37 Who is my neighbour	Chapter 11
Feb 24 th	Luke 11:1-13 Jesus teaches us to pray	Chapters 12 and 13
Mar 3 rd	Luke 12:35-48 Being a disciple	The whole gospel
Mar 10 th	OMF weekend	Chapter 14
Mar 17 th	Luke 14:1-14 The outsider welcomed in	Chapter 15
Mar 24 th	Luke 15:11-32 Jesus' heart for the lost	Chapters 16 and 17
Mar 31 st	Luke 17:20-37 Jesus and the coming kingdom	Chapters 18:1-19:27
Apr 7 th	Luke 18:18-30 or 19:11-27 Jesus and Money	Chapters 19:28-48
Apr 14 th Palm Sunday	Luke 19:28-48 Entry into Jerusalem	Luke 20:1-23:56
Apr 18 th Maundy Thursday	Luke 22:1-65	
Apr 19 th Good Friday	Luke 22:66-23:56	
Apr 21 st Easter Day	Luke 24:1-12 'HE IS RISEN'	Luke 24:13-53
Apr 28 th	Luke 24:13-53 Road to Emmaus	

Select Glossary

Herod and his family

Herod the Great, king of the Jews from 40 to 4 BC is the Herod of the nativity stories. Herod had been made King by Antony after Caesar's death; in part to usurp the Hasmonean line who had ruled previously. Herod progressively killed off remaining members of that family who he saw as a threat. He was responsible for many major building projects including the Temple in Jerusalem begun early in 19 BC. In his will he bequeathed his kingdom to three of his sons: Archelaus (Judea and Samaria); (Herod) Antipas (Galilee and Peraea), Philip (the NE territories).

Herod Antipas appears in the gospel as the one who had John the Baptist killed (3:19, 20; 9:9) and as an adversary and interrogator of Jesus (13:31, 23:7-15).

Law (Torah)

The Hebrew Scriptures of Jesus day were divided into three sections: Law (Torah), Prophets and Writings; Torah, in these terms, covers our Genesis to Deuteronomy. More usually the focus would be on the instructions (or guidance) that are given in Exodus, Leviticus and Deuteronomy. These instructions cover a wealth of religious, moral and social situations – from sacrifices through to health matters.

The Jews of Jesus day would have recognised that God acts through grace (Deut. 7:7-11) and that obedience to the law should be one of response to God's goodness rather than a way of 'earning' that goodness. The ways in which this was lived out differed between the various groupings of the day – see e.g. Pharisees below.

Lepers/leprosy

Within the New Testament leprosy tends to refer to skin diseases in general rather than the narrow definition we might put on the word. In the culture, those with leprosy were declared unclean and untouchable (see Lev 13-14 – the separateness was as much to do with disease control as anything else). This is what makes Jesus' actions in touching those with leprosy so scandalous in the sight of some.

Passover

One of the main feasts in Jerusalem. Passover celebrated the passing over of the angel of death when Israel was brought out of Egypt by Moses (Ex 12). It was a feast linked with the killing of a lamb and the sprinkling of its blood such that salvation would come.

Pharisees

The Pharisees saw their foundation in the work that Ezra had begun on the return from exile. As those in Jesus' day looked back at their history, they determined that one of the prime reasons for exile in Babylon was people neglecting God's

commands and thus neglecting God. In the light of this they placed a strong emphasis on law keeping. In many cases additional laws were added to prevent the underlying ones from being broken, or to make them relevant to their time. There is in this a tension (still with us as Christians today) between knowing God's free grace and how to live lives so that they are holy and pleasing to God.

It is this tension that underlies many of the controversies that Jesus has with the Pharisees. As you read Luke note that the issues are around whether the Pharisees themselves lived out what they preached.

Samaritans

Samaria was the name of the capital of the northern kingdom of Israel when David's kingdom split after the death of Solomon. When the kingdom fell to the Assyrians most of its people were scattered across the Assyrian Empire and a variety of other subject peoples settled in their place. The area became known as Samaria.

Although it became a 'mixed' community (many of the opponents to Nehemiah and Ezra were based there) there was a strong presence of those believing in the one God. By Jesus' day a temple had been built on Mount Gerizim as the place of sacrifice and worship for Samaritans in place of the temple in Jerusalem. The community only accepted a Samaritan version of the Pentateuch as scripture. These things in themselves would have caused tensions with Jerusalem. The tenor of the accounts in the gospels is that Jerusalem viewed the Samaritans with suspicion (if not worse). It is against this setting that we find Jesus telling a parable which involves a Samaritan, Jesus travelling through Samaria and Jesus healing a leper from Samaria.

Sadducees

The origin of the Sadducees is open for debate. What is known is that, by the time of Jesus, they were a mainly upper class grouping who valued their links with political power. Nearly all Sadducees were priests and they held a majority on the Jewish ruling council, the Sanhedrin. In religion they were marked for their conservatism, seeing the written laws of the Pentateuch as the only valid authority. Most significantly, they rejected any concept of the soul and its afterlife or of resurrection.

Sabbath

The Jewish Sabbath (the seventh day of the week), was a regular reminder of creation (Gen 2:3 and Ex 20:8-11) and of the Exodus (Deut. 5:5). Along with the food laws and circumcision, Sabbath keeping was one of the distinctive marks of being a Jew in the pagan world of Jesus time. So, when Jesus starts to do things on a Sabbath which most thought shouldn't be done controversy ensues.

Septuagint (LXX)

The Septuagint was a Greek translation of the Hebrew Scriptures probably made around the middle of the 3rd century BC. It got its name from a legend that it was produced by 70 scholars in 70 days. The Septuagint is the main translation that Luke and the other New Testament writers use when referring to Old Testament passages. This explains why some of the quotations in the New Testament differ from what we have in most of our English Old Testaments which have been translated from the Hebrew texts. NIV will usually footnote such passages as 'LXX'.

Synagogue

Before the Babylonian exile all worship was centred on the temple in Jerusalem. In the exile, with no temple, the synagogue ('place of meeting') in each community became *the* place where the teaching about, and worship of, God was carried out. The synagogue also acted as the centre for the government of the civic life of the community. The establishment of the synagogue meant that the people were no longer tied to one place to worship and thus underpinned a theological understanding that God was with people wherever they were. The development of synagogue worship preserved the faith in God during the years in Babylon. It provided a new way of meeting for those who returned to the Land, and was continued by those who were dispersed across subsequent empires.

Table fellowship

In many cultures eating together is *the* symbol of unity and acceptance in the community. To be excluded from the table is to be an outcast. Such attitudes were true in Jesus time, and it's no surprise the number of times in which meals take place in Luke's gospel (all bar three or four chapters when I did a count). Jesus was often the honoured guest – but his behaviour must have exasperated his hosts as he threw open the table to all, not just the 'nice' who the hosts would have wanted.

A prevailing theme of the Old Testament is a great banquet at the end of time (e.g. Is 25:6). As we read Luke see how Jesus uses the table fellowship he is part of as prefiguring this event.

Tax Collectors

These were employed by the Romans to collect the taxes. It could be a lucrative job as there was no clear oversight – providing the Romans got their share nobody looked too much at what other practices went on (although gross extortion was sometimes punished). Usually the task of collecting the taxes was farmed out – it is likely that Zacchaeus was a lead contractor given the Greek word used to describe him. Tax collectors were seen to be beyond the pale: they were in league with the Gentile occupying power and would have needed to have worked on the Sabbath.

Temple

On leaving Egypt there is a constant refrain in the scriptures about the need to worship 'at the place I will show you'. This culminated in the building of the temple in Jerusalem under King Solomon. The temple was to be centre of the sacrificial worship system and the place that people were expected to travel to at Passover, the Feast of Weeks (Pentecost) and the Feast of Tabernacles.

Solomon's Temple was razed to the ground when the Babylonians struck. We have few references to what was built when the exiles returned (although Haggai and Zechariah make reference to it).

Herod's temple was commenced in 19BC and would have been the building known to Jesus – although it wasn't finally completed until 64AD. Parts of its Western Wall still stand (sometimes called the 'Wailing Wall'). It was dominated by the Antonia fortress – the residency of the Procurators when in Jerusalem.

The temple was approached through a series of courts:

The outermost the Court of the Gentiles – this was where the money changers and the sellers of the sacrificial animals had their stalls; it was also where the scribes and teachers of the law held their schools and debates. Gentiles were allowed no further.

The Women's Court was next, followed by the Court of Israel for the men. The next court was the Court of Priests with the altar. This court then led to the shrine itself (copied from Solomon's temple) and within it the holiest place divided off by a large curtain.

Zealots

This party was founded by Judas the Galilean who led a revolt against the Romans in 6AD. They opposed the payment of tribute to the Gentile power and were willing to keep alive the spirit of armed revolt from their founder.

Bibliography

Author	Title	Publication Details	Comments
Kenneth Bailey	Poet and Peasant / Through Peasant Eyes	Grand Rapids: Eerdmans 1983	He gives both a literary and cultural background to most of the Lukan parables.
D A Carson and Kathleen Nielsen (Eds.)	His Mission – Jesus in the Gospel of Luke	Wheaton: Crossway 2015	A collection of eight expositions covering much of the gospel
Joel Green	How to read the Gospels and Acts	Downers Grove: ivp 1986	Guidance on reading these two books
Joel Green	The Gospel of Luke	Grand Rapids: Eerdmans 1997	Detailed commentary
Jonathan Knight	Luke's Gospel	London: Routledge 1998	Considers ways of reading Luke's gospel
I Howard Marshall	The Gospel of Luke	Exeter: Paternoster 1978	Detailed commentary based on the Greek text
I Howard Marshall	Luke: Historian and Theologian	Exeter: Paternoster 1984	A detailed look at the nature of Luke's writings.
Leon Morris	Luke	Leicester: ivp 1988	Part of the Tyndale New Testament series
Stephen Motyer	the bible with pleasure	Leicester: Crossway 1997	A background guide in how to read the different parts of the Bible
John Nolland	Luke 1-9:20	Dallas: Word 1989	Volume 1 of a three volume detailed commentary on the gospel
Eugene Peterson	The Contemplative Pastor	Grand Rapids: Eerdmans 1989	The section on parables comes from a chapter headed 'The Subversive Pastor'.
John Proctor	Luke's Jesus	Cambridge: Grove 2006	Brief introduction to the message and meaning of Luke's gospel. This has been given to all the preachers in this series.
Tom Wright	Surprised by Hope	London: SPCK 2007	Especially Part 3 of this book 'Hope in Practice: Resurrection and the Mission of the Church'
Tom Wright	Luke for Everyone	London: SPCK 2001	Daily readings through the gospel