

Dr. Robert A. Peterson, The Theology of Luke-Acts Session 4, Bock's Theology, God's Plan, Christology and Salvation

This is Dr. Robert A. Peterson in his teaching on the theology of Luke-Acts. This is session 4, Darrell Bock's Theology, God's Plan, Christology and Salvation.

We continue our studies of Lukan theology by looking at Darrell Bock's summary of Lukan theology in the introduction of his first volume of the two-volume commentary on the Gospel of Luke. He also did a commentary on Acts.

Biblical theological treatments often compartmentalize an author's teaching. The survey that follows outlines the major strands and connections that show Luke's theological and pastoral concerns. God's Plan, Christ and Salvation, and the New Community.

God's Plan. The center of Luke's concern is a detailed discussion of God's Plan. This theme is emphasized in Luke more than in the other synoptics.

Bock knows what he's talking about. He did a very good volume on a profile of Jesus that combined the first three Gospels and then the Gospel of John in a separate treatment. A Portrait of Jesus, it was called.

Really, very well done. Mark and Matthew speak of the role of John the Baptist as forerunner, the necessity of Jesus' suffering, and a plan concerning his return. They also have a series of parables that describe the kingdom, but Luke provides details concerning the connections and relationships between these ideas.

A number of uniquely Lukan passages bring out this theme of God's Plan. Luke 1:14 to 17, 31 to 35, 46 to 55, 68 to 79, Luke 2:9 to 14, Luke 2:30 to 32, 34 to 35, Luke 4:16 to 30, Luke 13:31 to 35, Luke 24:44 to 49. How many times have we referred to that great passage? One key text does overlap with the other Gospels.

Luke 7:18 through 35. In addition, Luke has the Suffering Son of Man text, a few of which are unique to him. The overlapping passage, Luke 7:18 to 35, deals with John the Baptist and his questions concerning Jesus' Messiahship.

Luke's Suffering Son of Man passages include Luke 9: 22 and 44. Luke 17:25, which is unique to Luke. Luke 18:31 to 33, the same.

Luke 22:22, the same. Luke 24:7, unique to Luke. Acts also highlights the details of God's Plan.

Acts 2:23, Acts 4:27 and 28, those two passages focus on the cross of Christ as predestined by God, and at the same time, the passages condemn the evil of human beings for crucifying the Christ. Acts 10:34 to 43, Acts 13:32 to 39, Acts 24:14 and 15, and 26, 12 through 23. These passages make it clear that the major elements of the plan are the career of Jesus, the hope of the spiritually humble and needy, the offer of God's blessings, the coming of the new era, the defeat of Satan, the suffering that comes to Jesus, and the division that comes to Israel.

Luke 24:44 to 49. My, how we have to read that passage. The disciples on the road to Emmaus are confused.

They were hoping that Jesus would bring redemption to Israel. And Jesus opened their eyes and explained to them certain wonderful things from the Old Testament. He also appeared to his disciples later and said, see my hands and my feet and so forth. I'm not a ghost.

He ate a piece of fish to demonstrate he was really physically risen in front of them. And Luke 24:44 to 49, then Jesus said to them, these are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you, that everything written about me in the law of Moses and the prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled. Then he opened their minds to understand the scriptures.

And he said to them. Thus, it is written that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead, and that repentance and forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things, and behold, I am sending the promise of my father upon you but stay in the city until you're clothed with power from on high. This is a key passage because it divides the career of Jesus into three parts and appeals to the scriptures.

One, Christ must suffer. Two, he must be raised from the dead on the third day. And three, repentance for the forgiveness of sins must be preached in his name to all the nations, starting from Jerusalem.

Also highlighted is the promise of the Spirit's coming. Thus, for all the beauty of Jesus ethical teaching, the message of the gospel for Luke is more than ethics. It is a new way of relating to God by turning to him through Jesus.

In other words, Luke presents Jesus as the mediator of the new covenant. If one approaches God in repentance, the spiritual blessings of the Father are bestowed. Promise and fulfillment.

The theme of God's plan is supported by the note of promise and fulfillment in the gospel and acts, especially as it relates to the scriptures. Appeal to the Old Testament concentrates on Christology, Israelite rejection, Gentile inclusion, and justice in the end. The latter two themes are more prominent in Acts than in the gospel.

In this way, Acts 24:14 is presented and defended from various charges, especially during Paul's efforts among Jews and Gentiles. Nonetheless, the theme of Gentiles and non-Jews responding to the gospel while Israel stumbles is present in numerous texts in Luke. Luke 2:34, 3, 4-6, 4:25-27, 7:1-10, 10:25-37, 11:49-51, 13:7-9, 13, 23-30, and 13:31-35, 14:16-24, 17:12-19, and 19:41-44.

This racial concern observed throughout Luke's gospel indicates how God's plan includes all races. The today passages enhance the plan motif and show the immediate availability of the promise. Those are passages that use the word today.

For example, Luke 2:11, one of our Christmas verses, for unto you is born this day, or today, in the city of David a Savior who is Christ the Lord. 4:21, in Nazareth, Jesus stands up in the synagogue, takes the Isaiah scroll and reads chapter 61 and says, today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing. Bock's point is that this today business, that language indicates the plan of God is being fulfilled right in the midst of Jesus' ministry in person.

Jesus heals a paralytic, amazement sees them all, Luke 5:26, and they glorify God and were filled with awe saying, we have seen extraordinary things today. 13:32, and 33. So Luke uses different catchwords, different devices.

It is necessary, he says, over and over again. And here, today speaks of fulfillment of promises in the plan of God. Luke 13:32, some Pharisees come and say to Jesus, in the previous verse, get away from here, for Herod wants to kill you.

And Jesus said to them, go and tell that fox, behold, I cast out demons and perform cures today and tomorrow, and the third day I'll finish my course. Nevertheless, I must go on my way today and tomorrow and the day following, for it cannot be that a prophet should perish away from Jerusalem. The "today" language used twice in the span of two verses is connected with opposition and with his going to meet his demise in Jerusalem.

19:5, Zacchaeus hurry and come down, Jesus says to the man up in the tree, the little guy, for I must stay at your home house today. Verse 9, Jesus said, today salvation has come to this house, since he also is a son of Abraham. And then what many regard as the most important verse in the whole Gospel of Luke, for the son of man came to seek and to save the lost.

Verse 42, Jesus cries over Jerusalem, would that you, even you, oh Jerusalem, had known on this day, today, the things that make for peace. But now they are hidden from your eyes. And then Luke 23:42 and 43, today you'll be with me in paradise, he tells the thief.

Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom, the repentant thief says, from the cross. And he said to them, truly I say to you, today you'll be with me in paradise. So, the "today" repetition, the "today passages" enhance the plan motif and show the fulfillment of the promise immediately in the work and words of Jesus and those with whom he interacts.

John the Baptist, John the Baptist is the bridge stretching between the old era of promise and the new era of inauguration. Luke 1 and 2, especially 1:76 to 79, Luke 3:4 to 6, Luke 7:24 through 35, and Luke 16:16. The law and the prophets were until John.

Since then, the good news of the kingdom of God has been preached, and everyone forces his way into it. Our concern is not with the difficult end of that verse. The law and the prophets were until John.

Since then, good news of the kingdom is preached. John's the bridge figure connecting the old era with the new. Actually, he belongs to the old, but points to Jesus who is the central figure in the new.

Luke 7 is instructive here. John is the forerunner predicted by Malachi, but even more John represents the greatest prophet of the old period. Luke 7:27.

Actually, I see. After quoting the prophecy from Isaiah, no from Malachi 3:1, Isaiah 40 also has a John the Baptist prophecy if you will. I Luke 7:28.

None is greater than John. What a statement. Yet the one who is least in the kingdom of God is greater than he.

So, John is a huge figure, an amazing man of God. Nevertheless, he belongs to the old era and the least person in the kingdom of the new kingdom, the kingdom of God brought in its New Testament manifestation in Jesus, is greater than John. The greatest of people born of women.

Incredible. The passage presents that when we just mentioned the basic Lukan structure of God's plan, an era of promise or expectation to which John belonged as the greatest, followed by an era of inauguration to which John did not really belong. This two-stage structure is better than the three stages proposed by Hans Conzelmann in a famous commentary on Luke written in 1960 and defended in modified form by Fitzmyer in 1981.

Conzelmann's proposal makes the divisions between Jesus era and the church era too strong, especially in light of the parallels between the activities of Jesus and those of the church. The church's gospel message and Jesus teaching about the end, clarify the timing and structure of the newly inaugurated era. God's plan has future elements to be realized still.

Luke 17:21 to 27, Luke 21:5 to 38, but the basic turning point has come. So, the second portion of the plan has a subdivision, even though the entire era is one of fulfillment. So, there's the time of promise, Old Testament, the time of fulfillment in Jesus and his apostles, but that time of fulfillment in turn breaks into two parts.

It's this is what the prophets predicted. And consummation, Acts 3:14 to 26, the final end is not yet, or what New Testament theology now calls already not yet. Already, the major promises of the Old Testament are fulfilled.

The Messiah has come. The kingdom of God has arrived in the person and ministry of Jesus. If I cast out demons, Luke says, by the finger of God, the kingdom of God has come in your midst.

And yet, not yet is the fullness of the kingdom of God. That will only come when Jesus returns. The "not yet" expectation is important to Jesus' ethical message, as we will see as we continue.

Mission statements. Other elements of God's plan are seen in Jesus' mission statements, where he outlines his task. Jesus comes to preach good news to the needy, Luke 4:18 and 19.

He comes to heal the sick, Luke 5:30 to 32. He comes to be heard, whether the message is through him or his representatives, Luke 10:16 to 20. He comes to seek and to save the lost, Luke 19:10.

His career is reviewed again in Acts 10:36 to 43. Acts 10:36, as for the word that God sent to Israel, preaching good news of peace through Jesus Christ, he is Lord of all. You yourselves know what happened throughout all Judea, beginning from Galilee after the baptism that John proclaimed, how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth, Acts 10, 38, with the Holy Spirit and with power.

He went about doing good and healing all who are oppressed by the devil, for God was with him. Geographic progression. Geographic progression reveals the movement's growth under God's plan.

The outline of the gospel from Galilee to Jerusalem shows this growth, as does the necessity of Paul's going to Rome in Acts. A friend of mine noted how in Acts, Paul

also had to make a trip to Jerusalem, and that is certainly true. So Jesus models that, but then Paul goes further in his trip to Rome in Acts, Acts 19:21, Acts 23:11.

It is necessary. We're back to that word again and what it means. Many passages declare it is necessary.

The Greek word, *dei*. It is necessary, or one must, you could translate sometimes. Many passages declare it is necessary that something occur.

In fact, 40 of 101 New Testament uses of *dei* occur in Luke, Acts. Jesus must be in his Father's house, Luke 2:49. He must preach the kingdom, Luke 4:43.

He must heal the woman tormented by Satan, Luke 13: 16. Luke shows that Jesus is not a mere moralist, but one struggling against cosmic forces opposed to God. Certain events must precede the end, Luke 17:25.

Luke 21:9. Jesus must be numbered among the transgressors, Luke 22:37. The Christ must suffer and be raised, Luke 24:7. The preaching of repentance for the forgiveness of sins must take place, Luke 24:43 to 47. The necessity of the son of man's suffering already noted is also a part of this emphasis.

Acts also stresses this theme, sometimes using *dei*, sometimes not. Acts 1:11, 3:21, 9:6, and 16:13, 46, 14:22, 19:21, 23:11, 25:10, 27:24. Like a church bell's ring each hour, Luke chimes the note of God's design.

God's plan expresses his compassion and effort to deliver. He directs what occurs, what has happened God has designed, for Luke is reassuring to fall into the hands of an active, compassionate God. Christology and salvation is the second major division in Luke's understanding, the first being the plan of God.

Christology and salvation. At the center of God's plan are Jesus and deliverance. Who is Jesus? What does he bring? How do we know he's God's chosen? These are central questions for Luke.

There are also the message and the call to respond, along with the enablement of God. All these notes are wrapped in a package that makes it clear that the plan not only has a future but is relevant for the present. Not only is one to know God, but one is responsible and accountable to him.

Thus, the plan not only delivers, but calls for a response of faith that has an ethical edge as well. Messiah, servant, prophet, and Lord. The portrait of Jesus is one that Luke carefully develops.

Some say Luke's Christology is a collection of a variety of traditions. The most variegated in the New Testament says Craig Evans in a 1990 book. It is argued that none of the titles dominates the work and has been worked out in detail.

In my judgment, this understates Luke's work, Bach says. Luke 1 and 2 introduces Jesus largely as a regal or royal figure. Both the announcement to Mary and the remarks of Zachariah make the Davidic connection explicit.

Jesus will reign, and this baby will reign in David's line. Luke 1:31 to 33. Luke 1:69.

He will occupy the throne of his father, David. Other functions, like prophet and servant, are also important to Luke. The anointing of Jesus at his baptism recalls a combination of Psalm 2 and Isaiah 42, which brings together a regal, prophetic image.

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

Beloved Son, we call Psalm 2, which speaks of the Son of God, whom God has appointed to rule in Zion, and whom the hearers must kiss or bow before, lest his anger be aroused, and they feel his wrath. Isaiah 42 speaks of the Messiah as chosen by God. You are my Son, with whom I am well pleased.

Servant and prophet imagery come together in Simeon's remarks. Luke 2:30 to 35. Luke 1:4. Luke 4:16 through 30.

But the idea of a leader prophet is dominant in Luke. A leader prophet. Though the prophets Elijah and Elisha are raised as parallels, Luke 4:25 to 27, Luke also speaks of the anointing in the poor, Luke 4:18, thus indicating that the anointing of Jesus, that Jesus says, is fulfilled today.

Luke 4:21 looks back to Jesus' baptism. Luke 3:21 to 22. It's an important point.

The Messiah, Jesus, has been anointed. Reflecting, Luke 4:21, that reflects back to the baptism of Jesus, which already has happened. Luke 3:21 to 22.

Still, the populace views Jesus as a prophet. Luke 7:16, 9:7 to 9 and 9:19.

But Peter's confession centers on Jesus as the Christ. Luke 9:20. Jesus qualifies this confession by introducing the inevitability of the Son of Man's suffering.

Luke 9:22. Even Jesus' title as Son is used to describe the Son of Man. Luke 9:21.

The Son of Man is uniquely related by Luke to Jesus' messianic role. Luke 4:41. The demons also came out of many crying, you are the Son of God.

But he rebuked them and would not allow them to speak because they knew that he was the Christ. This royal prophetic mix reappears with the voice of the transfiguration. This is my beloved Son.

Hear him is a reference to, by the way, Luke 9:35 is where the Father speaks from heaven like that. Let me make sure I've got it right. And a voice came out of the clouds saying, this is my Son.

The Son of God, according to 2nd Corinthians. The Son of God, the Son of God, 1 Samuel 7, applies to Solomon and David's other descendants who will occupy the throne of David forever. One of them will.

That's the royal one. This is my Son, my chosen one. Isaiah 42:1. Listen to him.

Deuteronomy 18:15. So that saying, this is my beloved Son, the chosen one, listen to him, that reflects fulfillment of Psalm 2:7. Isaiah 42:1. Deuteronomy 18:15. When Jesus is presented as a prophet, he's a leader prophet, one like Moses.

Even here, the note of rule and direction is fundamental. In short, Jesus' messianic role is central for Luke's Christology. But Jesus' Messiahship needs clarification and careful definition.

So, Luke places other expectations alongside that of Messiah. Nonetheless, Messiahship is the fundamental category around which the other concepts revolve. The prophetic motif is strong in texts like Luke 11:47 to 51.

Luke 13:31 to 35. Luke 24:19 and 21. But the appeal to Psalm 118 in Luke 13 expands the presentation into a regal allusion.

Luke 19:38. Since the one who comes is fundamentally an eschatological and messianic figure. Luke 3:15 to 18.

Luke 7:22 to 23. 19:38. Luke 24 also presents the hope, although the speakers thought it had failed, mistakenly thought it had failed, that Jesus would redeem the nation.

Luke 24:21. Thus, the regal deliverer picture is never very far from the prophetic one. Bach is saying that Luke presents different strands of messianic, of Christological teaching, and they are sort of intertwined.

At the same time, this one is Messiah, that's the most fundamental, the servant of God, the prophet who speaks for God, and the Lord who is God and who will reign. Toward the end of Jesus' ministry, Luke's portrayal is more focused. Luke now makes reference to the authority of the Son of Man and speaks of the Lord.

Luke 20:41 to 44. 21:27, 22:69. Luke 20:41 to 44. To repeat: Luke 20:41 to 44. Luke 20:41 to 44.

Luke 20:41 to 44. Jesus said, how can they say that the Christ is David's son? For David himself says in the book of Psalms, the Lord said to my Lord, sit at my right hand until I make your enemies your footstool. David speaks and calls God the Lord, who speaks to David's other Lord, which is astonishing.

David thus calls him Lord. David calls the Messiah Lord. How can he be his son? How can he be God and a human descendant of David at the same time? Jesus does not solve the problem.

He just lets them stew. The other Gospels say, after that, nobody asked him any more questions. He stymied them.

21:27, in his eschatological discourse in Luke, Jesus says, and they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. And then 22:69. These are amazing sayings.

But from now on, the Son of Man shall be seated at the right hand of the power of God, at which the Jewish leaders accused him of blasphemy, which it would have been if he were not Daniel's son of man. Daniel 7:13 and 14. Son of Man is actually a complicated category.

Jesus' favorite self-designation. He always uses it in the third person. He never says, I am.

He always says, the Son of Man has no place to lay his head. Son of Man will be delivered over to the scribes and chief priests and be crucified and rise again. Son of Man is coming in glory, like that.

And it combines both the humble, mortal Son of Man of Psalm 8. Who is man that you're mindful of him? The Son of Man that you take thought of him. That's reflected in Jesus' saying. Birds have their nest.

Foxes have their dens. Son of Man has no place to lay his head. He's a frail, mortal, and homeless at that time.

But then there's references in Jesus' lips, always in the third person, to Daniel 7:13 and 14, which is coming in the clouds of heaven and so forth, combined with Psalm 110. To sit at God's right hand, which I just read. And it elicited the cry of blasphemy from the leaders.

So, Jesus thus combines Danielic, divine Son of Man with the Psalm's humble, mortal Son of Man to further confuse them. Of course, the truth of the matter is, he is both God and man in one person. Acts 2, 30 to 36.

Acts 10:36 speaks in similar fashion. I'll just do Acts 10:36. Jesus Christ, he is Lord of all, Peter says.

These concepts mentioned earlier, Luke 5:24, now become the focus of the dispute about Jesus. Luke's citations of Psalm 110 show the centrality of this passage. In three steps, Luke raises the issue of Lordship, Luke 20:41 to 44, gives Jesus' answer, Luke 22:69, and shows how Jesus' authority in Lordship is proclaimed.

The synoptics share the first two texts, but unique to Luke is the detailed exposition found in Acts 2. Luke 22:69 makes it clear that from now on, Jesus, alongside God, will exercise authority as Lord. The Messiah's servant, prophet, is Lord. In Acts, religious rites are done in his name.

Jesus' authority is total and extends to believers calling on his name and acting in his name, just as Old Testament saints acted on behalf of Yahweh. In other words, Luke develops his Christology from the earth up. Although hints of a heavenly connection exist at his birth, the Messiah's servant, prophet, is gradually revealed as Lord in the context of his ministry and trial.

The narrative brings the reader along. Its portrait of Jesus deepens as events proceed. Luke enhances the portrait of Jesus' authority by uniquely speaking of the Lord in narratives introducing events in Jesus' ministry.

Old Testament citations involving Christology and the use of kurios, or Lord, a Greek word for Lord, within editorial narrative notes in the Gospel show that central to the Lukan portrait is the picture of Jesus as leader-prophet, who is more than Messiah. Obviously, other titles are important, but Luke is more present alongside this basic portrait. Jesus is Savior or Deliverer.

Luke 2:11, Luke 1:70-75, Luke 2:30-32, Acts 5:31, they killed him, the Jews killed him, but 5:31, God exalted him at his right hand as leader and Savior to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins. This is the Jewish leadership's verdict, differed quite radically from God's. They crucified him.

God exalted him highly. Acts 13:23-25 shows the same thing. He's the son of David, Luke 1:27, 32, 69, 2:4, 11, 18, 38, 39, Acts 2:25-31, Acts 15:16, or he is king, Luke 19:38. He is the son of David, Luke 1:27. He is the son who relates to God as father, even as divine testimony declares.

Luke 1:35, Luke 2:49, 3:22, 38, 4:3, 9, 41, 9:35, 10:21, 22, yet he is also the son of Adam who grows in grace. Luke 3:38, Luke 2:40, Luke 2:52, he grew in wisdom and in stature, the boy Jesus. He grew in wisdom, mentally, and in stature, physically.

He grew in favor with God, spiritually, and in favor with human beings, socially. How can he be both God and man at the same time? That is the miracle of Christmas. That is the miracle of the Incarnation.

When the second person of the Trinity, God the Son, becomes a human being. So, he is henceforth the God-man. He grew in grace, he is compared to Jonah, Solomon, and others.

As son of man, he suffers, is exalted, and ministers. He frequently is simply teacher. Luke's portrait of Jesus is variegated, but organized.

Jesus bears authority and promise. Kingdom in Jesus' teaching and work. The Messiah brings God's kingdom, God's rule manifested on earth, Luke 4:18 and 43, 7:22, 8:1, 9:6, 10:11. The kingdom is present now, but comes in the future.

It contains earthly hope and yet has spiritual dimensions. It has responsive, potential, and reluctant subjects. The kingdom present is associated with Jesus' authority.

Luke often mentions the kingdom's already presence when Jesus exercises authority over evil spiritual forces. This connection shows the spiritual character of the kingdom. The kingdom is near, Luke 10:9. The authority of the 72 disciples over demons is seen as Satan's fall, Luke 10:18 and 19.

In fact, Jesus says that if he casts out demons by the finger of God, then the kingdom has come upon those who are present, Luke 11:20 and 23. The kingdom is among you, Luke 17:21. The king in one parable departs, quote, to receive a kingdom, close quote, so he clearly possesses it before he returns, Luke 19:14 and 15. At his trial, Jesus makes clear that he will now be at God's side.

The kingdom is among you, the second time you are at God's side. Bach likes to say side instead of right hand, Luke 22:69. Luke's appeal to Psalm 110 depicts the presence of regal authority. Luke expounds on this theme in Acts 2:30-36, which involves the distribution of the benefits of salvation.

Complementing the present aspect of the kingdom is its the future nature, this “not-yet” aspect, includes a judgment that precedes the Kingdom's coming. Luke 17:22 to 37, which is called the time of redemption. Luke 21:5 to 38, day of the Lord imagery abounds as evil is decisively judged.

In Luke 21:25 to 27, our allusions to Isaiah 13:10, Ezekiel 32:7, Joel 2:30 and 31, Psalm 46:2 and 3, Psalm 65:7, Isaiah 24:19, Septuagint, Haggai 2:6 and 21, and Daniel 7:13. Old Testament hope and expectation is not dead, Acts 3:20 to 21. Jesus will return to bring the rest of the promise, a promise that will visibly show itself on earth to all humankind, as well as in the eternal benefits given to believers.

We'll pick up a little bit more, we'll pick up more of this Kingdom motif in our next lecture.

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