

New Testament History, Literature and Theology

Session 14: Characteristics of Luke

By Dr. Ted Hildebrandt

A. Review of Luke: Jesus Savior of All [00:00-6:52]

A: Combine A; 00:00-6:52; Jesus Savior of All

This is our third talk on the book of Luke and we had started out with Luke as kind of the historian checking with eyewitnesses, traveling with the Apostle Paul and never having seen Jesus but having talked to his mother Mary possibly and other eyewitnesses. We have been working through various characteristics of the book of Luke. We talked about the humanity of Christ we talked about Luke's emphasis on the Holy Spirit. We talked about the parables of Luke and unique distinct material that Luke has of these parables and miracles. These miracle stories telling about how specializing in women who are widows and only child types of things. Luke seemed to be very sensitive to the human condition and pulls those types of things in. Now, we were talking about the parable of the Good Samaritan last time and this time we want to shift to another one of Luke's major themes and that is that Jesus is the savior of all. So how do we pick this up? Well you look at the unique things. So, for example, Simeon, that old man that was waiting for the consolation of Israel, picks Jesus up in his arms. "Sovereign Lord, as you have promised, now dismiss your servant in peace for my eyes have seen your salvation." Picking the baby up he says, "my eyes have seen your salvation." Jesus is portrayed as the savior in the book of Luke. Matthew portrays Christ as King, Mark as kind of the amazing suffering servant. Now in Luke we get Christ portrayed as the savior, the *soter*. Soteriology is the study of salvation, Jesus is the savior. It's interesting too in terms of admission into the kingdom Luke picks up on this Samaritans and you remember Jesus heals the ten lepers and this is in Luke 17. Jesus heals ten lepers and yet who is the only one who comes back to him? It's a Samaritan who comes back to thank him out of the ten lepers the one who comes back is a Samaritan. So after chapter 17 I want to look at a story. Now that Christ is the savior of all and now one of those "all" that the salvation is

reaching out to is a guy that you are fairly familiar with.

How does the story about Zacchaeus play off the story of the rich young ruler? What I would like to do here is what they call intertextuality. Intertextuality means you compare one text with another and you show the relationship between these two. In other words, as Luke is writing he is putting words, one word next to another word, how do you determine the meaning of a word? You determine the meaning of a word by its context. What is context? The context of the word is the words that come before it and the words that come after it. It is the words in the sentence that finish out the idea of the sentence. How does that word fit into the sentence. That's just not where it stops. How does that sentence fit into the paragraph? What is the sentence's role in the paragraph? Is it in the introductory part of the paragraph? Is it in the conclusion or is it in the middle of the paragraph? It is developing the argument? What role does that sentence play in that paragraph? And then you ask the question what role does that paragraph play in the greater story? So the story may have five or seven paragraphs, so what role does that paragraph play in that story? I often tell people, when you are going to write on my exams, you are going to write an essay, basically there are three steps to writing an essay. You write an introduction in which you introduce. You say, "I'm going to talk about these three things." One, two, three and you do an introduction. Then you actually elaborate. Here's point number one and then you have a paragraph and it elaborates on point number one. Then you have point number two, you elaborate on that. Then point number three you elaborate on that and then what do you do at the end? The end is like the beginning you have an introductory statement, I'm going to show these three points, and then the conclusion is now I've shown these three points and you draw out the conclusion from your points. You've got an introduction, a body, and a conclusion. The form is kind of that nature.

So here we are asking what is the relationship of the story of the rich young ruler and the story of Zacchaeus? They play off each other. So Luke puts these stories almost back to back here in chapter 17 and 18. We will want to look at those in detail here. So let's work with the story of the rich young ruler. I'm not going to read through the story

but you remember the rich young ruler comes to Jesus and says, “What must I do for eternal life.” Jesus says, “Give everything you have to the poor.” Well, first Jesus says “keep the law, honor your mother and father don’t kill,” the Ten Commandments kind of thing. The guy says I’ve done all of those things since my youth. Mark, who records the same story, says that Jesus looked at him and he had love for him. Jesus said if you want to be really perfect then give everything you have to the poor. The guy goes away sorrowful because he had much. So then, the question that comes up is, at the end of the story of the rich young ruler, the story ends up and this is I think important in terms of how the story concludes. Let me get to the story of the rich young ruler here. “When he heard this he became very sad,” the rich young ruler, this is chapter 18 verse 23. “Because he was a man of great wealth. Jesus looked at him and said ‘how hard it is for the rich to enter into the kingdom of God. It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God.’” That eye of the needle thing, people have said is like a camel going through a small gate in Jerusalem he has to be all unpacked. It’s never really done that much for me. I think the eye of a needle was talking about a sewing needle putting a camel through the eye of a needle. “Those who heard this ask, ‘then who can be saved?’” If the rich can’t be saved and the rich man turns away it is harder for them to go into the kingdom and that is chapter 18.

B. Context for Zacchaeus [6:52-9:56]

B: combine B-F; 6:52-26:19; Zacchaeus

When you turn the page to chapter 19 we are going to have a story of a rich man coming to Jesus. So the parable, well it’s not a parable this actually is a historical story, with the rich young ruler. I’m going to call him RYR, rich young ruler. There is a contrast between the rich young ruler who is wealthy but doesn’t make it but then we have another rich person who actually does make it and this is Zacchaeus. Now it’s very interesting too, in this narrative, how it sets up the story. In other words, in each case Luke introduces a character who faces Jesus with an opposition. There’s an obstacle. The person who comes to Jesus is seeking to come to Jesus but there is an obstacle in the way.

So the rich young ruler comes to Jesus and he asks him how he can get into the kingdom and he has an obstacle. The obstacle is his wealth and he can't overcome that obstacle so he turns away. So there's a blind beggar. Now this is taking place in Jericho. So Jesus is down in Jericho down in the valley just north of the Dead Sea there as we saw earlier. The blind man, what is the obstacle the blind man has. The blind man is trying to get to Jesus but he can't get to Jesus because the crowd is there. So the blind man cries out "Jesus have mercy on me" as Jesus is passing by. The crowd tells the beggar, the blind beggar, "Be quiet, be quiet say it. Jesus is coming by here don't be yelling like that." The more they tell him to quiet down the more he jacks it up and he yells more and more. So the blind beggar, what happens? He's got an obstacle, the crowd is his obstacle. He's blind and he can't get to Jesus so what does he do? He screams out more and Jesus then heals the blind beggar.

Now what you've got is the story of Zacchaeus. Zacchaeus, he also has an obstacle and what is the obstacle for Zacchaeus? "Jesus entered Jericho and was passing through and there was a man there by the name of Zacchaeus. He was a chief tax collector and was wealthy. He was a tax collector and was wealthy." Now remember, the rich young ruler. The conclusion of the story of the rich young ruler, it's harder for the rich man to enter the kingdom than a camel to go through an eye of a needle. Here we have a wealthy man. He wanted to see Jesus, to see who Jesus was, but being a short man, he could not because of the crowd. So again, you've got the crowd being an obstacle. He can't get to Jesus because he's a small short guy and can't get through there. So his height is a problem. By the way, do you see why the story of Zacchaeus is a wonderful one to tell to kids? Kids live in a world of big people and kids are small. Zacchaeus was small and kids can relate to that. He can't get to see Jesus because of the crowd because he is just little fellow. If you remember years ago, there was this movie called Big in which a kid basically went into a big body.

C. The Story of Zacchaeus [9:56-14:12]

Anyways, so, he ran ahead and climbed in a sycamore tree. So what does he do?

Like a kid would do, he climbs up in this sycamore tree and if you go to Jericho they have a sycamore tree there to this day. Obviously not the same sycamore tree but he goes to the sycamore fig tree to see Jesus since he was coming that way. “And when Jesus reached the spot he looked up and said to him, ‘Zacchaeus, come down immediately. I must stay at your house today.’ Zacchaeus come down for I am staying at your house today. So he came down at once and he welcomed him gladly. All the people saw this and began to mutter.” Notice the crowd’s response, they mutter “He has gone to be a guest of a sinner? But Zacchaeus stood up and said ‘Lord! Look, Lord here and now I give half of my possessions to the poor. If I have cheated anybody out of anything I will pay back four times the amount.’ Jesus said to him ‘Today salvation,’ what is the point Luke is emphasizing this? Salvation. Jesus is the savior of all. “Today salvation has come to this house because this man too is a son of Abraham. For the Son of man came to seek and to save what was lost.” Remember the prodigal son, the lost son? We also talk about a lost coin. A woman searching a house for a lost coin. Here you have Jesus seeking and saving that which is lost.

So there’s an obstacle for Zacchaeus, his short height and the crowd. There’s an obstacle for the rich young ruler, his wealth. Both Zacchaeus and the rich young ruler, both of them are wealthy. The conclusion, actually, in the story of the rich young ruler is that it is hard for a wealthy person to enter in to the kingdom of heaven, harder than to go through an eye of a needle with a camel. The rich young ruler keeps the commandments and so Jesus said, “have you kept the commandments?” The rich young ruler says, “I’ve kept the commandments since my youth.” So this guy is actually a morally upright person. He’s kept the commandments. Zacchaeus, on the other hand, is a wealthy tax collector. How does Zacchaeus get his money? He is wealthy because he is a tax collector. They are both wealthy but Zacchaeus gets it by ripping people off. Why were tax collectors looked on so poorly in that culture? Largely tax collectors kind of like the IRS today, the Romans came in and were sucking taxes out of Palestine. They would have these tax collector guys and they would collect taxes for the Romans. Not only would they collect the taxes that were owed to the Romans but they would also then

cushion things and take some money for themselves. In other words, if they were collecting taxes they would add 10%, 20 % on to it and as payment for collecting the taxes. So they got wealthy off the backs of their own people. So these guys would be viewed as traitors. They were supporting Rome. They were the gophers for Rome and they were traitors. They were looked on as sellouts. They had sold out to Rome. They were selling their own people in favor of Rome for their own personal profit from the backs of their own people. So, tax collectors were just absolutely despicable people and would have been despised by the Jewish people who were wanting to throw off the Roman yoke. Do you remember that Matthew, our Matthew/Levi, was also a tax collector. They came to Matthew's house and the people had the same reaction there. How can Jesus eat with tax collectors and sinners? So Zacchaeus violates the commands.

D. Salvation in the Story of Zacchaeus [14:12-17:47]

Now the rich young ruler is counseled to sell all he has and give to the poor. Jesus tells him you have to sell all you have and give it to the poor. What's very interesting here, is there's a big change that happens. Does Jesus ever say to Zacchaeus "Zacchaeus you're a wealthy man, you need to give that wealth away and give it to the poor"? Jesus never says anything to Zacchaeus. When you read the story here it says let me just show you the transition here. Jesus says "come down from the tree, I am going to your house today" and all the people then mutter and what is Zacchaeus' response? Jesus says nothing in the narrative but Zacchaeus stood up and said to the Lord. Zacchaeus voluntarily, this is what he does voluntarily. Jesus recognizes him, and that's okay, he's just going to his house. "Look, Lord, here and now I give half of my possessions to the poor" Zacchaeus volunteers. Jesus commands and tells the rich young ruler he's got to give his money to the poor but he cannot do it because he is so attached to it. Zacchaeus, on the other hand, he does it voluntarily. So what you see is God's work in Zacchaeus' life. Jesus doesn't have to tell him, he just does it automatically, he knows what is right to do. "If I have cheated anybody out of anything, I will pay back four times the amount." Jesus said "today salvation has come to this house." Beautiful statement: "today salvation

has come.” How has salvation come? Zacchaeus gives half of his wealth to the poor. Again this is a very interesting way of how Zacchaeus gets salvation.

The conclusion here, in the story of the rich young ruler, can the wealthy be saved? That was the question. Jesus says, it is really hard, it’s like a camel going through an eye of a needle. It’s almost impossible. And, yet Zacchaeus, the answer is: “today salvation has come to your house Zacchaeus, and you are a child of Abraham.”

Now what is interesting in the story, remember how we were telling how you write a story, that the beginning and the end are very similar? It’s very interesting Jesus stops at the spot and Zacchaeus is up in a tree and he said to him “Zacchaeus come down immediately, I must stay at your house today.” That’s how the story begins. “I am going to come to your house today Zacchaeus I am going to stay at your house.” How does the story end? “Today salvation has come to this house.” Do you get the association? The story opens with Jesus coming to his house and then Jesus announces “today salvation has come to this house.” What is Luke doing in writing this story? I think he is associating Jesus with salvation. I am coming to your house: salvation is coming to your house. Actually they have a literary thing they call this an *inclusio*. It begins the same way it ends. Jesus comes to his house, salvation comes to his house. The story is bounded, kind of like bookends, it’s bounded by Jesus comes, salvation comes to this man’s house. It’s associating Jesus as savior and Jesus is the savior of all men, including Zacchaeus.

E. Implications of Zacchaeus [17:47-23:37]

This raises an interesting story for me from my past in terms of this thing. Does Zacchaeus say, “O, I believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and you shall be saved?” Does it say anywhere that Zacchaeus believed in Jesus? No. What you see is Zacchaeus’ actions. He gives half of his wealth to the poor. He repays anybody he has ripped off four times what he stole. Once upon a time I taught at a maximum security prison in Indiana for about a decade. I would teach at a college during the day and then we would ride up to, about an hour and a half ride, Michigan City to a maximum security prison up there. In

that class there was a man we used to call Probo. His name was John Shultz but we used to call him Probo and Probo was one of the smartest guys I've ever taught, actually, but he was an older guy. He came out of Vietnam, he was a Vietnam vet and he was imprisoned because he killed a couple guys, it was bad. Probo sat in class and he would never take a note and when he would take my tests he would get hundreds on my tests. He had like a photographic memory and he could remember anything you said, he could remember. I think he got that in the military where they would offer commands and he was special services in the military. He could just remember what you said and he was a really bright guy. Well what happened was I taught at Grace College for about 20 years and then I came out to Gordon College in the Boston area and Probo was getting out of prison and he was about 55 at the time and he was getting out of prison and he actually got out of prison and he actually told me, "Ted, when I get out of prison," he's a big Harley guy, and he was going to get a Harley and he said he was going to come to the college campus and buzz me. In Indiana they take the mufflers off of the Harleys so they make a lot of noise and huge noises you can hear a mile away. So I'm always up in my office at Gordon College saying one of these days, and I prayed for Probo he was out of prison for a couple years and he married a Christian girl. I always thought that was so weird because Probo wasn't really a Christian, as a matter of fact, he would challenge me in class and any time he could find an error in the Bible he would be all over me and call it a bunch of things. We would go back and forth and we would have kind of an argument. I really enjoyed the guy he was a really bright guy, but he was Probo, he was always probing something and coming at me with stuff. Well, he got out of prison, I was praying for him and I was away here at Boston and this was back in Indiana and turns out that about a year after he died I found out that he had been dead for about a year and a half. He was riding his motorcycle and his coat had got caught in the back tire and he had gotten projected off of his motorcycle head first into a guardrail and was killed instantly.

I was at a conference, this is in November, and I had to read a paper down in Atlanta, Georgia. I was down there with this guy named Ron Clutter. Ron and I went to

lunch and he was a former colleague from Indiana. As we were leaving, we talked and talked and talked, old memories kind of thing. Two old men talking and as I got up to leave he said “Do you remember John Shultz? Do you remember old Probo?” and I said “Yeah, I do remember Probo. I was so angry here I am out in Boston and nobody told me he was dead. I was praying for that dude for over a year and he was dead already and nobody told me that he was dead.” So I felt kind of betrayed that nobody told me so I told that to Ron. Ron said, “Well, let me tell you the rest of what happened with Probo.” He got out of prison and he married a Christian woman. Remember I told you that it didn’t make sense because he wasn’t a Christian. He was really anti-Christian in a lot of ways. Probo never told anyone that he became a Christian, but as a matter of fact, he accepted the Lord. Probo said, “I don’t want to have to say it to people, I want people to see that my life, that God has changed my life.” So basically Probo wasn’t one of these guys that always has “Jesus” as every other word kind of person declaring I’m a religious person now. His voice didn’t come out as religious, with Probo it changed his life. He said, “If it changes my life, my life will speak louder than my words. And so I am a Christian and my life has changed and they will be able to see that.” I really respect that. That’s what you get with Zacchaeus. Zacchaeus’ life has changed. He doesn’t have to go around saying Jesus this and Jesus that. No, his life changed. How did the people know his life changed? The people knew his life changed because the guy gives half of what he has to the poor. He’s a wealthy person. He pays back anybody that he’s ripped off four times and when they got that money back they say “Whoa, what has happened to old Zacchaeus?” Jesus says, salvation has come to your house today. So that’s the story of Zacchaeus and I think what Luke is doing is playing off these two stories: the rich young ruler and the story of Zacchaeus. They play off each other. They’re both wealthy. One, salvation comes to his household, Zacchaeus. The other one is attached to his wealth and he turns away. That’s kind of an intertextual reading and what I’m working on here is just trying to get you to think about how does one interpret the Bible? What is your hermeneutic? Hermeneutics is the study of how you interpret the Bible.

F. Intertextuality and Zacchaeus searching for Salvation [23:37-26:19]

What I'm saying is that you can read these stories intertextually. Like you read the story of the rich young ruler and you say, "Wow, there are a lot of things that compare with the story of Zacchaeus. The stories play off one another, so in order to understand the story of Zacchaeus properly I think you need to understand the story of the rich young ruler." The story of the rich young ruler ends up with the conclusion, how can the wealthy be saved? The solution to that is Zacchaeus, where he is a wealthy person but he does what the rich young ruler was not able to do, even though the rich young ruler is more moral in many senses than Zacchaeus was. So those kinds of stories play with Zacchaeus. This *inclusio*, this is that word that I told you before, the *inclusio*--the beginning and ending. "I'm coming to your house;" salvation is coming to your house associating who is seeking whom. Is Zacchaeus seeking Jesus or is Jesus seeking Zacchaeus? So you get this kind of reversal that takes place there. So Zacchaeus is seeking salvation.

This is just a diagram, how to diagram this out. Here's Zacchaeus, here's Jesus here are the crowds. The crowds then are going to form an obstacle so what you get is something like this: Zacchaeus is seeking Jesus but the crowd is in his way and so he's got to overcome this obstacle of the crowd. The crowd murmurs and rejects Zacchaeus. So he's got to overcome the obstacle of the crowd in his way, he's a small guy. They reject and murmur against Zacchaeus so he's got not just the size thing but also the rejection of the people in the crowd and feeling that rejection. The crowd, by the way, does not seem to be associated with Jesus. It's Zacchaeus that connects with Jesus not the crowd. So the crowd is cut off from Jesus and then what you get is Zacchaeus repents, repays, and gives to the crowds, and the poor people. He pays back the people of what he'd done. So Zacchaeus repents and what you get is Jesus. In other words, you have Zacchaeus seeking Jesus and salvation, and Jesus seeking Zacchaeus. So I think this is kind of a graphic way of a lot of these stories with Jesus you have the person, you have a crowd usually the Pharisees or Sadducees and some obstacle and you've got Jesus. Then

you've got, this triangulation thing going on with a lot of these stories. So I think this just puts it graphically and it is somewhat helpful.

G. Luke Puts Jesus in Context of the Whole World [26:19-29:45]

C: Combine G-I; 26:19-34:48; Jesus in world context, problems

Jesus is the savior of all. What does this remind you of? "The voice of one calling in the wilderness." Every one of the gospels has this quote, "the voice of one calling in the wilderness" referring to John the Baptist. He's out in the wilderness eating grasshoppers and wild honey. "The voice of one calling in the wilderness" all quote it, yet only Luke adds "all flesh shall see the salvation of God." Luke adds this statement: "all flesh shall see the salvation of God." Luke is emphasizing Jesus as savior of all, so he continues that quote out of Isaiah and he continues to use that statement "all flesh shall see the salvation of God."

Now, I want to work with, there's a little thing that comes up here--this is in chapter 2 and 3 of Luke, and it occurs in Luke 2:1 and then also in 3:1. Let me just read this. Luke is saying Jesus is the savior of all. So Luke puts Jesus in the context of all in the whole world and Luke has a bigger world, I think, than some of the other apostolic writers who were Jewish and somewhat narrower in their focus. So, here's Luke chapter 2 verse 1 and then I want to look at chapter 3 verse 1 for something very similar. He says, "in those days," talking about the time of the birth of Jesus. "In those days, Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken." Caesar Augustus, once he mentions Caesar Augustus, does that put Jesus in the context of the world with Caesar, the Roman Caesar. We know who Caesar Augustus was so we are able to put Jesus in an international context then. We know who he was, Jesus was born in the reign of Caesar Augustus. That also helps us to locate Jesus chronologically. Luke records, "That a census should be taken in the entire Roman world. This was the first census that took place while Quirinius was governor of Syria." So there's a Syrian governor, Damascus is the kind of capital of Syria; the Syrian governor is going to do a census then down in Israel. Then in chapter 3 verse 1 you get a similar statement. "In the fifteenth year of the

reign of Tiberius Caesar,” so you’ve got another indication here. Tiberius Caesar is another Caesar. Again, we know when Tiberius reigned. In the fifteenth year, it mentions a specific year of Tiberius which is very helpful to have. These kinds of historical comments are not found very often in the Bible so when you can link it in to secular people like Tiberius Caesar in his fifteenth year that gives us a good hook onto which to hang this history. “When Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea, Herod the tetrarch of Galilee and his brother Philip the tetrarch of Ituraea, and Trachonitis and Lysanias tetrarch of Abilene, during the high priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas.” So not only do we know these governors of the area and Palestine but we also know Annas was the high priest along with Caiaphas. So Luke seems to locate Jesus in this bigger picture of these Roman governors.

H. Critics Response “Problems in Luke [29:45-32:40]

Now some have said that this is a contradiction, the Bible has a contradiction there, with real history. Basically there are some problems here, there was no census. Critics will say things like this: there was no census in the time of Augustus. There was no known census from the time of Augustus, number one. Number two there is no census to require Joseph then to go to Bethlehem. Remember Joseph and Mary had to come down to Bethlehem to take the census. There’s none recorded that we have in external history. Josephus has no Quirinius census before 6 AD. So Josephus who was a Jewish historian about 40 AD to 100 AD kind of after the time of Christ but still 40 to 100 AD Josephus was a Jewish historian. He wrote a book probably that thick on the history of the Jews and the Antiquities of the Jews. So Josephus was the most complete historian of the Jewish people in the first century. He mentions that the census took place at 6 AD. Now what’s the problem? Jesus is born at what, 4 or 5 BC so the census thing has missed it by about ten years and that’s significant. Quirinius could not have been the governor at the time of Jesus’ birth. Quirinius was governor after that. So these kinds of things come up and they say well there’s an error in the Bible. There was a guy named Daryl Bach who is a Jesus and Lukan scholar. Darrel Bock is one of the tremendous New Testament

Scholars on Luke in the country down at the Dallas Seminary and he specialized in Jesus and he's very good at what he does. He notes then, that there were three censuses in Augustus' reign. The Romans were registering people, and when the Romans went to take a census and register people they allowed each area to do it in a way that was appropriate for that area. So the governors of the area would decide how they wanted to do the census. Now it turns out in Jewish circles, and you would think this is natural, in Jewish circles you had to go back to your base territories. So for example they went back to Bethlehem where they were from. They had to go to Bethlehem of Judea for they were from the tribe of Judah. That's a very Jewish way of doing it and the Romans allowed the census to be taken as the native customs of that area would allow for. So it seems very fitting then that Jesus would go back. The census recorded by Josephus was 6 AD. It's very likely that there were other censuses. Josephus mentioned the one at 6 AD but he didn't mention the one that was taken at 4 or 5 BC.

I. Argument from Silence [32:40-34:48]

So because he doesn't mention it, does that mean the Bible is wrong? That's what's called an argument from silence. In other words does Josephus list every last census that was taken? No so you can't argue against the Bible because you don't have any records saying well there was absolutely no census taken before 0 in the BC period. It's an argument from silence and those are weak arguments. Just because we don't know about it from secular history doesn't mean that it never happened. We don't know a lot of things about history. When you get into archaeology and dig up archaeology you have only a fraction of a fraction of a fraction of the archeological material. Much of archeology, most of it is still buried and hasn't been dug out in Israel, Mesopotamia, and Egypt even. Egypt has been done quite a bit but archaeology is very fragmentary so you can't argue against something on the basis of silence. We just may not have discovered it yet and there are literally tons and tons hundreds of tons of material that needs to be sifted through.

The other suggestion for Quirinius that Bock mentions is that it's very possible

that Quirinius could have been governor twice. That he could have been a governor and then he was asked to step down or he went on some other mission for Caesar and then he came back and was governor again. So you may actually have that he is governor two times and that's why there's the BC and then the AD and that may have been likely. So there are explanations that's all I'm trying to say is there are explanations to explain this. Be careful of arguments from history saying it contradicts the Bible. There's really no evidence from that to contradict there's just no evidence. So we can't say the Bible is wrong when you just don't have any evidence of it one way or the other. It's an argument of silence. So that's the date problem and that's what we've been working on here in chapter 2. No census that Quirinius and the census--that's how you spell Quirinius--were not until 6 AD in Josephus and there was no travel to Bethlehem ordered. These are the things the critics raise and this is what we tried to answer.

J. Songs in Luke: The Magnificat and Benedictus [34:48-38:29]

D: Combine J-N; 34:48-48:51; Songs and People in Luke

Now, Luke characteristics. If I said to you who is the sweet singer of Israel, what would the answer be? Who is the sweet singer of Israel? Who is the one in Israel who gave all the songs and things of Israel? It was David. King David in the Psalms you read 72 psalms have the title "for David" or "to David" or however you want to understand the titles there. But the songs, who is the song's sweet singer of Israel in the New Testament or, out of Israel maybe, but the song writer of the New Testament is Luke. So Luke has these wonderful songs there. I just want to go over some of his songs. These songs are given Latin names. These songs are all very famous. They're so famous that they actually have names for them and sometimes you'll hear the monks chant them in Latin.

The first one is called the Magnificat and this is Mary's song. Remember how we said that Luke seems to talk to Mary and so you get very close readings of things about Mary, things very close to her heart. Luke tells us that she treasured these things up in her heart. Mary would know that so Luke picks that up. Mary says this "My soul glorifies the Lord, my spirit rejoices in God my savior." Notice how she identifies God "my spirit

rejoices in God my savior.” Remember how we said salvation was a big theme for Luke, you can see it even here in the song of Mary. “For he has been mindful in the humble state of his servant from now on all generations will call me blessed, for the almighty one has done great things for me.” This is Mary’s song. Beautiful song here, Mary realizing that she is going to be the mother of the Lord and this is just tremendous, Mary’s song is called the *Magnificat*.

Benedictus, we understand what benedictions are. Several of the students this year have had Latin, *bene* means “well” or “good.” *Dictus* means “diction” like diction, to speak. So *benedictus* is to speak well. A benediction, at the end of a church service the pastor will usually hold up his hands and give a benediction. Benediction means he will speak well over the people. If you go down to Park Street Church you’ll see Gordon Hugenberg. He raises his hand and says “the Lord bless you and keep you. The Lord be gracious onto you and give you peace” and he goes off on the Numbers 6 with the priestly blessing. So, a benediction is like a priestly blessing. So here you have the *Benedictus*. This is Zacharias. Who is Zacharias? Zacharias and Elizabeth are the parents of John the Baptist. John the Baptist was announced that he would be born and Zacharias didn’t believe it but then he does. God opens his mouth when John the Baptist is born and Zacharias was filled with the Holy Spirit. Remember the theme of Holy Spirit that Luke comes up with? Zacharias was filled with the Holy Spirit and prophesied. Zachariah’s song “praise be to the Lord the God of Israel, because he has come and redeemed his people. He has raised up a horn of salvation.” Notice the salvation theme. “He has raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant.” So this is a benediction, a *Benedictus*, of Zacharias singing and praising God.

K. Songs in Luke: Gloria in Excelsis and Nunc Dimittis [38:29-40:24]

The *Gloria in Excelsis*, do you remember *Gloria in excelsis deo*. The angels we have heard on high kind of thing. Glory to God in the highest, “glory to God in the highest and on earth peace to men on whom his favors rest.” *Gloria in excelsis* this is a Latin rendition of what the angels sang. So Luke picks up songs, he picks up songs that

angels are singing in front of God. So there will be music in heaven and many of you are studying music on earth and that's a good thing because apparently there is music in heaven. The angels are singing glory to God in the highest in chapter 2 verse 14.

The last one of these songs, and this one that I love, is Simeon's song. Do you remember old man Simeon? The Holy Spirit told him he wouldn't die until he had seen the Lord's Christ and he picks up baby Jesus in his arms. He says this, and *Nunc Dimittis* is the Latin for "now depart." So he says this: "sovereign Lord as you have promised now dismiss your servant in peace for my eyes have seen your salvation." Who is salvation? "Salvation," Zacchaeus, "has come to your house." Simeon, baby Jesus, "my eyes have seen your salvation." Jesus is salvation. "I have seen your salvation for what you have prepared in the sight of all people a light for revelation to the Gentiles." Notice, the Gentiles are included in here, Luke is a Gentile he picks up on that theme. When you get into the book of Acts the Gentile theme is picked up. "For the glory of your people in Israel. For the revelation of the Gentiles and for glory of people in Israel." So these are four wonderful songs from the book of Luke. Luke is the psalmist of the New Testament.

L. People in Luke: Prodigal Son and the Emmaus Road [40:24-42:46]

Now Luke seems to be interested in people. He has a very close reading of what goes on inside people and so you get the story of the prodigal son. The prodigal son coming to his father and you get this father-son tension. The father being benevolent and gracious to his son giving him the inheritance. What an insult that was to the parent. You guys have had to read that article we've got up online for free on the prodigal son. Wonderful article that is and, basically, showing how this guy really turned his back on his father and then squandered the wealth that his father had developed and squandered his inheritance on a raunchy living. When it was all gone he had all these friends, all this wine and women and once his wealth was gone he didn't have any friends left. So he ends up with the pigs and comes back to his father and his father runs out. By the way, do you get the Semitic idiom that the article brought out? Well, a father doesn't run. It's almost a shameful thing that the father runs out and greets and grabs his son and

welcomes his son back. So you get this reuniting of father and son after the son has turned his back and went away. It's a beautiful story of a reunion of a father and son here, the prodigal son.

So Luke picks up on all these little personal things of the intimacies of the inside. The Emmaus Road we will look at that later. The Emmaus Road, and you get these two people walking after the resurrection and Jesus has risen from the dead. These people don't really know about it so they are walking going west out of Jerusalem going about six or seven miles, a Sabbath day's journey. This guy just appears and walks alongside them. It's really Jesus but he walks alongside them and he starts explaining to them, "Do you guys know what's going on in Jerusalem?" They said "Haven't you heard that Jesus, a prophet, died?" Jesus is playing along and says, "No, tell me more" and then Jesus explains to them out of Scripture and it says, "our hearts burned within us as he explained the scriptures and he explained that he must rise from the dead." Then all of a sudden Jesus breaks bread with them and it's a really cool story. When he breaks the bread with them all of a sudden they recognize him and say this is Jesus and then he takes off.

M. People in Luke: women and children [42:46-45:31]

So women and children, we have pointed this out several times. Jesus pointed out that women and children when Jesus is in chapter 8 verses 1 through 3 it says that the women were meeting Jesus' needs. That a lot of the women were supporting Jesus. It's very interesting. You get Zebedee's mother the wife of Zebedee. Do you remember James and John the apostles? The wife of Zebedee was apparently traveling and supporting Jesus in his ministry as well as Mary Magdalene and all these other women. When Jesus goes to the cross it's interesting that the women are bewailing Jesus as he goes to the cross not the disciples. If you go in the Get Lost in Jerusalem program and you go up to what's called the via Dolorosa, you go up the via Dolorosa in Jerusalem, is the way of sorrow. If you go up the via Dolorosa you'll see many stations of the cross you'll see fifteen. I don't know how many stations from station 3, 4, or 5 you'll see the

women involved in weeping and wailing for Jesus. It's out of the book of Luke 23:27 and following.

Luke picks up on the widow of Nain. The widow of Nain who has an only son who has died and Jesus raises the widow of Nain's son. You've got another one that says it was his only daughter. Do you remember Jarius? Jarius was a guy who comes to Jesus and says "My daughter is on the verge of death. Jesus, please, come and heal her." She is his only daughter. Luke seems to pick up on this only child motif. She is his only daughter and then what happens? As they are going to Jarius' house they come with the message that "the girl has died. There's no sense to bother the Master anymore." Why should he come now when she's dead. And Jesus says, "I'm coming to your house," and Jesus raises her from the dead. So it's really kind of a special thing there with this "only child" motif.

Then the other thing that you've got is this other guy in chapter 9. Jarius was in chapter 8 verse 42. Chapter 9, the next chapter you've got Jesus coming. So its chapter 7 the widow of Nain's son is raised from the dead, chapter 8 verse 42 Jarius' daughter is raised from the dead and then on to chapter 9. So its chapter 7, chapter 8, and chapter 9, all of these stories, in Luke 9:38 this guy has an only child. This only child has this demon and Jesus cast the demon out of this only child. Luke seems to pick up these things with only children and women and that seems to be the people's interest. He has a real close reading on people's hearts what they're thinking.

N. Focus on the Poor: Mary's Song and Social Justice [45:31-48:51]

Now Luke also focuses on the poor. So in Mary's song in the *Magnificat* I didn't read the whole thing before but in the *Magnificat* says this: "he has brought down the powerful thrones and lifted up the lowly. He has filled the hungry with good things and sent the rich away empty." So, "he's brought down the powerful, lifted up the humble. He's fed the hungry but sent the rich away empty." So you get this kind of reversal where the wealthy become poor and the poor are fed. Luke seems to pick up on this with the poor and a lot of the things. When you talk about social justice issues they usually talk

about the book of Luke because Luke emphasizes the poor and that kind of context. Chapter 4 verse 16 and following says that Jesus came to bring good news to the poor. “He came to bring good news to the poor, to proclaim the release of captives and to recover the sight of the blind, to let the oppressed go free.” So, Jesus works for the poor, for the oppressed and he sets them free. Beautiful message there social gospel people have pulled these passages out.

Problem is you deal with sin and salvation and those types of things. You get this tension developing in our culture between the social justice issues and salvation issues in terms of salvation from sin. Since our culture doesn’t like sin anymore we actually fixate on the social justice and we make a big deal over social justice helping the poor, helping the poor, helping the poor and much to the neglect of the fact that Jesus came to do what? “Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world” and the salvation, the redemption through the blood of Christ we de-emphasize while emphasizing the help of the poor and that can be a problem. The question is well is it either this or that? The answer is no, it’s not either/or it’s both/and the problem is that the one group emphasizes the poor particularly socialists and communist Marxist type people. You use Scripture and use social justice issues and coop Scripture they didn’t really care much about Scripture what they do is they go and rip these themes out of Scripture about the helping of the poor and they basically go off on those themes and ignore the other aspects of the gospel of repentance, worshiping God and serving God take a backseat. I think there are problems on both extremes actually. Of course, in the academy--and I should say in most colleges--the social justice issue is pushed and redemption and salvation from sin are downplayed. So therefore I think that the academy and the colleges and universities could use a balancing on the other side that Jesus came to save sinners and to shed his blood for the sins of the people of the world. Luke is used pushing the social justice side of things.

O. Focus on the Poor: Sell Everything and Parables [48:51-51:41]

E: Combine O; 48:51-51:41; Focus on Poor

Sell everything and give it to the poor three times in chapter 12:31, 14:33, 18:22 was that rich young ruler we looked at that. By the way when you pick up this theme in the book of Acts, Luke is writing Acts too. You'll notice in the early church they gave everything and had everything in common in the early church. Notice, by the way, that when they had everything in common was that the government saying you got to redistribute wealth you have to give wealth to this person here? No, it happens like Zacchaeus, that a person does it from their heart. It is their choice. He doesn't take the wealth from the people. It's their choice to give it in generosity to the poor and so you got to be really careful about these things where they come in and say you've got wealth and I'm poor therefore you should give me your money. Jesus did not say the rich should give the poor and I'm poor so give me your money. That's not what's being said here. It comes from the heart and generosity to help the poor. The person needs to have the integrity to have the freedom to choose for themselves, so then it becomes a moral issue. They can or don't have to it's their choice. Choice: if anything is a big deal in Scripture the issue of choice and the individual's choice is a big thing that needs to be guarded. In our culture we are wanting to legislate what must be done and make it a must. It's got to come from the heart. All the rich people did not give all of their stuff away. We are going to see Joseph of Arimathea helps Jesus with his tomb but Joseph of Arimathea is a wealthy man. When you get into the book of Acts you are going to see Lydia who is a seller of purple. She is a wealthy lady. She helps them out of her wealth but she doesn't give it all away to the poor. She uses her wealth for good. You got to work with that.

The rich fool's barns this is the guy who is going to die the next day and is talking about building bigger barns and Christ comes and says, "Today your soul is going to be required of you and when you die you can't take it with you." You can be absolutely wealthy as possible. It's one of the things I like about Warren Buffet. One of the richest guys in the world says he wants to die with zero and he wants to give it all away. I think there's something noble about that and I just hope he carries through on it. There's something noble and good about that. That's kind of the way of Jesus. So rich fool's barns, you can't take it with you, and how are you going to use it. Lazarus and Dives.

Lazarus and the rich man we will talk about that in a second in terms of heaven and hell. The focus is on the poor.

P. The Parable of Lazarus and the Rich Man [51:41-56:19]

F: Combine P-T; 51:41-73:30 end; Lazarus and the Rich Man, Hell

Speaking of Lazarus and the rich man, let's make our way over to that in terms of the heaven and hell. I want to just go over a little bit about this parable in chapter 16 verses 19 and following. The parable of Lazarus and the rich man. Let me just read through this. The question is what does the Bible teach about hell? Is there really a place called "hell"? How can a good, loving, kind God send anyone to hell? How can a good, kind, compassionate, forgiving God send someone to hell? First of all I don't think God sends anyone to hell, I think they make a choice and end up going there. But anyway, chapter 16 verse 19 "there was a rich man who is dressed in purple [sign of wealth], and fine linen and lived in luxury every day. At his gate was laid a beggar named Lazarus, covered with sores and longing to eat what fell from the rich man's table." Some people value their dogs more than they value people. In that culture dogs are viewed very negatively. "Even the dogs came and licked his sores. The time came when the beggar died and the angels carried him to Abraham's side. The rich man also died and was buried in hell where he was in torment." So it tells us a little about hell. "In hell, when he was in torment he looked up and saw Abraham far away with Lazarus by his side."

Very interesting, whenever you come across the biblical story, always note who is named and who is not named. Lazarus in this story is named. Who is Lazarus? Lazarus is the poor beggar. But yet Lazarus is dignified by giving Lazarus a name. The rich man however has what? He's never called by name he's called "the rich man." He is never mentioned by name, so it's just interesting. "And he called him, 'father Abraham, have pity on me. Send Lazarus to dip his finger in the water and cool my tongue because I am in agony in this fire.'" Notice there is agony, pain, and suffering. He is wanting something, water, to cool his tongue. So this is describing, we are getting here a parable, a story that Jesus is using to describe what's going on in this separation between the rich

man and Lazarus. This guy is in hell and Lazarus is in Abraham's bosom or close to Abraham. "But Abraham replied, 'son remember that in your lifetime you received your good things while Lazarus received bad things but now he is comforted here and you are in agony. Besides all this, between us is a great chasm which has been fixed so that those who want to go from here to you cannot nor can anyone cross over from there to us.'" There's this chasm and apparently you can't go across the chasm. Apparently you can communicate across the chasm because they could hear what the guy was saying but they couldn't cross it. "He answered, 'then I beg you, father, send Lazarus,'" again he is ordering Lazarus around still, "'send Lazarus to my father's house for I have five brothers. Let him warn them so that they will not also come to this place of torment.' Abraham replied [check this out], Abraham replied, 'They have Moses and the prophets.'" These are two sections of Scripture. Moses, they had the Pentateuch, Genesis to Deuteronomy, and they had the prophets. The prophets starting in Joshua and they call those the former prophets and the later prophets: Isaiah, Jeremiah, in the Hebrew canon. So he says, "they have Moses and the prophets. Let them listen to them." "No, father Abraham," [he's rebuking from hell he's still rebuking Abraham]. He said 'but if someone,' [now this is the important catch line. I think this is the punch line]. He says, 'no, father Abraham, he said but if someone from the dead goes to them they will repent.' Abraham said to him, 'If they do not listen to Moses and the prophets they will not be convinced. Even if someone rises from the dead they will not be convinced.'" Who is this talking about? I think this is foreshadowing. This is an adumbration about Jesus Christ. Foreshadowing Jesus Christ will come back from the dead and they still will not believe.

Q. Contrasting Descriptions and the Significance of Hell [56:19-59:13]

So this is the parable of Lazarus and the rich man and it raises the question then of what do you do with hell. You've got Lazarus and the rich man. Let me just kind of work through the five bullet points here. There are contrasting descriptions in this life the luxury the opulence of the rich man and the poverty of Lazarus. Yet in the other world there's this reversal where the rich man with his luxury now is in hell while Lazarus the

beggar who didn't have enough to eat is lifted up. He remembers his brothers. It's interesting that he remembers his brothers in the other world but there is no sense of remorse for what happened with Lazarus. Lazarus is a poor beggar by his table with the dogs licking his sores, but there is no remembrance of Lazarus. It's only concern for his own brothers. They have Moses and the prophets Abraham told him. It foreshadows Jesus, the one who came back from the dead and that's kind of the end of the story. If one came back from the dead they still wouldn't believe and that seems to be talking about Jesus.

So is heaven and hell the point here? I don't think so. I think the point is we need to think about repentance. We need to think about caring for the poor. We need to think that there is a place called "hell." So, does now matter? Does this life matter? This life determines, are our decisions are determinative? I think this gets really scary for people. Do the decisions that we make now have eternal ramifications? Do our decisions right now have eternal ramifications? The answer is: yes. Now matters. What you decide to do with your life matters. It matters not just for now, it matters for eternity. So I want to suggest that god is really honoring us as human beings that we make choices, we get involved in this world and our choices then have consequences. Our choices have enteral consequences. It's amazing what God has allowed us to in this finite temporal world that we all wing around for 80, 90 years maybe now and we get 80 or 90 years and those decisions that we make last forever. It's kind of an amazing thing so decisions now are really important and you need to consider deeply the decisions that you make.

So what are some other things that we know about hell from other parts of the Bible? It's interesting, Jesus actually taught more on hell than he did on heaven. Jesus taught more, there's more teaching from Jesus--by the way, you can't just blow hell off and say, "to hell with hell." You can't say that because Jesus himself taught more on hell than he taught on heaven. Quite a bit of the teachings on hell comes from Jesus. By the way, Jesus is the good one to talk about hell because Jesus knows both sides. He's been on both sides and not that Jesus has been in hell, that's a whole other question.

R. Three Words for Hell [59:13-62:12]

There are three words for hell. The word in the Old Testament was *sheol*. *Sheol* was used as kind of underworld. *Sheol* often times simply means “grave.” Often times when they put people in the ground they use the word *sheol* for grave. It doesn’t mean underworld. It means they buried the guy. So *sheol* can simply mean “tomb” or “grave” that kind of thing.

Gehenna is two words actually in Hebrew. *Geh*, basically means “valley.” *Henna* is for Hinnom, referring to the Hinnom Valley in the southwest of Jerusalem. If some of you go to study at Jerusalem University College, it sits right on the edge of the Hinnom Valley. Hinnom Valley goes around and Jerusalem University College is up and goes around there. This was a trash dump where they burned their refuse. It was a place of burning. This place then, this place of burning becomes this Gehenna, the valley of Hinnom, this place of burning, becomes a metaphor or better a metonymy for hell as this place of burning.

The other thing that the valley of Hinnom was known for is that’s where they burn their children. You remember in the Old Testament, there was a god named Chemosh and Molech of Moab and Edom and Transjordan and those gods then came over to Israel and the people actually burned their children. They burned their children in the valley of Hinnom to the gods Molech and Chemosh, so it’s a very bad place.

I remember when I was there I was taking some pictures for the Get Lost in Jerusalem, a virtual reality of Jerusalem. I went down the valley of Hinnom and I was out early and I went by myself, usually you shouldn’t travel by yourself. I said I want to get a picture and I noticed there was dump in the valley off the Hinnom. I thought I’m going to go get this 360 degree picture of this dump, this burning place in the valley of Hinnom there. So I’m walking up to the dump and I’m getting ready to take my picture and all of a sudden there are these three strange guys come out of the dump and they’re actually coming straight for me. I realized it’s time to get out of there so I snapped the legs of my tripod and my camera and took off running because I knew these guys were coming after me. So anyway, the trash dumps in the valley of Hinnom is used then as a metaphor for

Gehenna, the place of hell, hades or the abyss basically referring to the underworld.

S. Hell in Modern Culture [62:12-67:15]

Jesus taught more on hell than he did on heaven. This is counter to modern culture. Modern culture say there's always a second chance. God is loving, God is kind god always gives second chances. Sometimes God doesn't give a second chance. Sometimes things happen and there are eternal consequences. Now matters. Your choices matter. So be careful about the stress on love. You have to remember sin is a big deal. In our culture they say, "sin didn't really hurt anybody so it's no big deal." We always minimize sin. Apparently sin is such a big deal for God that he sent his son to die for it. Sin is a big deal to God. Be careful about always forgiving.

Now, how do you work with the concept of hell and you think about people being in hell forever and ever? The honest truth is, lately I've been thinking about the eternity of heaven. I'm not sure I can get my mind around what it means going for heaven for millions and billions of years. I have no clue what that means even going the other way. Do you remember the sheep and the goats? He separates the sheep on one side and the goats on the other. The sheep are invited into his kingdom. The goats he sends to hell where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth. So the separation of sheep and goats in Matthew chapter 25, is another significant passage.

Here's Mark 9:47. Notice that all the writers, Luke talks about hell, Matthew talks about it, Mark says now "if your eye offends you pluck it out. If your hand offends you cut it off. It's better for you to enter in with one hand into life than where the worm dieeth not and the fire is not quenched." It's a terrible imagery of burning. It's a bad place. Remember Matthew 7:22 "many will say to me in that day 'Lord, Lord,' and I will say depart from me, I never knew you," that's a terrible thing to hear those words from God. Hell, Matthew 23:23: "It will be better in the day of judgment for Sodom and Gomorrah than it will be for you [Capernaum] because you rejected Christ."

All this is saying is there's a coming judgment day which judgments will be made and it will be better for Sodom and Gomorrah. Apparently there are levels of punishment.

It will be better for Sodom and Gomorrah than it will be for Capernaum, there are apparently levels of reward. There are also levels of punishment. Revelations chapter 20. The book of Revelation, nobody likes the book of Revelation because it's so hard to understand. In the book of Revelation, and part of it that is fairly clear, is that there's a lake of fire that people, Satan and his angels are involved in that as well in Revelation 20.

So with all these passages then, we ask about, and let me just kind of finish this up as a discussion here. What are the options people have? When you think about hell, I just--to be honest with you I can't get my mind around it. Some people think, "Well, if there is a God and he can send somebody to hell, I would never worship such a God." You can make all of the pontifications you want. Let me just kind of get in your face a little bit. It doesn't matter what you think. "I don't want to worship a God who sends somebody to hell." You can sit on your high horse all you want but it doesn't matter what you think. It's a question whether it really exists or not. Whether you think it exists or not you say "well, I choose to not believe in hell." You can choose not to believe in hell but that doesn't change or make it any different. If it exists it doesn't matter if you believe or not. It doesn't matter what your opinion is, it doesn't matter at all, zero. If the place exists it exists. It's like if somebody gets hit by the car you can say, "I don't really believe a car can go that fast so I don't believe that it actually hit you." It does matter whether you believe it or not you just got your legs busted there, Buster. So it doesn't matter what you believe, reality breaks in at a certain point.

I think that's one of the problems we have going on in America now is people think the way we think in our head determines reality. I'm sorry, it doesn't. Reality is outside your head. I think you've got to get outside the Gordon bubble sometimes and see. The reality happens in the real world and it doesn't matter what you think or what you thought. Reality happens. So you've got to get a clue and get your feet into reality. The Bible--Jesus describes hell in so many different ways. So hell seems to really exist and heaven seems, by the way if you do away with hell then what are you going to do about heaven? Do you get rid of heaven too? We take the good stuff but we don't want to take the bad stuff.

T. Alternate Interpretations and Final Thoughts [67:15-73:30]

So what are some of our other options? Here are some of our other options on people handle this. Like I said I've had a real hard time understanding how--to be honest, the truth for myself is I have a real hard time with it myself in understanding it and thinking about the gravity of the situations. When I think about it it scares the daylights out of me and I wonder something. Some people say it's universal. We are in New England here, Boston area and so here's its universalism. Everybody goes to heaven. God basically welcomes everyone into heaven and they may have to wait a bit. I tell my students when they're going into heaven and they see me waiting at the gate. Peter's there holding me out, to wave at me and say, "Hey, Hildebrandt come in here after a while." Tell Peter to let me in. Some people say it is universalism everybody makes it into heaven. Some will go by greater rewards and lesser rewards but everyone makes it in. They call that universalism.

The problem with universalism is the Bible doesn't teach it. The Bible teaches that there are sheep and there are goats. This is why I have a problem with universalism. Apparently there are goats and there are sheep and they are separated at judgment time and people go to hell.

The second perspective would be annihilationist. Annihilationism basically means that people are annihilated that the people that are bad get annihilated. They simply go out of existence. In some senses, you look at that and say that's more merciful, considering somebody staying in hell for eternity annihilation is merciful. I don't know it seems like in the parable Lazarus and the rich man; you've got the rich man after death. Now maybe this is before the judgment so he's in torment before the judgment and the sheep and goat judgment comes later, after Lazarus. Annihilationism some people think that.

Usually in my class I walk way over to the left and this is a conjecture on my part and let me just say up front I understand very little of heaven. I do understand very little of hell. I understand that the decisions we make now are really important. They reflect

the glory of God. They reflect the kingdom of God. They reflect what Christ has done in our lives. We should walk in the footsteps of Jesus this is a big metaphor for me. What is this thing with hell? I wonder too part of me doesn't like to think about it because I can't think how's it going to be when a parent is in heaven and their child is in hell or how is it when a husband is in heaven and the wife is in hell or vice versa. Probably more likely, I'm sorry, the wife is in heaven and the husband is in hell. She's really compassionate. At the end of the book of Revelation it says there will come a time where Jesus will wipe away all tears. Jesus will wipe away all tears as New Jerusalem and the new heavens are made new. Everything will be made new and wipe away all tears. I'm wondering, I'm not a universalist on things like this but I wonder if there's kind of like, I just don't know. I think that's probably what I need to say. To step back and say I don't know. I do know this and this verse comes out of the Old Testament, I'm sorry it's not from Luke. It says "will not the God of all the earth do right?" So my guess is, in the long run, when we get to heaven and hell and however that's configured we are going to realize that what God did was right. We may not be able to understand it now and we have no clue. Like I said I don't understand heaven and I don't understand hell and what that does to a person and what's going on there. How God's redemption and mercy, everyone wants to talk about redemption and mercy but very few people want to talk about God's justice and the sin and how that's destroyed and things. I think it's something you need to think about.

I think thinking about heaven and hell and Christ's return in 1 John calls it "the blessed hope." It's referred to as the hope there. We have this hope that we are going to meet Jesus someday; we purify ourselves even as he is pure. What I'm saying is that, I think that it's important to live in light of the other world. That's I guess what I'm trying to say. It's important to live in light of the other world. There's a place of good. We can make choices that will lead us to that place. We can believe in Christ. We can do good and we need to be about doing that now. How it's actually going to flush out I don't know. I think it's wise at some points to say I don't know. I hope for heaven, I fear hell and I fear hell for everyone, for individuals in my family for myself, for everyone. I hope for heaven and I pray for Christ and his redemption and things. I think it's something

important to understand that there are consequences. There are negative consequences and there are positive consequences.

The choices we make matter. So my thing is to seize the day. Today is the day we have, we need to make right choices. We need to make choices that are honoring God that lead to the kingdom of heaven.

So thank you very much and I think we'll call it quits there and we've got one more thing to do in the book of Luke and that's on the notion of prayer. We'll cover that next time, thanks.

Transcribed by Brittany Marshall
Edited by Ben Bowden
Rough edited by Ted Hildebrandt