

Dr. Dave Mathewson, New Testament Literature, Session 10, Luke: Background and Themes Resources from NotebookLM

1) Abstract, 2) Audio podcast, 3) Briefing Document, 4) Study Guide, and 5) FAQs

1. Abstract of Mathewson, NT Literature, Session 10, Luke: Background and Themes, Biblicalelearning.org, BeL

Dr. Mathewson's lecture focuses on the Gospel of Luke, exploring its unique aspects and themes. He highlights that Luke is part of a two-volume work with Acts and emphasizes Luke's awareness of other written accounts and reliance on eyewitnesses. **The lecture identifies key passages, like Luke 2, demonstrating Luke's focus on Jesus' compassion for social outcasts and the broader Greco-Roman context.** It also addresses unique parables in Luke 15 about lost things being found and the importance of the parable of the prodigal son. **Dr. Mathewson concludes by outlining major themes in Luke, such as Jesus as savior, fulfillment of the Old Testament, the role of wealth and possessions, and the importance of prayer and praise.**

**2. 13 - minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of
Dr. Mathewson, NT Literature, Session 10 – Double click icon
to play in Windows media player or go to the
Biblicalelearning.org [BeL] Site and click the audio podcast link
there (Old Testament → Major Prophets → Daniel).**



**Mathewson_NTLit_S
ession10.mp3**

3. Briefing Document: Mathewson, NT Literature, Session 10, Luke: Background and Themes

Okay, here is a briefing document summarizing the key themes and ideas from Dr. Mathewson's lecture on the Gospel of Luke:

Briefing Document: Dr. Dave Mathewson's Lecture on Luke: Background and Themes

Overall Theme: The lecture focuses on the distinctive aspects of the Gospel of Luke compared to Matthew, Mark, and John, highlighting Luke's unique emphasis and portrayal of Jesus. The lecture also sets the stage for a quiz, which the lecturer acknowledges is confusing this week.

Key Ideas and Facts:

1. Luke as Part of a Two-Volume Work:

- Luke is the first part of a two-volume work with Acts. "Luke is actually part of a two-volume work comprising Luke and Acts."
- They were separated to group Luke with the other Gospels and Acts as a bridge between Gospels and Paul's letters.
- The structure reveals a chiasm, starting with the Roman world, focusing on Jerusalem, and then extending back to the Roman world.

1. Luke's Purpose and Method:

- Luke explicitly states his purpose in the first four verses: "to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus...so that you may know the truth."
- He is aware of other written sources and relies on eyewitnesses. "Luke is apparently aware of other written sources...Luke is dependent on eyewitnesses as well."
- Luke aims for accuracy and order, but not always chronological order.

1. Author and Audience:

- Luke was a physician and an associate of Paul, which likely influenced the inclusion of his Gospel in the canon. "Luke, as tradition has it, was a physician, but more importantly, Luke was an associate of Paul."

1. Key Passages and Themes

- **Luke 2 (The Christmas Story):** Emphasizes the humble and even humiliating circumstances of Jesus' birth. The shepherds, social outcasts, are the ones who visit Jesus, highlighting Luke's theme of the gospel reaching the marginalized. "Luke wants to emphasize that the gospel goes out to the social outcast, to the disgusting elements of society."
- **Central Travel Narrative:** The journey to Jerusalem is important in Luke.
- **Luke 10 (The Good Samaritan):** Only Luke includes this parable. The Samaritan, a despised figure, is the hero, reinforcing the theme of salvation for social outcasts. "It fits Luke's purpose perfectly to demonstrate that salvation, again, goes out to the social outcast."
- **Healing of the Ten Lepers:** Only one, a Samaritan, returns to thank Jesus. Another example of Jesus ministering to outcasts and a Samaritan displaying faith.
- **Zacchaeus:** Only in Luke. Zacchaeus, a tax collector (another social outcast), is reached by Jesus.
- **Luke 15 (Parables of the Lost Sheep, Coin, and Prodigal Son):** These parables are told in response to the Pharisees criticizing Jesus for associating with "tax collectors and sinners." The emphasis is on rejoicing when something lost is found. The parable of the Prodigal Son, particularly, highlights the father's (God's) willingness to welcome back the repentant sinner.
- The lecture emphasizes that we tend to focus only on the prodigal son, but not the older brother. Mathewson suggests that the story ending with the older brother is intentional, and leaves it up to the audience to determine whether he will follow Jesus.

1. Unique Emphases in Luke's Gospel:

- **Compassion for the Outcasts:** Jesus consistently reaches out to and has compassion for the social outcasts (shepherds, tax collectors, lepers, Samaritans). "Jesus is consistently portrayed throughout Luke as reaching out to the social and having compassion for the outcasts of society."
- **Jesus as Savior of the World:** Luke uses the terms "savior" and "save" more frequently than the other Gospels. "Luke portrays Jesus as the one who brings salvation to the world."

- **Fulfillment of the Old Testament:** Like Matthew, Luke portrays Jesus as fulfilling Old Testament prophecies. "Jesus explained from the law and the writings and the prophets how they all spoke of him."
- **Money and Possessions:** Luke addresses issues of wealth and money frequently, emphasizing sharing with the poor and condemning the hoarding of wealth. "Luke is primarily against the hoarding of wealth and instead emphasizes sharing wealth with the poor."
- **Prayer and Praise:** Jesus is portrayed as praying at key moments, and individuals frequently respond with hymns of praise (e.g., Mary's Magnificat). "All through the Gospel, you have this emphasis on the fact that the salvation that God provides...should evoke a response of praise and worship in God's people."

Intriguing Aspect: Half of Luke's Gospel is unique, not found in the other Gospels, showing the unique emphasis that Luke places on Jesus' compassion for the outcast.

4. Study Guide: Mathewson, NT Literature, Session 10, Luke: Background and Themes

Luke: Gospel of Compassion and Salvation

Study Guide

This study guide is designed to help you review and reinforce your understanding of the Gospel of Luke, based on the provided lecture notes. It includes a quiz, essay questions, and a glossary of key terms.

Quiz

Answer the following questions in 2-3 sentences each, based on the lecture material.

1. Why is Luke considered part of a two-volume work?
2. According to Luke 1:1-4, what sources did Luke use when writing his Gospel?
3. What is significant about Luke's placement of Jesus' birth within the context of the Roman world?
4. What is a chiasm, and how does it relate to the structure of Luke-Acts?
5. What is distinctive about Luke's account of the Christmas story in Luke 2 compared to Matthew's?
6. Why does Luke include the parable of the Good Samaritan?
7. What is unique about the story of Jesus healing the ten lepers in Luke's Gospel?
8. In the parable of the Prodigal Son, who is often overlooked, and why is their role important?
9. What are some of the parables and stories unique to Luke that are not found in the other Gospels?
10. What are some ways that Luke portrays Jesus praying in the Gospel?

Quiz Answer Key

1. Luke is considered part of a two-volume work because Luke and Acts were originally written together as a single narrative. The first four verses of Luke read like the prologue to a first-century Greco-Roman biography. The books were later separated to group Luke with the other Gospels and Acts as a bridge between the Gospels and the rest of the New Testament, particularly Paul's letters.

2. Luke mentions that he used other written sources and eyewitness accounts when writing his Gospel. He claims to have carefully investigated everything from the very first, suggesting a thorough research process. In Latin manuscripts of the Gospel, it even appeared as though the work was guided by the Holy Spirit.
3. Luke emphasizes the broader Roman world by mentioning Caesar Augustus and Quirinius, the governor of Syria, in the context of Jesus' birth. This places Jesus' birth not just in Bethlehem and Jerusalem, but within the context of the entire Greco-Roman world, highlighting the universal significance of his arrival.
4. A chiasm is a literary structure where the beginning and end mirror each other, and the middle sections correspond similarly, creating an inward and outward movement. Luke-Acts appears to be arranged according to this structure, starting in the Roman world, focusing on Jerusalem, and then expanding back to the Roman world.
5. Luke's account of the Christmas story differs from Matthew's by portraying Jesus' birth in humble circumstances. While Matthew depicts Jesus receiving a royal reception with visits from wise men bearing expensive gifts, Luke emphasizes the humiliating circumstances of Jesus' birth, with shepherds, who were social outcasts, visiting him.
6. Luke includes the parable of the Good Samaritan because it aligns with his theme of salvation extending to social outcasts. Samaritans were looked down upon by Jews, making the Samaritan's act of compassion particularly striking and reinforcing Luke's message that Jesus' salvation is for those on the margins of society.
7. The story of Jesus healing the ten lepers is unique to Luke and highlights his emphasis on Jesus ministering to social outcasts. The fact that only a Samaritan returns to thank Jesus emphasizes Luke's theme that the gospel reaches the disenfranchised.
8. In the parable of the Prodigal Son, the older son is often overlooked. He represents the Pharisees who grumbled about Jesus associating with tax collectors and sinners, and his reaction at the end challenges readers to consider whether they will rejoice at the repentance of others or remain resentful.

9. Luke contains unique parables and stories such as the Good Samaritan, the Prodigal Son, Zacchaeus, and the healing of the ten lepers. These stories emphasize Luke's themes of compassion for the outcast, salvation for sinners, and the importance of rejoicing in God's grace.
10. Luke portrays Jesus as praying at key points in his life. More than the other Gospels, Luke shows Jesus praying at the Garden of Gethsemane. Additionally, Luke emphasizes the act of praise or hymns of praise to Jesus such as the Magnificat.

Essay Questions

1. Discuss how Luke's portrayal of Jesus as the "Savior of the World" is reflected in specific narratives and teachings within his Gospel.
2. Analyze Luke's use of the chiasm structure in Luke-Acts and explain how this structure contributes to the overall message and themes of the two-volume work.
3. Compare and contrast Luke's depiction of wealth and possessions with that of another Gospel, highlighting the key differences in emphasis and potential reasons for these variations.
4. Explore Luke's emphasis on prayer and praise, providing examples from both Luke and Acts to illustrate how these themes underscore the importance of responding to God's salvation with gratitude and worship.
5. Examine how Luke uses the concept of "social outcasts" and provide textual examples of different types of outcasts, explaining the reasons for their position in society.

Glossary of Key Terms

- **Greco-Roman Biography:** A literary genre common in the first century, characterized by an orderly account of a person's life, often focusing on their character and teachings. Luke's Gospel shares similarities with this genre.
- **Theophilus:** The individual to whom Luke addresses his Gospel, potentially a patron who funded Luke's writing.
- **Eyewitness:** A person who directly observed an event and can provide a first-hand account. Luke relies on eyewitness accounts in compiling his Gospel.
- **Chiasm:** A literary structure in which parallel elements are arranged in a criss-cross manner (A-B-C-B'-A'). Luke and Acts appear to utilize this structure.
- **Travel Narrative:** A section in Luke (often chapters 9-19) where Jesus is depicted as journeying towards Jerusalem, culminating in his death and resurrection.
- **Samaritan:** A member of a group of people living in Samaria, often viewed with disdain by Jews in the first century. Luke frequently portrays Samaritans positively.
- **Tax Collector:** Individuals who collected taxes for the Roman government, often regarded as corrupt and social outcasts.
- **Parable:** A short story used by Jesus to teach a moral or spiritual lesson. Luke contains many unique parables.
- **Pharisees:** A Jewish sect known for their emphasis on ritual purity and adherence to the law. They often clashed with Jesus.
- **Magnificat:** Mary's hymn of praise found in Luke 1, expressing joy and gratitude for God's favor.

5. FAQs on Mathewson, NT Literature, Session 10, Luke: Background and Themes, Biblicalelearning.org (BeL)

Luke: Background and Themes FAQ

- **What makes the Gospel of Luke unique compared to the other Gospels (Matthew, Mark, and John)?**
- Luke presents Jesus as the savior of the world, emphasizing compassion for social outcasts like shepherds, lepers, Samaritans, and tax collectors. Luke also stresses the fulfillment of the Old Testament prophecies in Jesus and highlights themes of prayer, praise, and the proper use of wealth. Furthermore, Luke and Acts were originally part of a two-volume work. Half of Luke's gospel is not found elsewhere, highlighting its unique content.
- **What is the significance of Luke 1:1-4?**
- These verses reveal Luke's method for writing his Gospel. He acknowledges other existing accounts of Jesus' life but aims to provide an "orderly account" based on his own careful investigation, drawing upon both written sources and eyewitness testimonies. He wrote it for "most excellent Theophilus" to know the truth concerning the teachings he was instructed on. Luke doesn't explicitly claim divine inspiration, presenting his work as a careful historical narrative.
- **How are Luke and Acts related, and what is the significance of their structure?**
- Luke and Acts were originally a single, two-volume work. Luke begins by placing Jesus' birth in the context of the broader Roman world and concludes in Jerusalem. Acts picks up in Jerusalem and shows the gospel spreading throughout the Roman world. This structure forms a chiasm, moving inward towards Jerusalem and then outward towards the Roman world, emphasizing the universal reach of the gospel.
- **Why does Luke emphasize the humble circumstances surrounding Jesus' birth in Luke 2?**
- Luke contrasts the royal reception in Matthew with the humble setting of Jesus' birth among shepherds. This highlights Luke's theme that Jesus' ministry extends to the marginalized and social outcasts. Shepherds, considered among the lowest rungs of society, are the ones who first worship Jesus, foreshadowing Luke's emphasis on salvation for those rejected by the elite.

- **What is the significance of the parables found in Luke 15 (the lost sheep, the lost coin, and the prodigal son)?**
- These parables illustrate God's joy and concern for the lost. Jesus tells these stories in response to the Pharisees' criticism of his association with tax collectors and sinners. The focus isn't just on finding what was lost, but on the rejoicing that follows. The Parable of the Prodigal Son is especially important in that the oldest son is meant to challenge the Pharisees, as they must decide whether to rejoice in God's salvation for the social outcasts or distance themselves from it.
- **What is Luke's perspective on wealth and possessions?**
- Luke emphasizes that the Gospel applies to people with wealth. Luke emphasizes the responsible use of wealth, advocating for sharing it with the poor rather than hoarding it. The story of Zacchaeus exemplifies this, as Zacchaeus demonstrates his faith by giving half his possessions to the poor and restoring what he had stolen. Luke condemns the hoarding of wealth.
- **How does Luke portray Jesus in relation to the Old Testament?**
- Like Matthew, Luke presents Jesus as the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecies and promises. After his resurrection, Jesus explains to the disciples on the Emmaus Road how the Law, the Writings, and the Prophets all spoke of him. Jesus is also portrayed as the son of David, fulfilling the promise of a Davidic king.
- **What role does prayer and praise play in Luke's Gospel?**
- Luke emphasizes prayer and praise as vital responses to God's salvation. Jesus is frequently shown praying at key moments in his life. Additionally, individuals throughout the Gospel, like Mary and the shepherds, respond to God's intervention with hymns of praise. Luke suggests that God's grace, especially towards the undeserving, should inspire worship rather than complaint.