

## **Dr. Robert Peterson, Theology of Luke-Acts, Session 2, D. Bock—Sources for Luke, Purpose, Readers Resources from NotebookLM**

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

### **1. Abstract of Peterson, Theology of Luke-Acts, Session 2, D. Bock – Sources for Luke, Purpose, Readers, Biblicalelearning.org, BeL**

**Dr. Peterson's lecture on the theology of Luke-Acts**, specifically drawing from Darrell Bock's introductory work, **explores the complex issue of the Gospel of Luke's sources**, presenting various hypotheses such as the Augustinian and Griesbach views before focusing on the widely accepted four-source theory (Mark, Q, L, and M). The lecture further examines **Luke's unique content and its connection to Acts**, highlighting thematic parallels and Luke's careful approach as a historian and theologian. Finally, it discusses the **purpose of Luke-Acts, the intended audience (possibly Theophilus and other Gentiles), and the debated date of writing**, with arguments favoring an earlier timeframe in the 60s AD.

**2. 21 - minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of Dr. Peterson, Theology of Luke-Acts, Session 2 – Double click icon to play in Windows media player or go to the Biblicalelearning.org [BeL] Site and click the audio podcast link there (New Testament → Gospels → Luke).**



**Peterson\_Theo\_LkA  
cts\_Session02.mp3**

### 3. Briefing Document: Peterson, Theology of Luke-Acts, Session 2, D. Bock – Sources for Luke, Purpose, Readers

#### Briefing Document: Theology of Luke-Acts - Session 2 Review

##### Main Themes:

This session delves into critical introductory aspects of studying Luke-Acts, primarily drawing upon the work of Darrell Bock. The main themes covered are:

- **Sources of the Gospel of Luke:** Examining the complex "synoptic problem" and various hypotheses regarding the literary relationships between Matthew, Mark, and Luke. The session emphasizes the prevalence of some form of the four-source theory among scholars.
- **Luke's Unique Material (L):** Highlighting the significant portion of Luke's Gospel that is not found in the other synoptics, including infancy narratives, unique sayings, parables, and miracles. This material sheds light on Luke's specific theological and pastoral concerns.
- **The Link Between Luke and Acts:** Underscoring the deliberate structure and thematic connections between Luke's Gospel and its sequel, the Book of Acts, emphasizing Luke's intention to present a unified narrative of God's plan in Jesus and the early church.
- **Luke as a Historian:** Discussing the debate surrounding Luke's historical accuracy and his approach to using sources. While acknowledging critical perspectives, the session ultimately leans towards recognizing Luke as a careful and generally trustworthy historian, even while acknowledging his theological purposes.
- **Purpose, Readers, and Destination of Luke-Acts:** Exploring the various proposed reasons for Luke's writing and identifying the likely audience, particularly Theophilus, who is suggested to be a Gentile with some connection to the early church and experiencing doubts amidst persecution and Jewish rejection. The intended audience likely extended beyond Theophilus to any facing similar tensions.
- **The Date of Luke-Acts:** Reviewing the arguments for different dating periods, ranging from the 60s to the early 2nd century AD. The session critically analyzes the arguments for a later date (post-70 AD) and presents a case for an earlier date (early to mid-60s AD) as more likely.

- **Place of Writing:** Briefly touching upon the speculative nature of determining the location where Luke-Acts was written, with various possibilities like Caesarea, Rome, Antioch, and Greece being mentioned.

### **Most Important Ideas and Facts:**

- **The Synoptic Problem:** The significant overlap and differences between Matthew, Mark, and Luke necessitate understanding their literary relationships. The four-source theory (Markan priority, Q, M, and L) is a dominant scholarly view.
- "The sources of Luke's work are a debated part of a complex area known as the synoptic problem."
- **The Importance of Q:** The hypothetical "saying source" (Q) shared by Matthew and Luke, although lacking direct manuscript evidence, is crucial to the four-source theory.
- "It must be noted that the most challenging aspect of this approach is the nature of the evidence for Q, a document containing only sayings which have only the Gospel of Thomas as a possible ancient parallel in this genre."
- **Luke's Unique Contributions (L):** Approximately 42% of Luke's Gospel contains unique material, revealing his distinct theological interests and pastoral concerns.
- "This unique material comprises 485 verses of Luke or about 42% of Luke's whole, so 42% of Luke is unique to Luke."
- Examples of unique parables include the Good Samaritan, the Pharisee and the Publican, the Lost Coin, and the Prodigal Son.
- **The Deliberate Link Between Luke and Acts:** Luke structured his two-volume work to show the continuity between Jesus' ministry and the development of the early church.
- "In thinking about the use of sources, one should also consider that Luke structured his gospel to anticipate his sequel, Acts. This connection to Acts is seen in the repetition of the prologue, Luke 1:1 to 4, Acts 1:1."
- Parallels exist between Jesus and the apostles (healing, travel to key cities, facing opposition).
- **Luke as a Generally Trustworthy Historian:** While Luke had theological aims, he demonstrated care in handling his sources and accurately depicting settings and customs.

- "Nonetheless, an examination of Luke's use of his sources shows his general trustworthiness. Investigation into his description of settings, customs, and locales reveal the same sensitivity."
- "...Luke is a first-class ancient historian, and most good ancient historians understood their task well."
- **Theophilus as a Likely Gentile Believer Facing Challenges:** The prologue (Luke 1:3-4) suggests Theophilus had prior instruction and Luke aims to provide a more certain account to address his potential doubts related to Gentile inclusion, Jewish rejection, and persecution.
- "Luke 1:3, and 4 suggest that Theophilus received some instruction... Theophilus appears to be a man of rank, Luke 1:3, who has associated himself with the church but doubts whether, in fact, he really belongs in this racially mixed and heavily persecuted community."
- **Purpose of Luke-Acts:** Likely includes confirming the message of salvation, defending God's faithfulness to Israel, legitimizing full fellowship for Gentiles, and showing the new community was not unfaithful to Rome.
- "Of all these suggestions, those centering on God's role in salvation and his new community are most likely to reflect the key aspects of Luke's comprehensive agenda."
- **Arguments Against a Late Date (Post-70 AD):** The lack of direct reference to the fall of Jerusalem and the more significant issue of Jewish-Gentile tensions, which were more prominent in the earlier period, argue against a date in the 80s or 90s.
- "In addition, proponents of an earlier date note that there is no direct reference to the fall of Jerusalem. That the fall is alluded to here is strictly an inference."
- "Acts presupposes a racially mixed community, which in turn suggests an earlier date, not a later one."
- **Likely Date of Writing:** An early to mid-60s AD timeframe is considered more probable based on factors like the open-ended conclusion of Acts regarding Paul's career and the nature of the Jewish-Gentile dynamics portrayed.
- "Overall, an early to mid-60s date is likely. Luke left the end of Paul's career open-ended because that is where matters stood when he wrote."

- **Uncertainty of the Place of Writing:** The exact location where Luke-Acts was written remains unknown, with various cities proposed based on different dating theories and early traditions.
- "Where one fixes the place of Luke's writing depends on the date one fixes for the work. It is really unknown."

This session provides a foundational understanding of the critical questions surrounding the origin, purpose, and context of Luke-Acts, highlighting the complexities and ongoing scholarly discussions in these areas.

## 4. Study Guide: Peterson, Theology of Luke-Acts, Session 2, D. Bock – Sources for Luke, Purpose, Readers

### Study Guide: Theology of Luke-Acts, Session 2

**Key Topics:** Sources of Luke, Purpose of Luke-Acts, Readers of Luke-Acts, Destination of Luke-Acts, Date of Luke-Acts.

### Quiz

Answer the following questions in 2-3 sentences each.

1. What is the central challenge in studying the sources of Luke's Gospel, and why is Luke's preface (Luke 1:1-4) significant in this discussion?
2. Briefly explain the four-source theory for the Synoptic Gospels. What are the proposed sources, and which ones are believed to have been used by Luke?
3. What is "L" in the context of Lukan sources, and what percentage of Luke's Gospel is comprised of this unique material? Provide a couple of examples of the types of content found in L.
4. In what ways does Luke structure his Gospel to anticipate his sequel, the Book of Acts? Provide at least two specific examples mentioned in the source material.
5. According to the lecture, what are the four most probable purposes for Luke writing his Gospel and Acts, as suggested by Darrell Bock?
6. Who is Theophilus, the recipient of Luke-Acts? Based on the lecture, what was likely his background and why did Luke write to him?
7. According to the lecture, what was the primary tension or doubt that Theophilus and potentially other readers were experiencing? How does Luke address this in his writing?
8. What are the two main arguments presented in the lecture for dating Luke-Acts to the 80s or 90s AD? What are the counterarguments or weaknesses of these positions, according to the lecture?
9. What are the key reasons presented in the lecture for suggesting an earlier date (early to mid-60s AD) for the writing of Luke-Acts?
10. Why is the place of writing for Luke-Acts uncertain? What are some of the proposed locations, and on what basis are these suggestions made?

## Quiz Answer Key

1. The central challenge in studying Luke's sources is the "synoptic problem," the complex issue of the relationships between Matthew, Mark, and Luke due to significant agreements and disagreements in wording and order. Luke's preface is significant because his mention of "predecessors" suggests he relied on existing written and oral traditions, making a simple independent composition unlikely.
2. The four-source theory proposes that Mark was the first Gospel written and that Matthew and Luke both used Mark as a source. Additionally, it posits the existence of a sayings source called "Q" (used by Matthew and Luke), Matthew had a special source "M," and Luke had his own special source "L." Luke is believed to have used Mark, Q, and L.
3. "L" refers to Luke's special source material, unique to his Gospel. This material comprises approximately 42% of Luke's total content. Examples of L material include unique infancy narratives, fresh sayings and parables of Jesus (like the Good Samaritan and the Prodigal Son), and some unique miracles.
4. Luke structures his Gospel to anticipate Acts through the repetition of the prologue (Luke 1:1-4 and Acts 1:1), which looks back at the "first book." Furthermore, he employs similar themes in both volumes, such as Jesus and the apostles healing, their journeys (Jerusalem for Jesus, Rome for Paul), and facing opposition leading to death.
5. The four most probable purposes for Luke writing, according to Bock, are: confirmation of the word and the message of salvation; a theodicy of God's faithfulness to Israel; a sociological legitimation of full fellowship for Gentiles and a defense of the new community as not unfaithful to Rome; and an effort at conciliation with Judaism by showing that the offer of salvation in Jesus is the natural extension of Judaism.
6. Theophilus appears to have been a person of rank who had received some Christian instruction. The lecture suggests he was likely a Gentile who had associated himself with the early church, possibly a "God-fearer" before converting, and was experiencing doubts about belonging to the racially mixed and persecuted community.
7. The primary tension or doubt faced by Theophilus and other readers was whether Gentiles truly belonged in this new, largely Jewish movement, especially amidst Jewish rejection and potential Roman disapproval. Luke addresses this by

demonstrating how God's plan of salvation, as seen in Jesus' ministry, always included Gentiles and how the new community's broad inclusion was in line with Jesus' teachings and God's direction.

8. Two main arguments for a later date (80s-90s AD) include the idea that Luke used Mark (believed to be written in the 60s) and that the Lukan apocalyptic discourses presuppose the fall of Jerusalem in 70 AD. Counterarguments suggest that Mark could have circulated quickly, making it accessible earlier, and that Jesus could have predicted Jerusalem's destruction based on covenantal unfaithfulness without it being a past event for Luke.
9. Key reasons for an earlier date (early to mid-60s AD) include the portrayal of Rome as still assessing the Jesus movement, the absence of mention of the deaths of James (62 AD) or Paul (late 60s AD), the silence about Jerusalem's destruction even where it could have been editorially noted, and the significant uncertainty about Jewish-Gentile relations within the church, which aligns with the issues addressed in Paul's earlier letters.
10. The place of writing for Luke-Acts is uncertain because it depends on the debated date of composition, and there is no explicit statement within the text. Proposed locations include Caesarea (if written in the 60s), Rome (60s or 80s), Antioch, and Greece, with some later prologues suggesting Achaia, Greece, but Fitzmyer concludes the location is ultimately unknown.

## **Essay Format Questions**

1. Discuss the complexities of the synoptic problem and analyze the arguments for and against the four-source theory as it relates to Luke's Gospel.
2. Explore the multifaceted purposes behind Luke's writing of his Gospel and the Book of Acts. How do these purposes relate to his intended audience, particularly Theophilus?
3. Analyze the historical reliability of Luke as presented in the lecture. What evidence supports the view of Luke as a careful historian, and what are some of the challenges or debates surrounding his historical accuracy?
4. Compare and contrast the arguments for an early versus a late dating of Luke-Acts. What are the key pieces of evidence used to support each perspective, and which arguments do you find most compelling?



5. Examine the connection between Luke's Gospel and the Book of Acts. How does Luke structure these two volumes to present a unified narrative and theological understanding of God's plan of salvation?

## Glossary of Key Terms

- **Synoptic Problem:** The scholarly debate concerning the literary relationship between the first three Gospels: Matthew, Mark, and Luke, which share significant similarities in content, wording, and order.
- **Augustinian Hypothesis:** An early solution to the synoptic problem proposing that Matthew was written first, followed by Mark (who summarized Matthew), and then Luke (who used both).
- **Griesbach Hypothesis (Two-Gospel Hypothesis):** A view suggesting that Matthew was written first, Luke second, and Mark last, drawing on both Matthew and Luke.
- **Four-Source Theory:** The most widely accepted solution to the synoptic problem, proposing that Mark was the first Gospel, and Matthew and Luke independently used Mark and a hypothetical collection of Jesus' sayings called "Q" (from German *Quelle*, meaning "source"). Matthew also had "M" (special Matthew material), and Luke had "L" (special Luke material).
- **Q (Quelle):** A hypothetical written collection of Jesus' sayings believed to have been used by both Matthew and Luke in addition to Mark.
- **M (Matthew Special Source):** Material unique to the Gospel of Matthew, not found in Mark or Luke.
- **L (Luke Special Source):** Material unique to the Gospel of Luke, not found in Mark or Matthew.
- **Pericope:** A short, self-contained passage or story within a larger work, often used in biblical studies to discuss specific units of tradition.
- **Eschatological Discourse:** A section of Jesus' teaching that focuses on the end times, future events, and the coming of God's kingdom (found in Matthew 24-25, Mark 13, and Luke 21).
- **Theodicy:** A defense of God's goodness and justice in the face of evil and suffering in the world.

- **God-fearer:** Gentiles in the ancient world who were attracted to Judaism's monotheism and ethical teachings but did not fully convert (e.g., by undergoing circumcision).
- **Early Catholicism:** A term used (often by liberal scholars) to describe certain developments in early Christianity after the apostolic era, such as a more formalized church structure, emphasis on sacraments, and a delayed eschatological expectation.
- **Anti-Marcionite Prologues:** Ancient introductions to the Gospels (including Luke) that aimed to refute the teachings of Marcion, a second-century heretic.
- **Monarchian Prologue:** Another set of ancient prologues to the Gospels, emphasizing the unity (monarchy) of God.

## **5. FAQs on Peterson, Theology of Luke-Acts, Session 2, D. Bock – Sources for Luke, Purpose, Readers, Biblicalelearning.org (BeL)**

### **Frequently Asked Questions on the Theology of Luke-Acts (Based on Peterson's Summary of Bock)**

#### **1. What are the primary sources scholars believe Luke used when writing his Gospel and the Book of Acts?**

Most scholars adhere to some form of the four-source theory. This theory posits that Luke utilized the Gospel of Mark, a hypothetical collection of Jesus' sayings known as "Q" (from the German "Quella," meaning "source"), and his own unique source material referred to as "L." Some scholars also suggest that "Q" might not have been a fixed document but rather a circulating pool of traditions. Luke himself mentions predecessors in his preface, indicating he drew upon existing accounts.

#### **2. What are some key aspects that distinguish Luke's Gospel from the other synoptic gospels (Matthew and Mark)?**

Luke's Gospel contains a significant amount of unique material (approximately 42%). This includes a distinct infancy narrative, numerous parables (such as the Good Samaritan, the Prodigal Son, and the Rich Man and Lazarus), and several miracles not found in the other Gospels. Luke also demonstrates a particular ethical thrust in his unique material, emphasizing themes like service, humility, prayer, the preciousness of the lost, and care for the poor.

#### **3. How does Luke structure his Gospel in relation to his second volume, the Book of Acts?**

Luke intentionally structured his Gospel to anticipate the Book of Acts, creating a two-volume work that tells a connected story. This is evident in the repetition of the prologue (Luke 1:1-4 and Acts 1:1), the parallel themes between Jesus' ministry and the ministry of his followers (such as healing and facing opposition), the journey to Jerusalem in Luke and Paul's journey to Rome in Acts, and the account of the Ascension which links the two volumes. Luke aims to show parallels between the time of Jesus and the time of the early church.

#### **4. Was Luke primarily a historian or a theologian in his writing?**

Luke is best understood as both a historian and a theologian. While he meticulously gathered and arranged his source materials, demonstrating a general trustworthiness in his descriptions of settings, customs, and locales (as supported by historical research), his purpose was not solely to record events chronologically. He selected and emphasized material to convey theological truths about God's plan of salvation, Jesus' identity and mission, and the emergence of the church. His historical account serves a theological and pastoral purpose.

#### **5. Who was Theophilus, to whom Luke addressed both his Gospel and the Book of Acts, and what was Luke's purpose in writing to him (and others)?**

Theophilus was likely a Gentile of some rank who had associated himself with the early Christian community but harbored doubts about his place within it, especially given the Jewish rejection of Jesus and the persecution faced by believers. Luke's purpose in writing was multifaceted. He aimed to confirm the message of salvation Theophilus had received, to demonstrate God's faithfulness to Israel despite their rejection of Jesus, to legitimize the inclusion of Gentiles in God's new community, and to offer reassurance and exhortation to remain faithful and hopeful amidst opposition. Luke's writings were not solely for Theophilus but also for any Gentile feeling out of place or any Jewish Christian troubled by the differing responses to the Gospel.

#### **6. What are some of the proposed dates for the writing of Luke's Gospel and the Book of Acts, and what are the key arguments for these different timeframes?**

The dating of Luke-Acts is debated. While some critical scholars suggest a later date in the early to mid-second century, the most popular view among scholars is sometime after the fall of Jerusalem (70 AD), typically between 80 and 90 AD. Arguments for this later date often include Luke's presumed reliance on Mark (written in the 60s), the emergence of Paul as a hero figure, the portrayal of churches, and the Lukan apocalyptic discourses seeming to presuppose the fall of Jerusalem. However, a significant case is also made for an earlier date in the early to mid-60s AD, prior to the deaths of James and Paul and the destruction of Jerusalem. Proponents of this earlier date point to the lack of explicit mention of these events, the uncertainty surrounding Jewish-Gentile relations reflected in Acts (paralleling the Pauline letters), and the need for reassurance amidst Jewish pressure.

**7. What is the significance of Luke's unique parables and miracles?**

Luke's unique parables and miracles highlight several key themes in his Gospel. The parables often emphasize ethical living, including themes of service (Good Samaritan), humility (Pharisee and Publican), persistence in prayer (Nagging Friend, Nagging Widow), the joy of God over the lost (Lost Coin, Lost Son), and the responsible use of resources (Rich Fool, Crafty Steward). The unique miracles often involve individuals on the margins of society (like the woman with a disabling spirit and the healed lepers, one of whom was a Samaritan), demonstrating Jesus' compassion and the inclusive nature of his ministry.

**8. How does Luke portray the relationship between the new Christian community and Judaism?**

Luke portrays the emergence of the Christian community not as a conscious break from Judaism but as a development within God's ongoing plan of salvation. He emphasizes that the offer of salvation in Jesus Christ is a natural extension of God's promises to Israel. However, Luke also carefully details the rejection of Jesus by many within Israel, which ultimately led to the separation. For Luke, the inclusion of Gentiles in the new community was not an afterthought but was in accordance with Jesus' own preaching and God's direction, demonstrating the broad extension of God's blessing.