

Dr. Robert Peterson, Theology of Luke-Acts, Session 5, D. Bock—Theology: Christology, Salvation, New Community 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 5, D. Bock – Theology: Christology, Salvation, New Community, Biblicalelearning.org, BeL

This text is a transcript of a lecture by Dr. Robert A. Peterson on the theology of Luke-Acts, specifically focusing on Christology, salvation, and the formation of the new community. Peterson examines Luke's writings to explore the nature of Christ's kingdom, the promise of spiritual deliverance and the Holy Spirit, and the significance of Jesus' resurrection and ascension. The lecture also covers Luke's perspective on salvation, the blessings offered to believers, and the diverse makeup of the early Christian community, highlighting the inclusion of marginalized groups. Finally, Peterson addresses the tension between the new community and Jewish law, emphasizing Luke's view of its fulfillment and selective application.

2. 24 - minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of Dr. Peterson, Theology of Luke-Acts, Session 5 – 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_Session05.mp3**

3. Briefing Document: Peterson, Theology of Luke-Acts, Session 5, D. Bock – Theology: Christology, Salvation, New Community

Briefing Document: Theology of Luke-Acts - Christology and Salvation, The New Community (Peterson on Bock)

Executive Summary:

This briefing document summarizes the key themes and important ideas presented by Dr. Robert A. Peterson regarding Darrell Bock's theological insights on Luke-Acts, specifically focusing on Christology, salvation, and the emergence of the new community. Peterson highlights Bock's view that Luke portrays Jesus as the Davidic king bringing both earthly and spiritual deliverance, inaugurated through his ministry, death, resurrection, and ascension, and empowered by the Holy Spirit. This salvation results in the formation of a new community characterized by specific responses (repentance, turning, faith), diverse membership (including marginalized groups), and a complex relationship with the Jewish Law.

Main Themes and Important Ideas:

1. The Kingdom of God:

- **Earthly and Spiritual Deliverance:** Bock, as presented by Peterson, emphasizes that the kingdom is both earthly, with Jesus ruling as a Davidite bringing total deliverance (Luke 1:32-33, 46-55, 69-75), and spiritual, offering deliverance from darkness and leading to peace (Luke 1:78-79), forgiveness of sins (Luke 24:47), and the promise of the Spirit (Luke 3:15-18, Acts 1:8).
- **Future Hope:** The eschatological hope connected to Old Testament roots remains alive despite the present inauguration of the kingdom (Acts 1:11, 3:18-21). This reflects a "little bit of Dr. Bock's dispensationalism."
- **Subjects of the Kingdom:** Peterson outlines different categories of subjects: willing, responsive, potential, and unwilling, resistant subjects who will ultimately face Jesus' rule (Luke 19:27, 21:24-27, Acts 3:20-26, 10:42, 17:30-31).
- **Judgment:** Even though it's a parable, Luke 19:27 ("But as for these enemies of mine, who do not want me to reign over them, bring them here and slaughter them before me") illustrates Jesus' attitude toward his enemies as one of judgment and wrath.

2. The Holy Spirit:

- **Central to Redemption:** The Spirit moves from being promised (Luke 3:15-18) to being a testifier and enabler for Jesus (Luke 3:21, 4:16-18) and finally falling on all believers at Pentecost, marking the new era (Acts 2:1-13, 14-21).
- **Gift of the Exalted Son:** The Spirit is the gift from the Father through the resurrected and ascended Jesus, representing power from on high (Luke 24:49, Acts 2:30-36, 10:44-47, 11:15-16, 15:8).
- **Evidence of Jesus' Presence:** The Spirit's presence confirms Jesus' resurrection and his direction of the new community from God's right hand. This reassures Theophilus of Jesus' continued presence despite his physical absence.

3. Resurrection and Ascension:

- **Crucial for the Spirit and Rule:** The resurrection and ascension are central to the provision of the Spirit and Jesus' ability to rule and fulfill his promises (Acts 2:23-24, 30-36, 3:14-15, 21, 4:10-12, 5:30).
- **Authority and Blessing:** A risen Savior can forgive sins and bestow blessings (Acts 2:21, 4:12, 10:43). His authority is actively demonstrated through those who work in his name (Acts 2:38, 19:5).
- **Ascension as Lordship:** Luke uniquely emphasizes and develops the ascension, demonstrating Jesus' lordship.

4. Salvation in Jesus' Teaching and Work:

- **Components of Salvation:** Salvation involves sharing in hope, experiencing the Kingdom, receiving forgiveness, and being enabled by the Spirit.
- **Jesus as Teacher and Wonder-Worker:** Jesus reveals himself as the bringer of salvation through his teaching (centered on the offer of the Kingdom) and miracles (demonstrating his power and the arrival of the new era).
- **Ethical Living and Community:** Salvation calls for ethical honor, love, humility, service, and righteousness within the new community, reflecting God's plan (Luke 6:20-49, various parables, Acts 10, 11, 15).
- **Accountability and Commitment:** The community is accountable to God, and commitment is prominent in Jesus' teaching (Luke 9:21-26, 9:57-62, 14:25-35, 18:18-30).

5. The Cross:

- **Less Prominent but Theologically Important:** While Luke features the exaltation of Jesus more, the cross is still theologically significant and not merely an ethical example.
- **Inauguration of the New Covenant:** Jesus' death inaugurates the new covenant with God (Luke 22:20: "this cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood"), fulfilling prophecies like Jeremiah 31:31-34.
- **Purchase of the Church:** Jesus' blood purchases the church (Acts 20:28: "Shepherds the church of God, which he obtained with his own blood"). This highlights redemption through his violent death.
- **Substitution and Promise of Life:** The substitution of Jesus for Barabbas (Luke 23:13-25) and the offer of paradise to the thief (Luke 23:36-49) reinforce the view of Jesus' death as a substitutionary act offering eternal life.

6. The New Community (The Church):

- **Emerging Entity:** The new community is not fully structured in the gospel but develops in Acts, comprised of "disciples."
- **Diverse Membership:** Initially mostly Jewish, the community's benefits extend to Samaritans and non-Jews (Luke 3:4-6, 7:1-10, 20:15-16, 24:47). Luke emphasizes the inclusion of social outcasts, the materially and spiritually poor, sinners, tax collectors, and responsive women. "In short, the makeup of this new community knows no boundaries."
- **Response to the Message:** Response is characterized by three key terms:
- **Repentance (Metanoia):** A change of mind and reorientation towards God and his plan, turning from sin (Luke 11:32, 24:43-47, 3:10-14, 5:31-32, 15:17-21, 24:47, 18:9-14, 19:1-10, Acts 5:31, 11:18, etc.). Quote: "repentance for the forgiveness of sins...means that one seeks God's mercy through Jesus as one approaches God on his terms, recognizing the need to be forgiven and that only God can provide forgiveness."
- **Turning (Epistrepho):** A change of fundamental direction, a reversal of estrangement (Acts 3:19, 9:35, 11:21, etc.).
- **Faith (Pistis):** Recognition and persuasion that God offers forgiveness and blessings through Jesus, expressed through action (Luke 5:20, 7:9, 7:47-50, 17:19,

18:42, Acts 3:16, 14:9, etc.). Quote: "faith is the recognition and persuasion that God has something to offer through Jesus, namely forgiveness and the blessings of promise."

- **Blessings of the New Community:** Forgiveness, release, life, peace, and the Kingdom of God/Spirit.
- **Social Implications:** While not a political movement challenging Rome directly, the transformation within the new community has social implications, urging care for those within and outside the community (Acts 4:32-38, Luke 10:25-37).

7. Opponents of Salvation:

- **Spiritual Forces:** Evil spiritual forces resist God's plan but are ultimately powerless.
- **Human Opposition:** The primary human opponents are the religious leadership of Judaism (scribes, Pharisees, Sadducees) due to their rejection of Jesus' authority and challenge to their traditions (Luke 5:24, 6:1-11, 7:29-30, etc.). The crowd's reaction is mixed and ultimately leads to their demand for Barabbas.
- **Accountability of Israel:** The nation of Israel is held accountable for rejecting Jesus, missing their "day of visitation" (Luke 19:44). However, Israel is not entirely outside of God's plan, though a period of desolation exists until they acknowledge the Messiah (Luke 13:14, Acts 3:14-21).
- **No Anti-Semitism:** Luke's portrayal of opposition is not anti-Semitic but reflects the rejection of the message of hope. The new community consistently offers the gospel to Israel.

8. The Law:

- **Complex Relationship:** The new community's relationship to the Jewish Law is a debated topic. Peterson highlights the view that:
- As a legal and sacrificial code and sociological distinctive, the law passes away (Luke 6:1-11, Acts 10, 11, 15).
- As a promise of the Kingdom, the law is fulfilled (Luke 16:16-17, 24:43-47).
- Its ethical and moral commands are reaffirmed (Luke 6:27-49, 10:25-47, 16:19-31, 18:18-30).

- **Source of Tension:** The law and its associated traditions (especially Sabbath regulations and food laws) are a significant source of tension (Luke 6:1-11, Acts 10, 11, 15).
- **Optional Observance:** Luke portrays the observance of certain laws (like vows) as optional for Jewish Christians and not to be forced upon Gentiles (Acts 15:22-29, 21:17-26). God's acceptance of Gentiles without adherence to all aspects of the law (pouring out of the Spirit) confirms this new way (Acts 11:15-18, 10:1-33).
- **Unity as the Goal:** Luke's resolution regarding the law aims for the unity of the racially mixed new community, acknowledging the tensions arising from their Jewish roots.

Conclusion:

Peterson's exposition of Bock's theology of Luke-Acts emphasizes the comprehensive nature of salvation offered through Jesus Christ – a salvation that encompasses both earthly and spiritual realities, is empowered by the Holy Spirit, and culminates in the formation of a diverse new community. This community is defined by its response of repentance, turning, and faith, and navigates a complex relationship with its Jewish heritage and the Mosaic Law while striving for unity and living out the ethical implications of God's love.

4. Study Guide: Peterson, Theology of Luke-Acts, Session 5, D. Bock – Theology: Christology, Salvation, New Community

Study Guide: Peterson on Luke-Acts Session 5

Quiz

Answer the following questions in 2-3 sentences each.

1. According to Peterson, what are the two main aspects of deliverance that Jesus brings?
2. What is the significance of the Holy Spirit's arrival at Pentecost in Luke-Acts?
3. How does Luke portray Jesus' death, and what two key events does Peterson highlight in this regard?
4. What are some of the blessings offered to the new community in Luke's writings?
5. According to Peterson, who are some of the key groups that oppose Jesus and the new community in Luke-Acts?
6. What are the three terms Luke uses to describe the proper response to the gospel message?
7. How does Peterson explain Luke's portrayal of the poor and women in his gospel?
8. What does the ascension of Jesus signify in Luke's narrative?
9. According to Peterson, what are the three perspectives through which Luke views the law?
10. How does Luke address the tension between Jewish and Gentile believers regarding the law in the early church?

Quiz Answer Key

1. Jesus brings both earthly and spiritual deliverance. The earthly aspect involves his future Davidic rule and total deliverance of the earth, while the spiritual aspect includes shining on those in darkness and leading them to peace, as well as the promise of the Spirit and forgiveness of sins.
2. The arrival of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost signifies the beginning of the new era promised in the Old Testament. Luke explains this event as the sign that this new age has dawned, empowering believers and indicating Jesus' exaltation.

3. Luke portrays Jesus' death not merely as an example or an outcome of conflict, but as the inauguration of the new covenant (Luke 22:20) and the purchase of the church with his blood (Acts 20:28). These two explicit references highlight the redemptive nature of his death.
4. The blessings of the new community in Luke include forgiveness or release, life, and peace. Additionally, the kingdom of God and the gift of the Spirit are central blessings offered through Jesus.
5. The key opponents in Luke-Acts include the religious leadership of Judaism – the scribes, Pharisees, and Sadducees – who largely rejected Jesus' claims and challenged his authority. While the crowd initially shows interest, their response is often fickle, and they ultimately become responsible for calling for Jesus' crucifixion.
6. Luke uses the terms "repent" (metanoia), "turn" (epistrepho), and "faith" (pistis) to describe the proper response to the gospel message. Repentance involves a change of mind and orientation towards God, turning signifies a fundamental change in direction, and faith is the recognition and embrace of God's offer through Jesus.
7. Luke highlights the inclusion of the poor and women, who were often on the fringes of first-century society, as primary beneficiaries of Jesus' message. This emphasis shows that the gospel is available to all, especially those who are humble and receptive to God's grace.
8. The ascension of Jesus, which Luke uniquely emphasizes, signifies his exaltation and his ability to rule and fulfill his promises. It connects the gospel and Acts, showing that the resurrected and ascended Lord is the one who sends the Holy Spirit and continues his work through his followers.
9. Luke views the law in three ways: as a legal and sacrificial code and a sociological distinctive that passes away; as a promise of the kingdom that is fulfilled in Christ; and in its ethical thrust and moral commands, which are reaffirmed.
10. Luke addresses the tension by showing that while Jewish Christians might continue to observe some customs, Gentiles are not to be forced to adhere to them (like circumcision). The outpouring of the Spirit on uncircumcised Gentiles is presented as evidence of God's acceptance of this new, diverse community and its divergence from certain aspects of the law.

Essay Format Questions

1. Discuss how Luke presents the interconnectedness of Christology and salvation, using specific examples from the text.
2. Analyze Luke's portrayal of the Holy Spirit and its role in the inauguration and growth of the new community.
3. Compare and contrast Luke's presentation of Jesus' teaching on the kingdom of God with his emphasis on ethical living and community transformation.
4. Examine Luke's nuanced perspective on the law in light of the inclusion of Gentiles into the new community, considering the tensions and resolutions presented.
5. Evaluate the significance of the opponents to Jesus and the early church in Luke-Acts, and discuss how their resistance contributes to Luke's theological message.

Glossary of Key Terms

- **Christology:** The branch of theology concerned with the person and nature of Jesus Christ.
- **Salvation:** Deliverance from sin and its consequences, often understood as involving reconciliation with God and the experience of eternal life.
- **Kingdom of God:** The reign and rule of God, which is both present in Jesus' ministry and has a future, eschatological dimension.
- **Eschatological:** Relating to the end times or the final destiny of humanity and the world.
- **Dispensationalism:** A theological system that divides biblical history into distinct periods or dispensations in which God administers his plan differently.
- **Spirit (Holy Spirit):** The third person of the Trinity, understood as the power and presence of God, promised by Jesus and poured out on believers.
- **Resurrection:** The act of rising from the dead, referring specifically to Jesus' rising from the tomb after his crucifixion.
- **Ascension:** The event forty days after Jesus' resurrection when he was taken up into heaven in the presence of his apostles.

- **New Covenant:** The agreement established by God through Jesus Christ, superseding the Old Covenant and based on grace and forgiveness through faith.
- **Soteriological:** Relating to the doctrine of salvation.
- **Justification:** The act by which God declares a sinner righteous through faith in Jesus Christ.
- **Repentance (Metanoia):** A change of mind or heart, involving a turning away from sin and towards God.
- **Faith (Pistis):** Trust and belief in God and in Jesus Christ, often expressed through action.
- **New Community (the Church):** The body of believers in Jesus Christ, both Jewish and Gentile, who are united by the Holy Spirit.
- **Gentiles:** Non-Jewish people.
- **Law (in Lukan context):** Primarily refers to the Mosaic Law, the commandments and regulations given to Israel in the Old Testament.
- **Anti-Semitism:** Hostility to, prejudice against, or discrimination against Jews.

5. FAQs on Peterson, Theology of Luke-Acts, Session 5, D. Bock – Theology: Christology, Salvation, New Community, Biblicalelearning.org (BeL)

Frequently Asked Questions on Christology, Salvation, and the New Community in Luke-Acts

1. What is the nature of the Kingdom of God according to Luke's writings?

Luke presents the Kingdom of God as both an earthly and a spiritual reality. Earthly, in that Jesus will return as a Davidic king to rule and bring total deliverance to the earth, fulfilling Old Testament promises to Israel. This future hope is highlighted in passages like Luke 1:32-33 and Acts 1:11, 3:18-21. Spiritually, the Kingdom is inaugurated in the present through Jesus, offering spiritual deliverance, forgiveness of sins (Luke 24:47), and the promise of the Holy Spirit (Luke 3:15-18, Acts 1:8). Jesus' miracles demonstrate his power to bring these promises to fruition, benefiting his disciples and potentially anyone who enters the Kingdom (Luke 13:23-30, 14:16-24). However, Luke also acknowledges that there will be unwilling subjects who will face Jesus' ultimate rule and judgment (Luke 19:27, Acts 17:30-31).

2. What role does the Holy Spirit play in Luke's theology of redemption?

The Holy Spirit is central to Luke's understanding of redemption. Initially promised (Luke 3:15-18), the Spirit becomes a testifier and enabler for Jesus (Luke 3:21, 4:16-18). The full promise is realized at Pentecost when the Spirit falls on all believers (Acts 2:1-13), marking the arrival of the new era (Acts 2:14-21). The Spirit is presented as a gift from the Father through the exalted Son, representing power and enablement from on high (Luke 24:49, Acts 2:30-36). The Spirit's presence is evidence of Jesus' resurrection, ascension, and ongoing direction of the new community from God's right hand. Luke emphasizes that even though Jesus is no longer physically present, he is present through the gift and power of the Holy Spirit.

3. How does Luke present the resurrection and ascension of Jesus, and why are they significant for salvation?

Luke uniquely emphasizes and develops the ascension of Jesus, linking his Gospel and Acts (Luke 24 and Acts 1). These events are explained in several passages (Acts 2:23-24, 30-36, 3:14-15, 21, 4:10-12, 5:30). The resurrection demonstrates Jesus' victory over death, while the ascension signifies his exaltation to Lordship and his ability to rule and

fulfill his promises. As a raised and ascended Savior, Jesus possesses the authority to forgive sins and bestow blessings (Acts 2:21, 4:12, 10:43). His active authority is further demonstrated through those who work miracles in his name (Acts 2:38, 19:5). Therefore, the resurrection and ascension are crucial for salvation as they establish Jesus' power and authority to deliver on his promises, including the gift of the Holy Spirit.

4. According to Luke, what does salvation entail through Jesus' teaching and work?

Salvation in Luke's writings is multifaceted, involving several key aspects. It includes sharing in the hope of the coming Kingdom, experiencing the inaugurated blessings of that Kingdom, receiving forgiveness of sins (Luke 24:47), and being empowered by the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:8). Jesus, through his teaching and miracles, reveals himself as the bringer of this salvation. His teaching centers on the offer of the Kingdom, portrayed as release and healing reminiscent of Jubilee (Luke 4:16-21). It also includes a call to ethical living rooted in experiencing God's blessings (Luke 6:20-49). Ultimately, salvation requires commitment and faithful living within the context of the Kingdom's future consummation (Luke 9:21-26, 14:25-35).

5. How does Luke view the significance of Jesus' death (the cross) in relation to salvation?

While Luke features the exaltation of Jesus more prominently than the cross, the cross is still theologically significant in his writings. Luke presents Jesus as the righteous sufferer (Luke 22-23), whose death inaugurates the new covenant with God (Luke 22:20), fulfilling Old Testament prophecies like Jeremiah 31:31-34. Furthermore, Luke states that Jesus' blood purchases the church (Acts 20:28). The substitution of Jesus for Barabbas and the offer of paradise to the thief on the cross illustrate Jesus' substitutionary work for sinners and his power to offer life even in death (Luke 23:13-25, 39-43). Thus, in Luke's theology, the cross is not merely an example but a redemptive act that establishes the new covenant and secures the church.

6. Who constitutes the "new community" in Luke-Acts, and what are some of its defining characteristics?

The new community, which becomes the church in Acts, initially comprises disciples, mostly Jewish but with hints of inclusion for Samaritans and Gentiles in the Gospel (Luke 3:4-6, 7:1-10, 24:47). Luke emphasizes the reception of the gospel by those on the fringes of society, including the materially and spiritually poor, sinners, tax collectors, and women (Luke 1:50-53, 6:20-23, 5:27-32, 19:1-10, 8:1-3). The new community is characterized by a unity that transcends social boundaries (Acts 10, 11, 15), a commitment to ethical living rooted in love, humility, service, and righteousness (Luke

10:25-37, etc.), and accountability to God. The central elements of response to the gospel within this community are repentance (a reorientation of perspective and turning from sin to God, Luke 24:47), turning (a fundamental change of direction, primarily in Acts), and faith (recognition and embrace of God's offer through Jesus, Acts 2:21).

7. How does Luke portray the response to Jesus and the early church, particularly concerning the Jewish leadership and the nation of Israel?

Luke depicts a mixed response to Jesus and the early church. While some individuals responded with repentance and faith, the religious leadership of Judaism (scribes, Pharisees, Sadducees) generally opposed Jesus from the moment he claimed authority and challenged their traditions (Luke 5:24, 6:1-11). This opposition intensified and ultimately led to their role in his demise (Luke 22:3-6, 23:3-5). The crowd's reaction was also fickle, initially showing interest but eventually siding with the leadership in demanding Jesus' crucifixion (Luke 23:18-25). Luke portrays the nation of Israel as accountable for rejecting Jesus, missing their "day of visitation" (Luke 19:44). However, Luke avoids outright anti-Semitism, emphasizing that the new community is "pro-promise" and consistently offers the gospel to Israel, even facing persecution for doing so. He suggests that Israel's rejection is not the final word, hinting at a future acknowledgment of the Messiah (Acts 3:19-21).

8. What is Luke's perspective on the relationship between the new community and the Jewish Law?

Luke presents a complex view of the relationship between the new community and the Jewish Law. He indicates that as a legal and sacrificial code, and as a strict sociological distinctive, the Law is passing away (Luke 6:1-11, Acts 10, 11, 15), evidenced by changes in food regulations, circumcision, and Sabbath practice. However, as a promise of the hope of the kingdom, the Law is fulfilled in Jesus (Luke 16:16-17, 24:43-47). Furthermore, its ethical core, emphasizing love for God and neighbor, is reaffirmed (Luke 6:27-49, 10:25-27). Luke highlights tensions within the early church regarding the Law, particularly concerning Gentile inclusion. His resolution suggests that Jewish believers are free to observe their customs, but these should not be imposed on Gentile believers (Acts 15:22-29). Ultimately, the Law is not considered binding in the new era, and God's acceptance of the Gentile believers through the outpouring of the Spirit demonstrates a shift in focus (Acts 11:15-18).