

Dr. Robert Peterson, Theology of Luke-Acts, Session 6, D. Bock—Theology: The 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 6, D. Bock – Theology: The New Community, Biblicalelearning.org, BeL

This text is a lecture by Dr. Robert A. Peterson summarizing Darrell Bock's perspective on the theology of Luke-Acts, specifically focusing on the "new community" or church. Peterson outlines Bock's points regarding opposition faced by believers, the necessity of steadfastness, the importance of faith and dependence, and the call for total commitment to God. The lecture further explores the community's mission to the lost, the emphasis on love for God and neighbor, the role of prayer, and the themes of persistence, suffering, watchfulness, and patience in the life of a disciple. Finally, Peterson addresses Luke's eschatology, the significance of joy and praise, and potential hindrances to discipleship, concluding with a summary of Luke's pastoral, theological, and historical aims in presenting Jesus as the trustworthy Messiah.

2. 13 - minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of Dr. Peterson, Theology of Luke-Acts, Session 6 – 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_Session06.mp3**

3. Briefing Document: Peterson, Theology of Luke-Acts, Session 6, D. Bock – Theology: The New Community

Briefing Document: Darrell Bock's Theology of the New Community in Luke-Acts

Overview:

This briefing document summarizes the key themes and important ideas presented by Dr. Robert A. Peterson in his lecture on Darrell Bock's understanding of "The New Community" (the church) as portrayed in the Gospel of Luke. Peterson highlights Bock's perspective on the formation, characteristics, challenges, and eschatological understanding of this new community.

Main Themes and Important Ideas:

1. Opposition and Division:

- **Inevitable Opposition:** Bock emphasizes that following Jesus inevitably leads to opposition. Peterson quotes Luke 2:34-35, where Simeon says Jesus is "appointed for the fall and rising of many in Israel...and for a sign that is opposed."
- **Divisionary Nature of Christ:** The birth narratives themselves foreshadow the division Christ will bring. This theme is reiterated throughout Luke's Gospel in Jesus' predictions of suffering and rejection (e.g., Luke 9:22).
- **Boldness Through the Spirit:** While disciples initially shrink back from bold witness, the Holy Spirit in Acts empowers them to overcome this fear.

2. Formation and Distinctiveness of the New Community:

- **Hope of Israel Forced to Become Distinct:** The new community initially presented itself as the hope of Israel but was "forced to become distinct."
- **Steward of the Word and True People of God:** In its distinctiveness, the church became a "steward of the Word of God" (Acts 6:7) and the repository of God's promises to the patriarchs and David (Acts 13:21-39).
- **Newness of the Spirit:** The Holy Spirit is the source of the new community's distinct character and the enablement by which Jesus expresses his presence despite his physical absence (Acts 2:1-40, 11:15). The giving of the Spirit to Gentiles, like Cornelius, confirmed their inclusion in this new community.

- **Distinct Character:** The new community is to have a character unlike the prevailing piety of the leadership or cultural standards (referencing Luke 6:27-36, 12:1, 14:1-14, 22:24-27).

3. Foundational Principles of the New Community:

- **Faith and Dependence:** Trust in God is fundamental, not only for initial salvation but for sustaining the Christian life (Luke 5:31-32, 15:17-21, 12:22-32). "Faith and repentance are two sides of the same coin." Ongoing faith involves trusting in God's provision (Luke 12:31).
- **Total Commitment:** Disciples are to be completely focused on their walk with God, with no higher priorities (Luke 9:23, 57-62, 14:25-35). Jesus' seemingly harsh statements about hating family and renouncing possessions are interpreted as requiring a radical, "oriental contrast" where devotion to God takes absolute precedence.
- **Commitment to the Lost:** The new community has a clear mission to the lost, emphasized in Luke 24:47: "that repentance and forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem." This mission is further highlighted in Luke 5:31-32 and 19:10 ("The son of man has come to seek and to save that which is lost"). The parables in Luke 15 (lost sheep, coin, son) underscore the importance of each lost individual to God and the outward focus of the church.
- **Love for God and Neighbor:** Devotion to God is expressed through prayer (Luke 11:1-13) and prioritizing Jesus' teaching (Mary at Jesus' feet, Luke 10:38-42). Love for neighbor is exemplified in the parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37), demonstrating that compassion transcends social boundaries.
- **Prayer:** Prayer is both taught and exemplified by Jesus (Luke 11:1-13, 18:1-8, 9-14, 22:40-46). It is characterized by humble reliance on God's will and provision.
- **Persistence and Suffering:** Steadfastness is a mark of a disciple (Luke 8:13-15, 9:23, 18:8, 21:19). The early church in Acts demonstrates this persistence in the face of adversity (Acts 4:23-31).

4. Eschatological Perspective:

- **Watchfulness, Patience, Boldness:** Disciples are to fear God, not people (Luke 12:1-12), and live in expectation of the Lord's return (Luke 12:35-48, 19:11-27, 18:8).

- **Present and Future Reality of Jesus:** Jesus represents both the present and the future, with unrealized promises to be fulfilled (Luke 17:22-37, 21:5-38).
- **Judgment of Jerusalem as a Precursor:** The destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70 is seen as a guarantee and picture of the final judgment.
- **Uncertainty and Imminence of Return:** Luke's Gospel suggests uncertainty about the timing of Jesus' return, yet also the possibility of its coming at any moment. Peterson notes Bock's wisdom in recognizing "imminent sayings," "interval sayings," and "ignorance sayings" regarding the timing.
- **Personal Eschatology (Intermediate State):** Luke uniquely notes the reality of personal eschatology, a transition into paradise upon death (Luke 23:42-43 - the repentant thief; Acts 7:55-56 - Stephen's vision). Peterson affirms this intermediate state against those who deny it.

5. Joy and Praise:

- **Resounding Theme:** Notes of joy are prevalent throughout Luke's Gospel, related to God's plan (Luke 1:14), the birth of Jesus (Luke 2:10), the reception of the word (Luke 8:13), the success of the mission (Luke 10:17), and Jesus' resurrection and ascension (Luke 24:41).
- **Hope as Fuel:** The hope of the gospel fosters a fundamental joy and praise to God.

6. Hindrances to Discipleship:

- **Role of Money:** Money is a gift but also a danger, with numerous warnings and parables addressing its potential to hinder discipleship (Luke 8:14, 12:13-21, 16:1-15, 19-31, 18:18-25). Positive examples (Zacchaeus, the women supporting Jesus, the widow's offering) suggest the issue is not wealth itself but how it is used and one's fundamental orientation towards it.
- **Fearing People and Cares of Life:** Other hindrances include fearing people (Luke 12:1-12) and being consumed by the worries of life (Luke 8:14). The key is a fundamental recognition that all of life belongs to God.

Conclusion (Based on Bock's Introduction):

Bock, as presented by Peterson, views Luke's Gospel as pastoral, theological, and historical, emphasizing God's overarching plan that removes old barriers and offers new hope. The message of Jesus is transformative, open to both Jew and Gentile. Jesus, the

Messiah Lord, holds ultimate authority and will return, holding all accountable. While discipleship is challenging, it offers rich blessings. Luke's narrative serves to reassure believers like Theophilus of their salvation and place within this new community.

Next Steps:

The next lecture will explore Joel Green's sociological perspective on the Gospel of Luke.

4. Study Guide: Peterson, Theology of Luke-Acts, Session 6, D. Bock – Theology: The New Community

Study Guide: Darrell Bock's Theology of the New Community in Luke-Acts

Key Concepts

- **The New Community (the Church):** Luke's portrayal of the emerging community of Jesus' followers, including both Jewish and Gentile believers.
- **Pressure Against God's Plan:** The opposition and division that inevitably accompany commitment to Jesus.
- **Steadfastness and Faithfulness:** Essential characteristics of a disciple in the face of internal and external pressures.
- **Distinctiveness of the New Community:** Features that set the church apart, including the role of the Holy Spirit and a different standard of piety.
- **Faith and Dependence:** Foundational trust in God that both initiates and sustains the Christian life.
- **Total Commitment:** The undivided devotion required of disciples, prioritizing God above all else, even family and personal possessions.
- **Commitment to the Lost:** The mission of the new community to proclaim repentance and forgiveness to all nations.
- **Love for God and Neighbor:** Expressions of devotion through prayer and acts of compassion that transcend social barriers.
- **Prayer:** A vital practice of dependence and seeking God's will.
- **Persistence and Suffering:** The endurance and patient expectation required of disciples in a world that opposes them.
- **Watchfulness, Patience, Boldness:** Attitudes of readiness for Christ's return, coupled with fearless testimony.
- **Eschatology in Luke:** Luke's perspective on the present and future, including the judgment of Jerusalem as a precursor to the final judgment and the reality of personal eschatology.
- **Joy and Praise:** Recurring themes in Luke's Gospel related to God's plan, the word, mission, resurrection, and ascension.

- **Hindrances to Discipleship:** Obstacles such as the misuse of money, fear of people, and worldly anxieties that can impede one's commitment to Christ.

Quiz

Answer the following questions in 2-3 sentences each.

1. According to Peterson, what is inevitable with every decision for Jesus? Provide one example from Luke's Gospel that illustrates this.
2. Why did Luke emphasize steadfastness and faithfulness in his Gospel for readers like Theophilus? What did Theophilus need to be reassured about regarding the new community?
3. What is the significance of the Holy Spirit in the distinctiveness of the new community, according to the lecture? Provide one example from Acts mentioned in the excerpt.
4. Explain the relationship between faith and repentance as described in the lecture. Provide a verse from Luke's Gospel that illustrates initial saving faith.
5. How does Jesus' teaching on "hating" one's family relate to the concept of total commitment for a disciple? What is the intended meaning of this radical language?
6. What is the central mission of the new community as outlined in Luke 24:47? Where is this message to begin?
7. Describe the significance of the parable of the Good Samaritan in relation to the concept of loving one's neighbor. What does this parable emphasize about the boundaries of neighborly love?
8. According to the lecture, what is the purpose of prayer for the disciples? How did Jesus exemplify this in the Garden of Gethsemane?
9. How does Luke address the timing of Jesus' return in his Gospel? What are the three types of sayings discussed in relation to this topic?
10. What does Luke uniquely note about personal eschatology? Provide one example from Luke-Acts that supports this understanding.

Quiz Answer Key

1. Opposition is inevitable with every decision for Jesus. For example, Simeon's prophecy in Luke 2:34-35 states that the child Jesus is appointed for the fall and

rising of many in Israel and for a sign that is opposed, indicating division from the very beginning.

2. Luke emphasized steadfastness and faithfulness to reassure Theophilus and other readers facing conflict within and about the community that they belonged in this new movement and that God's plan and blessing were at work. He needed assurance of his place as a Gentile believer in relation to Jewish promises and Jewish Christians.
3. The newness of the Spirit is responsible for the distinctiveness of the new community and is the source of enablement by which Jesus expresses his presence despite his physical absence. In Acts 11:15, Peter recounts how the Holy Spirit fell on the Gentiles in Cornelius's house just as it did on the Jewish believers at the beginning, demonstrating God's inclusion of Gentiles.
4. Faith and repentance are described as two sides of the same coin, where repentance involves turning from sin and turning to Christ offered in the gospel. Luke 5:31-32 illustrates initial saving faith, where Jesus states he came to call sinners to repentance, implying a turning in faith towards him.
5. Jesus' teaching on "hating" one's family is not a literal command for animosity but rather an emphasis on the total commitment required of a disciple, where love and devotion to Jesus must take absolute priority, making even love for family appear as hatred by comparison. This highlights the radical nature of discipleship.
6. The central mission of the new community, as outlined in Luke 24:47, is that repentance and forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in Jesus' name to all nations. This proclamation is to begin from Jerusalem, marking the initial geographical scope of the mission.
7. The parable of the Good Samaritan illustrates that loving one's neighbor is an expression of devotion to God and emphasizes that such care and compassion should know no boundaries of race, gender, or class. The Samaritan, despite being despised, showed mercy and proved to be a neighbor to the one in need, contrasting with the indifference of the priest and Levite.
8. The purpose of prayer for the disciples is to express dependence on God, humbly rely on his mercy and will, and seek strength to avoid temptation. Jesus exemplified this in the Garden of Gethsemane in Luke 22:40-42 by praying for the cup to be removed but ultimately submitting to the Father's will.

9. Luke's Gospel presents uncertainty about the precise timing of Jesus' return while also suggesting its potential imminence. The three types of sayings discussed are imminent sayings (be ready), interval sayings (certain things must happen first), and ignorance sayings (the day and hour are unknown).
10. Luke uniquely notes the reality of personal eschatology, distinguishing it from corporate eschatology, highlighting the awareness of being in Jesus' presence upon death. An example is Jesus' promise to the dying repentant thief in Luke 23:43: "Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in paradise," indicating an immediate transition after death.

Essay Format Questions

1. Discuss the significance of opposition and division in Luke's Gospel as indicators of God's plan unfolding through the new community. How does this theme encourage believers facing similar pressures?
2. Analyze the distinct characteristics of the new community as presented in Luke-Acts, focusing on the role of the Holy Spirit and the contrast with prevailing cultural and religious norms.
3. Explore the concept of total commitment in Luke's teachings on discipleship. What are the implications of this radical call, and how might believers apply these principles in their lives without literal interpretation of every demand?
4. Examine Luke's emphasis on the mission to the lost, particularly his focus on marginalized groups. How does this emphasis shape our understanding of the church's role in the world today?
5. Compare and contrast Luke's presentation of the eschatological future with his emphasis on the present realities of discipleship. How do these two perspectives inform and motivate the new community in their daily lives?

Glossary of Key Terms

- **Theophilus:** The individual to whom both the Gospel of Luke and the Book of Acts are addressed, possibly a patron or a representative of a wider audience.
- **Messiah:** The promised deliverer of Israel, the Christ. In Luke, Jesus is presented as this long-awaited figure.
- **Kingdom of God:** God's reign or rule, both in the present (inaugurated by Jesus) and the future (in its fullness).
- **Repentance:** A turning away from sin and towards God, often accompanied by a change of heart and behavior.
- **Forgiveness:** The act of pardoning sin and releasing an individual from its penalty and guilt.
- **Holy Spirit:** The third person of the Trinity, understood in Luke-Acts as the power of God at work in the world and in the lives of believers, empowering them for witness and ministry.
- **Disciple:** A follower or learner of Jesus, committed to his teachings and way of life.
- **Apostle:** One of the twelve chief disciples of Jesus, chosen by him to be his primary witnesses and messengers. The term is sometimes extended to others who played a key role in the early church.
- **Eschatology:** The study of "last things," including the end times, the return of Christ, judgment, and the eternal state.
- **Parable:** A short, illustrative story used by Jesus to teach spiritual truths.

5. FAQs on Peterson, Theology of Luke-Acts, Session 6, D. Bock – Theology: The New Community, Biblicalelearning.org (BeL)

Frequently Asked Questions on Luke-Acts and the New Community

1. According to Luke, what is a fundamental characteristic of following Jesus, and what are some examples provided in the gospel?

Following Jesus inevitably brings opposition and division. Simeon's prophecy in Luke 2:34-35 highlights that Jesus is appointed for both the fall and rising of many and will be a sign opposed. This theme of division is evident throughout Luke, such as in Jesus' predictions of his suffering and rejection (Luke 9:22) and the various instances where commitment to Jesus creates division (e.g., Luke 12:4-9).

2. How does Luke portray the formation of the "new community" or church, particularly in relation to its Jewish roots and the inclusion of Gentiles?

The new community, initially presenting itself as the hope of Israel, was compelled to become distinct. This distinctiveness arose as Gentiles were incorporated into God's plan, signified by the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on them (Acts 10-11). Luke emphasizes that this inclusion was God's doing, reassuring Jewish Christians like Peter. The new community became the steward of God's Word and the repository of promises, with a distinct character marked by the newness of the Spirit, setting it apart from the prevailing cultural and religious norms.

3. What role do faith and dependence on God play in Luke's understanding of discipleship?

Faith and dependence on God are foundational and sustaining aspects of discipleship in Luke. Initial saving faith marks the beginning of the walk with God, while ongoing faith is essential for the Christian life. Jesus encourages believers not to be anxious but to trust in God's provision, drawing parallels to God's care for creation (Luke 12:22-32). Seeking God's kingdom and living by faith, trusting in the heavenly Father's care, are central to the life of a disciple.

4. What does Luke emphasize regarding the commitment required of a disciple of Jesus?

Luke stresses the need for total commitment to Jesus, where no other priorities supersede devotion to him (Luke 9:23, 57-62; 14:25-35). This commitment may appear as "hatred" for family in comparison to the love for Christ, signifying a radical prioritization of Jesus. Similarly, renouncing "all that he has" indicates that God should have the preeminent place in one's life, with everything else being secondary. This commitment involves a daily dedication and a willingness to "take up the cross," signifying a death to self and a life lived at Jesus' disposal.

5. What is the mission of the new community according to Luke, and what is its focus?

The new community has a clear mission to the lost, a call explicitly stated by Jesus in Luke 24:47, which involves proclaiming repentance and forgiveness of sins in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. The emphasis of this mission, as seen in Luke 5:31-32 and 19:10, is on seeking and saving those who are lost, including outcasts and sinners. The parables in Luke 15 (lost sheep, lost coin, lost son) further underscore the immense value God places on each lost individual and the joy in their restoration.

6. How are love for God and neighbor expressed within the context of Luke's Gospel?

Love for God is demonstrated through dependent prayer (Luke 11:1-13) and by prioritizing time with Jesus and his teachings (Luke 10:38-42). Love for one's neighbor is an outward expression of devotion to God, exemplified in the parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37). This parable emphasizes that being a neighbor transcends social and ethnic boundaries, requiring active compassion and care for anyone in need, regardless of their background.

7. What does Luke teach about the return of Jesus and its implications for believers?

Luke's eschatological discourse in chapter 21 highlights that there will be a period before Jesus' return, marked by signs such as wars, earthquakes, and persecution of believers. The destruction of Jerusalem is presented as a precursor to the final judgment. While the exact timing of the return is unknown, it will come suddenly, requiring believers to be watchful, patient, and bold, fearing God rather than people (Luke 12:1-12). Luke also uniquely notes the reality of personal eschatology, where death for a believer is a transition into paradise (Luke 23:42-43; Acts 7:55-56).

8. According to Luke, what are some significant hindrances to discipleship, and what is the proper orientation a disciple should have?

Luke identifies several hindrances to discipleship, notably the misuse of money (Luke 8:14, 12:13-21, 16:1-31, 18:18-25), fearing people (Luke 12:1-12), and being weighed down by the cares of life (Luke 8:14). While money itself is a gift, it can become a danger. The key is not necessarily the literal divestment of all possessions but a fundamental orientation where all of one's life and resources are recognized as belonging to God and coming from his hand. The rich man's refusal to consider Jesus' request contrasts with the disciples' initial commitment, highlighting the importance of entering into a process of surrender and reliance on God.