

Dr. Robert Peterson, Theology of Luke-Acts, Session 9, Peterson--Church in Luke, Part 2, Marshall--Save the Lost

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 9, Peterson--Church in Luke, Part 2, Marshall—Save the Lost, Biblicalelearning.org, BeL

This excerpt from **Dr. Robert A. Peterson's** lecture on "The Theology of Luke-Acts," specifically **session nine**, focuses on **I. Howard Marshall's** perspective in "To Save the Lost." Peterson examines **Luke's Gospel** to understand the nature of the church, the New Testament people of God, highlighting stories like the **parable of the lost son** and the encounter with **Zacchaeus** to illustrate God's grace towards sinners. The lecture also considers the **Great Commission** in Luke 24 and Marshall's argument that **salvation for the lost** is a central theme in Luke, distinguishing it from other Gospels which emphasize different aspects of Jesus' ministry.

**2. 17 - minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of
Dr. Peterson, Theology of Luke-Acts, Session 9 – 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_Session09.mp3**

3. Briefing Document: Peterson, Theology of Luke-Acts, Session 9, Peterson--Church in Luke, Part 2, Marshall—Save the Lost

Briefing Document: The Theology of Luke-Acts - The Church in Luke, Part 2 & "To Save the Lost"

Overview:

This briefing document summarizes the main themes and important ideas presented in Dr. Robert A. Peterson's ninth session on the Theology of Luke-Acts, focusing on "The Church in Luke, Part 2," and incorporates insights from I. Howard Marshall's chapter "To Save the Lost." The primary focus is on Luke's portrayal of the recipients of God's grace, the joy in the recovery of the lost, and the central theme of Jesus' mission as saving the lost. The briefing also touches upon the commissioning of the disciples and Luke's unique emphasis on salvation compared to other Gospels.

Main Themes and Important Ideas:

1. Recipients of Grace and the Joy of Finding the Lost (Luke 15):

- Peterson analyzes Luke 15, highlighting the three parables of the lost sheep, the lost coin, and the lost son as central to understanding God's grace.
- These parables illustrate God's intense desire to seek and save the lost, emphasizing the immense joy in heaven over one sinner who repents. As Jesus states, *"there will be more rejoicing in heaven over one sinner who repents than over 99 righteous persons who do not need to repent."*
- The parables are Jesus' response to the Pharisees and scribes who complained about his fellowship with sinners. They are meant to justify his actions and call the self-righteous to recognize their own need for repentance.
- The increasing value of the lost item in each parable (sheep, coin, son) underscores the profound significance of each individual in God's eyes.
- The parable of the prodigal son (or lost son) is examined in detail. The younger son's reckless behavior and subsequent repentance are met with the father's overwhelming compassion and celebration. *"For this, my son was dead and is alive again. He was lost and is found."*

- The older brother's resentment highlights the contrasting attitude of those who believe they have no need for repentance and fail to share in the joy of others' return.
- Joel Green is quoted emphasizing that Jesus' response to criticism was asserting *"the divine necessity of joyous responses to the recovery of the lost."* He also notes the open-ended nature of the prodigal son parable, challenging readers to reflect on their own response to the inclusion of the lost.

2. Salvation for the Lost (Luke 19:1-10 - Zacchaeus):

- The story of Zacchaeus, the chief tax collector, exemplifies Luke's theme of salvation extending to those marginalized by society.
- Zacchaeus's determined effort to see Jesus and Jesus' subsequent decision to stay at his house provoke grumbling from the crowd who viewed Zacchaeus as a sinner. *"And when they saw it, they all grumbled. He has gone in to be the guest of a man who is a sinner."*
- Zacchaeus's dramatic response, offering half his goods to the poor and repaying those he defrauded fourfold, demonstrates genuine repentance and a changed heart.
- Jesus declares, *"Today salvation has come to this house, since he also is a son of Abraham."* This signifies the inclusion of even the most despised into God's family.
- Luke 19:10 is presented as a central motto of Luke's Gospel: *"For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost."* I. Howard Marshall strongly supports this view, stating, *"If we were looking for a text to sum up the message of the Gospel, it would undoubtedly be Luke 19:10."*
- This episode underscores Luke's "evangelical universalism," emphasizing that Jesus came to save all, including the poor, the sick, sinners, children, and tax collectors.

3. The Great Commission and the Promise of the Holy Spirit (Luke 24:44-49):

- The resurrected Jesus appears to his disciples and interprets the scriptures, emphasizing that *"everything written about me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled."*
- He commissions them to proclaim *"repentance and forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem."* This highlights the universal scope of the gospel message.
- The disciples are identified as *"witnesses of these things."* This anticipates their role in Acts.
- Jesus promises the Holy Spirit: *"Behold, I am sending the promise of my Father upon you but stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high."* This empowerment is essential for their mission of evangelism.
- The passage emphasizes the importance of the message of salvation, the disciples' commission, and the empowering presence of the Holy Spirit as foundational for the New Testament people of God.

4. Luke's Emphasis on Salvation Compared to Other Gospels (from Marshall):

- Marshall argues that while all Gospels present Jesus as Savior, Luke uniquely emphasizes the "blessings of salvation" that Jesus brings.
- Mark focuses on the person of Jesus, Matthew on Jesus as the Messiah and his teaching, and John on the manifestation of eternal life in Jesus. Luke's distinctive contribution is the focus on the act and the benefits of salvation.
- Luke's use of salvation terminology is not entirely novel but is a distinguishing feature of his Gospel. The concept of salvation was already present in early Christian writings, as evidenced by Paul's letters.
- The central theme of "saving the lost" is a key element that sets the tone and purpose of Luke's narrative.

5. Jesus' Preaching at Nazareth (Luke 4:16-30) as Programmatic (from Marshall):

- Marshall discusses the significance of Jesus' reading from Isaiah 61:1-2 in the Nazareth synagogue and his declaration, *"today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing."*

- While the exact source and redaction of this scene are debated, its placement early in Luke's Gospel indicates its programmatic importance for understanding Jesus' ministry.
- Jesus' claim signifies that his ministry is the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy and is an eschatological event, marking the arrival of the "time of the end."
- This event sets the stage for understanding Jesus' mission as bringing good news to the poor, proclaiming release to the captives, recovery of sight to the blind, and setting at liberty those who are oppressed.

Conclusion:

The provided excerpts from Peterson's lecture and Marshall's book clearly establish Luke's central theological focus on salvation, particularly the salvation of the lost and marginalized. Luke's Gospel highlights God's boundless grace, the immense joy in repentance and restoration, and the universal scope of Jesus' saving mission. The commissioning of the disciples, empowered by the Holy Spirit, to proclaim this message to all nations forms the foundation for the New Testament people of God as presented by Luke. His emphasis on salvation as the core of Jesus' work distinguishes his Gospel while aligning with the broader themes of the New Testament.

4. Study Guide: Peterson, Theology of Luke-Acts, Session 9, Peterson--Church in Luke, Part 2, Marshall—Save the Lost

Study Guide: The Church in Luke and the Theme of Salvation

Key Concepts:

- **Recipients of Grace:** Luke's portrayal of God's welcoming attitude towards sinners and outcasts, exemplified in the parables of the lost sheep, lost coin, and prodigal son.
- **Joy in Repentance:** The emphasis on the celebration and rejoicing in heaven (and among God's people) when a sinner repents.
- **Divine Necessity of Joy:** Jesus' assertion that there is a divine imperative to respond with joy to the recovery of the lost.
- **Table Fellowship:** Jesus' practice of eating with tax collectors and sinners as a sign of acceptance and inclusion in God's kingdom.
- **Representation in Parables:** The allegorical interpretation of the prodigal son parable, with the younger son representing sinners and tax collectors, and the older brother representing the Pharisees and scribes.
- **The Saved as the New Testament People of God:** Luke's depiction of those who are saved by Jesus as constituting the new community of faith.
- **Seeking and Saving the Lost:** The central mission of Jesus, clearly stated in Luke 19:10, which underpins much of Luke's narrative.
- **Evangelical Universalism:** Luke's consistent portrayal of Jesus' mission as extending to all people, including those on the margins of society.
- **Witnesses and Commission:** The role of Jesus' disciples (and by extension, the church) as witnesses to his life, death, and resurrection, and their commission to proclaim repentance and forgiveness of sins to all nations.
- **Empowerment by the Holy Spirit:** The promise of the Holy Spirit to equip believers for the task of evangelism.
- **Salvation as a Central Theme in Luke:** I. Howard Marshall's argument that "salvation for men" is the core message of Luke's Gospel, distinguishing it from the emphases of other Gospels.

- **Eschatological Fulfillment:** Luke's presentation of Jesus' ministry as the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecies concerning the end times and the coming of the Messiah.

Short Answer Quiz:

1. What was the complaint of the Pharisees and scribes that prompted Jesus to tell the parables in Luke 15?
2. In the parable of the prodigal son, what actions of the father demonstrate his grace and forgiveness towards his younger son?
3. According to the provided text, who do the younger and older brothers in the parable of the prodigal son represent?
4. What was Zacchaeus' profession, and why did the crowd grumble when Jesus decided to stay at his house?
5. Describe Zacchaeus' response to his encounter with Jesus, and how did Jesus affirm his transformation?
6. What is identified as the "motto" of Luke's Gospel, and what does it emphasize about Jesus' mission?
7. According to Luke 24:47, what message were the disciples commissioned to proclaim, and where was it to begin?
8. What was the promise of the Father that Jesus told his disciples to wait for in Jerusalem?
9. According to I. Howard Marshall, what is the central theme that distinguishes Luke's Gospel from Matthew, Mark, and John?
10. How does Luke present Jesus' ministry in Nazareth (Luke 4:16-30) as an "eschatological event"?

Answer Key:

1. The Pharisees and scribes complained to themselves that Jesus associated with and even ate with tax collectors and sinners, viewing them as unrighteous.
2. The father saw his son from afar, felt compassion, ran to him, embraced and kissed him, and then immediately ordered his servants to clothe him in the best robe, put a ring on his finger, sandals on his feet, and prepare a celebratory feast.

3. The prodigal (younger) son represents the tax collectors and sinners, while the older brother represents the Pharisees and scribes who were critical of Jesus' association with the marginalized.
4. Zacchaeus was a chief tax collector and was rich. The crowd grumbled because Jesus, whom they likely considered a righteous man, was going to be the guest of a known sinner.
5. Zacchaeus declared that he would give half of his goods to the poor and restore fourfold to anyone he had defrauded. Jesus responded by saying, "Today salvation has come to this house, since he also is a son of Abraham."
6. The "motto" of Luke's Gospel is Luke 19:10: "For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost." This verse emphasizes the salvific purpose of Jesus' earthly ministry.
7. The disciples were commissioned to proclaim repentance and forgiveness of sins in Jesus' name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem.
8. The promise of the Father was the sending of the Holy Spirit, which would clothe them with power from on high to fulfill their commission.
9. According to Marshall, the central theme of Luke's Gospel is "salvation for men," with a particular emphasis on the blessings and positive quality of this salvation offered by Jesus.
10. In the synagogue at Nazareth, Jesus read from Isaiah and declared, "Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing." This presents his person and ministry as the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy, which was understood to refer to the eschatological time of the end.

Essay Format Questions:

1. Analyze how the three parables in Luke 15 collectively illustrate Jesus' attitude towards "the lost" and the appropriate response of God's people.
2. Discuss the significance of Jesus' table fellowship with tax collectors and sinners in Luke's Gospel, using specific examples from the text. How does this practice relate to the complaints of the religious leaders?
3. Explore the connection between Luke 19:10 and the broader narrative of Luke's Gospel. How does this "motto" illuminate the various encounters and teachings of Jesus presented in the text?
4. Examine Luke's portrayal of the disciples' commission in Luke 24:44-49. What are the key elements of this commission, and how does it set the stage for the book of Acts?
5. Compare and contrast I. Howard Marshall's perspective on the central theme of Luke's Gospel with the main themes identified in the Gospels of Mark and Matthew, as presented in the text. What does this comparison reveal about Luke's unique contribution?

Glossary of Key Terms:

- **Grace:** Unmerited favor from God, often demonstrated in Luke through forgiveness and acceptance of sinners.
- **Repentance:** A turning away from sin and towards God, often accompanied by a change in behavior and attitude.
- **Salvation:** Deliverance from sin and its consequences, a central theme in Luke's portrayal of Jesus' mission.
- **Parable:** A simple story used to illustrate a moral or spiritual lesson, frequently employed by Jesus in his teaching.
- **Pharisees:** A Jewish religious group known for their strict adherence to the Law and their criticism of those they deemed unrighteous.
- **Scribes:** Jewish scholars and teachers of the Law, often associated with the Pharisees.
- **Messiah:** The promised deliverer of the Jewish people, believed to be fulfilled in Jesus Christ.
- **Gospel:** The good news of salvation through Jesus Christ.
- **Eschatological:** Relating to the "end times" or the final events in God's plan for humanity.
- **Redaction:** The process of editing and arranging source materials in the composition of a literary work, often with a particular theological or narrative purpose.
- **Evangelical:** Relating to the proclamation of the Christian gospel or salvation through faith in Jesus Christ.
- **Universalism (in this context):** The idea that God's offer of salvation extends to all people, regardless of their social status or past sins.
- **Atoning Death:** Jesus' death on the cross, understood by Christians as a sacrifice that makes reconciliation between God and humanity possible.
- **Stigmata:** The wounds corresponding to those left on Jesus Christ by the Crucifixion, sometimes appearing on the bodies of saints.

5. FAQs on Peterson, Theology of Luke-Acts, Session 9, Peterson--Church in Luke, Part 2, Marshall—Save the Lost, Biblicalelearning.org (BeL)

Frequently Asked Questions on the Theology of Luke-Acts (Focus on Luke's Gospel)

What is the central theme that Luke emphasizes in his Gospel regarding Jesus' ministry?

Luke's Gospel prominently features the theme of salvation. The author highlights Jesus as the one who came "to seek and to save the lost," as explicitly stated in Luke 19:10. This emphasis on salvation as a core purpose of Jesus' earthly ministry distinguishes Luke's account compared to the other Gospels, which may focus more on Jesus' person (Mark), his teachings as the Messiah (Matthew), or the revelation of eternal life (John).

How do the parables in Luke 15 illustrate Jesus' attitude towards sinners?

The three parables in Luke 15—the lost sheep, the lost coin, and the lost son—collectively illustrate God's immense joy and grace upon the repentance and recovery of those who are lost. The shepherd rejoices over finding one lost sheep out of a hundred, the woman celebrates finding her lost coin, and the father extravagantly welcomes back his prodigal son. These parables were told to justify Jesus' fellowship with tax collectors and sinners, emphasizing that heaven rejoices over one sinner who repents, contrasting with the complaints of the self-righteous Pharisees and scribes.

Who are the intended recipients of God's grace as portrayed in Luke's Gospel?

Luke's Gospel emphasizes an "evangelical universalism," showcasing Jesus' concern and actions towards a wide range of people, including those marginalized by society. This includes the poor, the sick, those deemed "sinners" (such as tax collectors and prostitutes), as well as children. The parables and accounts like that of Zacchaeus demonstrate that God's grace is extended to all who are lost and repent, regardless of their social standing or past actions.

What is the significance of Jesus' encounter with Zacchaeus in Luke 19?

The story of Zacchaeus is presented as a climax of Jesus' evangelistic ministry before his entry into Jerusalem. Zacchaeus, a chief tax collector and considered a sinner, sought to see Jesus and, upon encountering him, experienced a transformative moment. His subsequent declaration to give half of his goods to the poor and restore fourfold to those he defrauded demonstrates genuine repentance and a changed heart. Jesus'

declaration that "today salvation has come to this house, since he also is a son of Abraham" underscores Luke's theme of salvation extending even to those most despised by society.

How does Luke portray Jesus fulfilling Old Testament prophecy?

Luke highlights throughout his Gospel that Jesus' life, ministry, death, and resurrection were in fulfillment of Old Testament prophecies. This is evident in Jesus' reading from Isaiah 61 in the synagogue at Nazareth, where he declares that the scripture has been fulfilled in their hearing. Additionally, the birth narrative, the role of John the Baptist (linked to Malachi's prophecy of Elijah), and Jesus' own statements about the necessity of the Christ to suffer and rise from the dead according to the scriptures all reinforce this theme of divine design and fulfillment.

What is the commission Jesus gives to his disciples at the end of Luke's Gospel (Luke 24:44-49)?

Following his resurrection, Jesus commissions his disciples to be witnesses of these things, proclaiming repentance and forgiveness of sins in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. He instructs them to wait in the city until they are clothed with power from on high—the promise of the Father, which refers to the Holy Spirit. This commission emphasizes the universal scope of the gospel message and the necessity of divine empowerment for its effective proclamation.

How does Luke's emphasis on salvation compare to the other Gospel writers according to the source?

While all four Gospels present Jesus as the Savior, Luke places a distinct emphasis on the "blessings of salvation" that Jesus brings. Mark focuses more on the person of Christ, Matthew highlights Jesus as the promised Messiah and his teachings, and John centers on Jesus revealing God and conveying eternal life. Luke, however, uniquely stresses the positive outcome and offer of salvation itself as a defining characteristic of Jesus' ministry and purpose.

What does the source suggest about the early church's understanding of "salvation"?

The source indicates that the concept and terminology of "salvation" were prevalent and understood within the early church. References to Paul's letters, such as 1 Thessalonians, demonstrate that "being saved" was a current term for Christian conversion from a very early period. Furthermore, the suggestion that Paul in Romans 10:9 uses an existing confession of faith involving salvation points to the primitive nature and widespread acceptance of this concept as central to the gospel message.