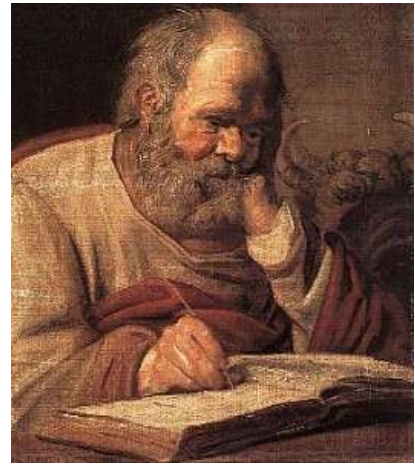


Luke's Gospel

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- Author** Luke's gospel does not identify its author, but it is widely accepted that the author was Luke, *the beloved physician*, a friend and travelling companion of the apostle Paul (Colossians 4:14). Luke had undertaken *to draw up an account of the things that had been fulfilled among us, just as they were handed down to us by those who were from the first eye-witnesses and servants of the word*. He *carefully investigated everything from the beginning* and set out to write an *orderly account* of the life of Jesus and of the beginning of the church. 1:1-4. As a result he wrote the "Gospel of Luke" and also "The Acts of the Apostles".
- Date** Possibly written in Rome while Paul was awaiting his trial, around AD 64. (Mark was probably the first gospel to be written, followed by Matthew and then Luke).
- Written to** Luke wrote to Theophilus so that he would *know with certainty the things he had been taught*. Theophilus was probably a Gentile who had become a believer. His name means *beloved of God*, and, as such, he stands for all those who would come to read Luke's gospel in future years.
- Setting** Luke gives the most complete account of Jesus' life of all the gospels. Jesus lived and ministered in a small area within Palestine. He was born in Bethlehem, grew up in Nazareth till He was about 30 years old and then ministered in the Galilee, based at Capernaum. He then journeyed to Jerusalem where He was betrayed, crucified and resurrected. All of this took place in an area about 80km wide by 250km long.
- Purpose** Luke sets out to write an account *of the things that have been fulfilled among us* for Gentile readers (unlike Matthew which was written specifically for Jewish readers). As a result Jesus is portrayed as the Saviour of the world, rather than as the Jewish Messiah. Jesus is seen as the "son of man" so Luke tells us much more about Jesus' feelings and human characteristics than the other gospel writers. (By comparison Matthew presents Him as the "King of the Jews", Mark presents Him as "the Suffering Servant", and John as "the Son of God").
- Relationship with other Gospels** Luke is one of the Synoptic Gospels, along with Matthew and Mark. These Gospels are called synoptic (from the Greek *syn-* together and *opsis* appearance) because they have so much in common. e.g. order of events, stories and parables. There are many theories as to which gospel was written first and of links between the three gospels. One common theory is that Mark was written first and that Matthew based his gospel on Mark. Luke was then based on both Mark and Matthew. John is quite different to the other three Gospels. It was written much later and focuses more on the spiritual meaning of what happened in Jesus' life, rather than on the events.
- Themes** Some of the main themes in Luke's gospel are:
- Jesus as the Saviour of the world.** Jesus is the Saviour of both Jews and Gentiles. *My eyes have seen your salvation, which You have prepared in the sight of all people, a light for revelation to the Gentiles and for glory to your people Israel!* 2:30-32
- The work of the Holy Spirit.** Jesus was conceived by the Holy Spirit (1:35); anointed by the Holy Spirit at His baptism (3:22); led by the Spirit to His temptation (4:2); and

empowered by the Holy Spirit for ministry (4:18). After the resurrection the disciples were told to wait till they were *clothed with power from on high* so they could fulfil God's will in spreading the gospel to all nations. 24:49. In his follow-up book (Acts) Luke describes how this was fulfilled. (Acts is sometimes called "The Acts of the Holy Spirit").

Joy. Luke highlights the joy of Jesus birth (2:14), Jesus' joy in the Holy Spirit (10:21), and the joy as He entered Jerusalem. (19:38).

Recognition of women. Luke (and Acts) gives much greater recognition to women than the other gospels (perhaps reflecting Luke's non- Jewish background). Elizabeth, Mary, Anna, Joanna, Mary and Martha, etc. are prominent in Jesus' life and ministry.

Jesus' disciples. Luke describes in detail how Jesus chose, taught, mentored and sent out His disciples to further His ministry on earth.

Jesus teaching. Jesus taught His disciples and the local the people through sermons, illustrations, parables, and by example. Jesus' teaching is often associated with demonstrations of His power. e.g. in healing the sick.

Jesus humanity. Jesus is seen as a person with real feelings, concerns and recognisable human characteristics.

Jesus death and resurrection. Jesus died on the Cross to bring salvation for all, enabling all who believe in Him to have a relationship with God.

Introduction. 1:1-4

Others have *undertaken to draw up an account* of Jesus life but Luke explains that he has *carefully investigated* everything based on information handed down from *eye-witnesses and servants of the word*. He has tried to *draw up an account of the things that had been fulfilled among us* so that Theophilus may *know the certainty of the things he had been taught*.

The birth of Jesus. 1:5 - 2:52

Luke's careful attention to detail is shown in his account of the birth of Jesus. He describes ten different incidents that took place and builds up a comprehensive description of Jesus' nativity, and the events surrounding it.

Foretelling the birth of John the Baptist. 1:5-25

During the reign of Herod the Great (37 - 4 BC) Zechariah the priest was ministering in the temple. (Twenty-four divisions of priests served in the temple for two separate weeks a year. The one who was to burn incense was determined by casting lots. Once a priest had done this he couldn't do it again).

Zechariah had no children because his wife *Elizabeth was barren*. An angel of the Lord appeared to Zechariah as he was about to burn the incense, saying that he and Elizabeth would have a son, and they were to name him John (meaning "God is gracious"). John would be *great in the sight of the Lord* and was to live as a Nazirite (see Numbers 6:1-4). He would be *filled with the Holy Spirit even from birth* and will *bring many of the people of Israel back to the Lord their God*. John's major role, though, would be to prepare the people for the coming of Messiah, the Lord. He would do this *in the spirit and power of Elijah*. (See Matthew 11:7-19). Zechariah doubted and wanted to *be sure of this* as he and Elizabeth were *well on in years* so the angel struck him dumb and he *could not speak* until the time of the promised birth. Elizabeth *became pregnant* and stayed in seclusion for five months. She recognised that the Lord had *shown favour* to her and *taken away her disgrace* in not having a child.



Foretelling the birth of Jesus. 1:26-38

Luke tells the nativity story mainly from the perspective of Mary.

The angel Gabriel visited Mary who was a *virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David*. Gabriel greeted her as one who is *highly favoured* because the Lord was with her. Mary was afraid but the angel told her she would *be with child and give birth to a son*, who she was to call Jesus (meaning "Yahweh saves"). Jesus would be great and would be called *the Son of the Most High*. He would sit on the throne of David and reign over Israel forever. *His Kingdom will never end*. Mary asked

how this could be as she was a virgin and the angel explained that she would conceive miraculously by the Holy Spirit. *The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God. Mary submitted to the Lord saying "I am the Lord's servant," "May it be to me as you have said".*



Mary's visits her cousin Elizabeth. 1:39-56

Mary visited her cousin Elizabeth and the baby John leaped within Elizabeth's womb as she heard Mary's greeting. Elizabeth was *filled with the Holy Spirit* and exclaimed "*Blessed are you among women and blessed is the child you will bear*".

Mary was indeed blessed because she believed what the Lord had said to her would come to pass. Her famous "Magnificat" is a declaration of her trust in the Lord. *My soul glorifies the Lord and my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour, for He has been mindful of the humble state of his servant. From now on all generations will call me blessed, for the Mighty One has done great things for me - holy is His name.*

The birth of John the Baptist. 1:57-79

At John the Baptist's birth, his father Zechariah indicated that he was to be called John in obedience to the word from the angel in 1:13. *Immediately his mouth was opened and his tongue was loosed, and he began to speak, praising God.* When the people throughout Judea heard about this they wondered about John. *What then is this child going to be? For the Lord's hand was with him.*

Zechariah was filled with the Holy Spirit and prophesied that God had come and had *redeemed His people. He has raised up a horn of salvation for us* in fulfilment of His covenant with Abraham to *rescue us from the hand of our enemies, and to enable us to serve Him without fear in holiness and righteousness before Him all our days.* Psalm 111:9; 2 Samuel 22:3; Genesis 22:16-18. John would be a *prophet of the Most High who would go on before the Lord to prepare the way for Him. He would give his people knowledge of salvation through the forgiveness of sins* (hence John's preaching about repentance); and *guide our feet in the path of peace.*

John the Baptist in the wilderness. 1:80

John grew and became strong in spirit, and he lived in the desert until he appeared publicly to Israel.

The birth of Jesus. 2:1-7

Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census be taken of the entire Roman world. This took place when *Quirinius was governor of Syria.* Everyone had to travel to their home town to register for the census. Joseph and Mary went from Nazareth where they lived to Bethlehem, just south of Jerusalem. They went there because Joseph belonged to the *house and line of David.* (See Matthew 1:6-16. It traces Joseph's family tree back to King David. Bethlehem was where King David came from).



Mary was *pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child.* When they arrived in Bethlehem *she gave birth to her firstborn, a son.* All of the accommodation in the town was taken but they were able to stay in the stable of an inn and the baby Jesus was placed *in a manger.*

The visit of the shepherds. 2:8-20

Angels announced Jesus' birth to *shepherds living out in the fields nearby.* They were terrified but the angel told them not to be afraid. *I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. Today in the town of David a Saviour has been born to you; He is Christ the Lord.* (The Greek word for Christ is *christos*. It means "the anointed one". It is the same as the Hebrew word *Mašiah*, or *Messiah*). How amazing that God's only Son; His anointed one; the Jewish Messiah should be born in such humble circumstances!



Immediately a great company of the heavenly host (angels) appeared and praised God saying "*Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to*

men of on whom His favour rests". The shepherds went to Bethlehem to see the thing the Lord had told them about. They found Mary and Joseph and the baby, lying in a manger. Afterwards they returned to their flocks glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen. Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart.

Jesus' circumcision. 2:21

On the eighth day Jesus was circumcised and given the name Jesus (meaning "Yahweh saves") – the name the angel had given Him before He was conceived. 1:31. All Jewish boys were circumcised on the 8th day.

Jesus' presentation in the temple. 2:22-40

After Mary had observed her 40 days of ritual purification, she went with Joseph to the temple to present Jesus to the Lord. Every firstborn male is to be consecrated to the Lord. Exodus 13:2,12.

At the temple there was a man called Simeon who was righteous and devout. The Lord had revealed to him that he would not die before he had seen the Lord's Christ. The Holy Spirit was upon Simeon and he recognised that Jesus was the One he had been waiting for. He could now die in peace because he had seen the Lord's salvation which God had prepared for everyone – both Jews and Gentiles. Simeon then prophesied to Mary that she would experience great anguish, because Jesus would cause the falling and rising of many in Israel. There was also a prophetess at the temple, Anna. She was very old and had been worshipping day and night, fasting and praying in hope of seeing the One who would bring the redemption of Jerusalem – Jesus.

After they had done everything required by the Law Joseph and Mary returned to their home town of Nazareth, in Galilee. And Jesus grew and became strong; He was filled with wisdom, and the grace of God was upon Him.

Jesus' visit to the temple at age 12. 2:41-52

Luke's account of the birth and childhood of Jesus closes with Jesus' visit to the temple at age 12. Every year He went with His parents to celebrate the Feast of the Passover. When it was time to go home Joseph and Mary left Jesus behind in the temple, assuming that He was among relatives or friends. When they realised He was not with them they went back to the Temple and found Jesus sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking questions. (This was the typical way of learning from Jewish Rabbis). Jesus thought that they would understand that He had to be in His Father's house.

Again, Mary treasured all these things in her heart. And Jesus grew in wisdom and in stature, and in favour with God and people.

Preparation for Jesus' ministry. 3:1 - 4:30

Luke now describes the events leading up to the beginning of Jesus' ministry. These include the ministry of John the Baptist, Jesus' baptism and His temptation in the wilderness, and His rejection in Nazareth. The date when each event took place is linked to the times when different political leaders were in office. (3:1),

The ministry of John the Baptist. 3:1-20

John the Baptist was Jesus' cousin. John prepared the way for the ministry of Jesus in fulfilment of Isaiah 40:3-5. His message was one of repentance for the forgiveness of sins and the people were to produce fruit in keeping with repentance. Examples of this are for those with possessions or food to share with those who have none; for tax collectors to only collect what they are required to, and for soldiers not to extort money or accuse people falsely. The people were wondering if John might possibly be the Christ but John said that he was preparing the way for Jesus who would be greater than he was: "I baptise you with water. But one more powerful than me will come, the thongs of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie. He will baptise you with the Holy Spirit and with fire".

John exhorted the people and preached the good news to them. When he rebuked Herod the Tetrarch for the evil things he had done, John was locked up in prison and was later beheaded. (See Matthew 14:1-12). Jesus clarified his relationship with John the Baptist in Luke 7:18-35.

The baptism of Jesus. 3:21-22

Jesus was about 30 years old when He came to John to be baptised. When Jesus was baptised heaven was opened and the Holy Spirit descended on Him in bodily form like a dove. And then God the Father said in a voice from heaven “*You are my Son, whom I love; with You I am well pleased*”.



Jesus baptism was the start of His earthly ministry and the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit were all involved. Jesus was anointed by the Holy Spirit empowering Him for the ministry tasks ahead.

Jesus baptism also highlights for us the major Christian experiences that Jesus would introduce:

- Repentance leading to forgiveness of sin, and salvation
- Baptism in water, showing that the old life is over, and a new life has begun
- Baptism in the Holy Spirit empowering us to live for Jesus.

The genealogy of Jesus. 3:23-37

Luke now describes the family tree of Jesus. Luke begins the genealogy with Jesus as *the son*, so it was thought, of Joseph, the son of Heli and ends it with Adam, the son of God.

This is different from Matthew’s genealogy which traces the family tree from Abraham through to Jacob who was the father of Joseph, the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus, who is called the Christ. (See Matthew 1:1-16). The two genealogies are different in the section from David to the birth of Jesus because Matthew’s genealogy is Jesus’ legal family tree (through Joseph), while Luke’s is His physical family tree (through Mary). It was customary for genealogies to end with males, which is why both end with Joseph as Jesus’ father. Neither implies that Jesus was Joseph’s physical son (because He was conceived by the Holy Spirit, and was God’s son, not Joseph’s). Matthew 1:18, Luke 1:35.

The temptation of Jesus. 4:1-13

Immediately after His baptism Jesus was *full of the Holy Spirit* and was *led by the Spirit* into the desert where for *forty days He was tempted by the devil*. Jesus ate nothing during this period and at the end of the time *He was hungry*. Jesus was tempted (or tested) by the devil to:

- do a selfish miracle (tell stones to become bread)
- bow down and worship the devil
- cast Himself down from the highest point of the temple.

In each case Jesus resisted the temptation by saying “*it is written*” and by turning away from the situation. Jesus was tempted to sin, just like we are, but resisted. Because He understands temptation He can now help us when we are tempted. See Hebrews 2:18, 4:14-16.

The way had been prepared by John the Baptist and Jesus had been baptised, been anointed by the Holy Spirit, and had overcome temptation to sin. He was now ready to begin His ministry.

Jesus’ ministry in Galilee. 4:14–9:50

Jesus moved from Nazareth to Capernaum on the shores of the Sea of Galilee and His initial ministry was centred around there. Luke records about 30 events that took place in Galilee, including many miracles. He also gives details of Jesus’ teaching, much of which is done through parables. Luke often emphasises how Jesus’ actions and teaching were done with authority, (in contrast to the rabbis) as would have been expected of Messiah.

Jesus’ rejection in Nazareth. 4:14-30

After His temptation Jesus returned to Nazareth *in the power of the Spirit* and crowds gathered to see and hear Him.

When He taught in the synagogue He quoted from Isaiah 61:1,2 which is a prophecy of the coming of Messiah, and said “*Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing*”.

The name of Jesus

Lord - *kurios* means *owner, master, sovereign*.
Jesus - *Iesous* means *Jehovah is salvation*.
Christ - *Christos* means *anointed*. It is the same as the Hebrew word for Messiah *Mašíaḥ*.

So Jesus’ title is *Lord*, His name is *Jesus*, indicating that He is both God and Saviour, and His role is to be the anointed *Messiah* or *Christ*.

This was a direct acknowledgment that He was indeed the long-awaited Messiah. The people of Nazareth all knew Him but Jesus recognised that *no prophet is accepted in His home town*. This was evident with Elijah when he was rejected by the local people and worked to help poor widows and lepers. See 1 Kings 17 and 18. When they heard this *the people in the synagogue were furious and drove Him out of town*.

Miracles in Capernaum. 4:31-44.

Jesus then *went down to Capernaum* and began to teach. The people were *amazed at His teaching, because His message had authority*. In the synagogue Jesus drove an evil spirit out of a man and the people were amazed and said *“What is this teaching? With authority and power He gives orders to evil spirits and they come out!”*

Jesus *healed many* (including Simon Peter’s mother in law) and *cast out demons from many people*. Interestingly, the demons recognised that He was the Christ – Messiah - but the people didn’t! v34, 41.

Jesus withdrew to a solitary place but the people followed Him and tried to stop Him leaving the area. He said *“I must preach the good news (gospel) of the kingdom of God to the other towns also, because that is why I was sent.”*



The Kingdom of God

Jesus said that He was sent to *preach the good news of the kingdom of God*. The Kingdom of God is the rule and reign of God as King (or Lord) over everything, including your life. It is having Jesus as Lord. He is in control and your life is spent in doing His will. Jesus introduced this Kingdom; showed how we can enter it; taught what the Kingdom is like, and will bring it to pass fully when He returns. All those who respond to Jesus, put their trust in Him and faithfully follow Him are God’s children, and part of His Kingdom.

The Kingdom of God isn’t just for this life. It carries on into eternity when we die. After the second coming of Jesus *the kingdoms of this world will have become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ and He shall reign for ever and ever*. Revelation 11:15. What good news!

What Luke calls the *Kingdom of God* is called the *Kingdom of Heaven* in Matthew’s gospel. That’s because Matthew was writing for Jews who would not say the name of God. (Even today Jewish literature describes God as G_d). So instead of calling it the *Kingdom of God*, as in the rest of the New Testament, Matthew called it the *Kingdom of heaven*.

The calling of Simon Peter. 5:1-11

Simon Peter was the first disciple that Jesus called. Jesus told Peter, a fisherman, where to drop his nets to get fish and he *caught such a large number of fish that the nets began to break*. Peter was afraid but Jesus said *“from now on you will catch people”*. Peter became a leader among Jesus’ disciples and later on became a leader in the early Christian church.

Healing the sick. 5:12-26

A man with a skin disease asked Jesus to make him clean. People with leprosy were unclean and were shunned by everyone. (The word “leprosy” used here applies to a range of skin diseases, not just leprosy). Jesus was willing, reached out and touched the man, and made him clean. His love and compassion are for all. *Crowds of people came to hear Him and to be healed of their sicknesses. But Jesus often withdrew to lonely places and prayed*.



Pharisees and teachers of the law came to see what Jesus was doing and *the power of the Lord was present for Him to heal the sick*. A paralytic man was brought to Jesus and had to be lowered in through the roof of the house. When Jesus saw their faith He forgave the sins of a paralytic. When the teachers of the law heard this they said He was blaspheming but Jesus, *knew what they were thinking* and showed that He did have authority on earth to forgive sins by healing the man. The crowd who saw this were *amazed and gave praise to God. They were filled with awe and said “We have seen remarkable things today”*.

Nothing is too hard for Jesus! He can handle any situation - including sinfulness, sickness, evil spirits and bad attitudes or opposition from unbelievers.

The calling of Levi. 5:27-32

Jesus called the tax collector Levi to *follow Me* and immediately Levi (also called Matthew) *got up, left everything and followed Him*. This would have entailed giving up his livelihood, facing up to his sinfulness, trusting Jesus, and following Him wherever He went. A big decision! Matthew invited Jesus into His house and introduced Him to his friends: *tax collectors and sinners*. The Pharisees were disgusted by this but Jesus said *I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance*. Jesus loves everyone and will welcome all who repent and follow Him. Nobody is too sinful for Him!

Questions about fasting. 5:33-38

When asked why His disciples didn't fast Jesus explained that they would after He had gone (just as wedding guests mourn after the bride and groom have departed). Jesus was showing the Pharisees that His way was completely different from their legalistic way. He told them a parable: "*no-one tears a patch from a new garment and sews it on an old one. Also no-one pours new wine into old wineskins*". New wine has to be contained in new wineskins. The old wineskin (the legalistic way) cannot contain the new wine (the way of love).



Questions about the Sabbath. 6:1-11

Jesus now confronts one of the most legalistic practices of the Pharisees: Sabbath-keeping. Jesus shows that He is Lord even of the Sabbath, and that there is something greater than rigid adherence to the Law. (The Law was just a temporary measure to show us that we can't be righteous on our own. Righteousness can only be found through faith in Christ. See Romans Chapter 2).

- Jesus' disciples picked ears of corn on the Sabbath and ate the grain. The Pharisees asked why they were doing what was *unlawful on the Sabbath*. Jesus showed that King David and the Priests did likewise. 1 Samuel 21:6; Leviticus 24:5,9; Numbers 28:9,10.
- Jesus also healed a man with a shrivelled hand on the Sabbath. He asked the Pharisees what was lawful on the Sabbath, *to do good or to do evil, to save life or to destroy it?*

Both of these graphically demonstrated that the *Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath*. But the Pharisees were furious and *began to discuss with one another what they might do to Jesus*.

Christians and the Old Testament Law

This is just one of many altercations that Jesus had with the Pharisees and teachers of the law. In every case He showed that His way of love is greater than the old legalistic ways required by the Law.

In Matthew 5 Jesus explains how He did not come to *abolish the Law or the Prophets but to fulfil them*.

Everything in the Old Testament Law – including all of its requirements – are fulfilled in Jesus. His way sets new standards; ones that are even higher than the legalism of the Law. Our righteousness must *surpass that of the Pharisees and the teachers of the law* or we will *certainly not enter the kingdom of heaven*. This is the way of love – Jesus' new commandment. See John 13:34,35; 14:23,24; 15:9-17.

Jesus has fulfilled the Old Testament Law so it no longer has any relevance for Christians (including the 10 commandments!). Jesus gave us a *new commandment* to love the Lord, our neighbours and ourselves, and obey what God says for us to do. See Matthew 22:37-40. This encompasses all that the Old Testament Law entailed. The new commandment is positive and freeing. Rather than being bound up in legalism about what we are not to do, we are to be led by the Spirit and to live a life of love. This will make our lives fruitful and positive.

Many sections of the New Testament deal with this issue as some of the early Church thought Christians should still be under the Law. Paul and the other New Testament writers expanded on Jesus teaching to show that Christians were free from the demands of the Law, because these demands have been fully met in Christ. Righteousness is by faith in Christ not by trying to keep the Law. See Romans Chapters 1-11, especially Chapter 8; and 13:8-10; Mark 12:29-31; John 13:34,35; John 14:15-27; Matthew 5:17-20, 22:37-39; Galatians 2:11- 5:26; Ephesians 2:14-18, Colossians 2:6-23; Hebrews 10:1-18; James 2:8-13; 1 John 3 etc. The Church Council in Acts 15 ratified this by not laying any burden on believers to follow the Law.

The twelve apostles. 6:12-16

Jesus spent time in prayer before choosing His 12 disciples. He designated them as *apostles* meaning "messengers" or "those who are sent" and sent them out to share the good news. The disciples were ordinary men with little education or background for such a mission. They loved Jesus, though, and willingly served and followed Him. As a result the gospel was spread throughout the local area and, later,

throughout the world. The disciples (except Judas Iscariot) are a great example to us of ordinary people who can do extraordinary things in partnership with Jesus.

- Peter (originally called Simon, son of Jonas). Peter was the recognised leader of the disciples.
- Andrew (Peter's brother). Peter and Andrew were fishermen before they were called to follow Jesus.
- James, son of Zebedee.
- John, James' brother. John was the *beloved disciple* and had a special relationship with Jesus. James and John had fiery natures and were called the "sons of thunder".
- Philip, later an evangelist.
- Bartholomew (also called Nathanael).
- Matthew (originally called Levi) was a tax collector.
- Thomas who later became famous for his doubting of Jesus' resurrection.
- James was the son of Alphaeus and may have been Jesus' younger brother.
- Judas the son of James (also called Thaddaeus).
- Simon the Zealot.
- Judas Iscariot was later to betray Jesus.



In the rest of Chapter 6 Luke describes some of Jesus' teaching. It is an abbreviated version of the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew Chapters 5, 6 and 7.

Blessings and woes. 6:17-26

Crowds gathered around Jesus because *power was coming from Him and healing them all*. Jesus spoke to the crowds with a number of blessings and woes (similar to the Beatitudes in Matthew 5:1-12).

The Greek word for "blessing" is *makarios* which means to be 'blessed, happy, envied, celebrated, fortunate, spiritually prosperous, as a result of God's favour'. The Greek word for "woe" is *ouai* which means 'alas' or 'to be grieved over'.

Blessed are:

- You who *are poor for yours is the kingdom of God*.
- You who *hunger now, for you will be satisfied*.
- You who *weep now, for you will laugh*.
- You when *people hate you and insult you, and reject your name as evil, because of the son of Man*.

You can rejoice because *great is your reward in heaven*.

Woe to:

- You who *are rich for you have already received your comfort*.
- You who *are well fed now for you will go hungry*.
- You who *laugh now, for you will mourn and weep*.
- You when *all people speak well of you, for that is how they treated the false prophets*.



Loving enemies. 6:27-36

We are to *love our enemies* and *do good* to those who hate us, and *bless* those who curse us, and *pray* for those who ill-treat us.

God's way is for us to **do to others as you would have them do to you**. This is often called the "Royal Law". In Matthew Jesus said that this "law" sums up the whole Law and the Prophets. Matthew 7:12.

Loving others is to be demonstrated in practical ways. e.g. in the way we share our possessions, give to others, resist violence, love our enemies and show mercy.

Loving others is at the heart of Jesus' teaching. If we follow it our *reward will be great*, and we will be *children of the Most High*.

Judging others. 6:37-42

Do not judge, and you will not be judged or condemn, and you will not be condemned. Rather we are to give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you. It is easy to see the faults of others and ignore the same faults in ourselves. This is hypocritical so we must be honest in dealing with our own faults and not be judgmental of others.

Producing good fruit. 6:43-45

No good tree bears bad fruit, nor does a bad tree bear good fruit. Each tree is recognised by its own fruit. Good people bear good fruit out of the good stored in their hearts. For out of the overflow of their hearts, their mouth speaks. The key to having a fruitful and meaningful life, is to have your heart right with God!

Being wise. 6:46-49

It's not enough to call Jesus "Lord" but not do what He says. Those who hear Jesus words and obey them are like someone who builds a house laid on a deep *foundation of rock*. *When the flood came, the torrent that struck the house could not shake it because it was well built.* The one who hears Jesus' words but *doesn't put them into practice* will find that the torrent causes their house to collapse with *complete destruction*. The wisest thing to do in any situation is to do what Jesus tells you!

The centurion's faith. 7:1-10

The centurion's servant was *sick and about to die*. Jesus determined to go and heal the servant but the centurion had great faith and said *Just say the word and my servant will be healed*. Jesus recognised that the centurion wasn't a Jew but had great faith. *I tell you, I have not found such great faith, even in Israel.* He was so impressed by this faith that He healed the servant immediately

Raising the widow's son from the dead. 7:11-17

In Nain, the son of a widow was brought to Jesus. The son was dead. Jesus touched his coffin and told the young man to *get up*. When the crowds saw that Jesus had raised him from the dead they were *filled with awe and praised God*, and Jesus' fame spread through the surrounding country.

John the Baptist. 7:18-35

John the Baptist's disciples asked Jesus if He was the expected Messiah. Jesus had *cured many diseases, sicknesses and evil spirits, and gave sight to many who were blind*. Jesus told the messengers to report this back to John, as evidence that He was indeed the Messiah.

Jesus then explained who John was. He was not just an ordinary prophet, but the one who came to prepare the way for Messiah, in fulfilment of Malachi 3:1. *Among those born of women there is no-one greater than John; yet the one who is least in the kingdom of God is greater than he.*

Those who had been baptised by John accepted this, but the Pharisees and experts in the law rejected it because *they rejected God's purpose for themselves*. They were like children in a market place who wouldn't participate in what was going on and so missed out. John came *neither eating bread nor drinking wine* and they said he had a demon. Jesus came *eating and drinking* and they said He was *a glutton and drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and "sinners"*. Their so-called "wisdom" was obviously false - as shown by the fruits of their lives

Anointing by a sinful woman. 7:36-50

Jesus was invited to dinner with one of the Pharisees and a woman who had lived a sinful life came *with tears* and anointed Him with perfume. The Pharisee thought that if Jesus was a prophet He would recognise that the woman was a sinner, but Jesus told a parable to show that the more your sins are forgiven the more that you love. Jesus said to the women *"Your sins are forgiven"* and the other guests wondered who he was, that He could forgive sins. Jesus then said to the women *"You faith has saved you. Go in peace"*. This is yet another example of how legalism keeps people in bondage, but Jesus' way of love sets us free.

There are many examples in Luke's gospel of Jesus healing people in great need. The essential elements leading to miraculous healings are:

- The needy person asked Jesus to help.
- The needy person (or someone else) put their trust in Jesus and believed that He could heal them.
- Jesus had the power to heal.
- It was God's will to heal them at that particular time.
- Jesus responded to the needy person in love, healing them in accordance with God's will.
- The needy person responded by praising and thanking God, and, if necessary, repenting of sin and making restitution, and sometimes, testifying to others of what God had done.

These principles still apply for miraculous healings today.

The parable of the sower. 8:1-15

When someone hears the *good news of the Kingdom of God* a number of things can happen depending on the state of their heart:

- The devil can snatch it away so that they won't *believe and be saved*. (The seed is *trampled on and the birds of the air ate it up*).
- The word can be received with joy but if it doesn't have any root it will be lost when testing comes along. (The seed which *fell on rock*).
- It can be choked out and not mature due to *life's worries, riches and pleasures*. (The seed that *fell among thorns*).



All of these mean that they will not be fruitful. But when the word is received and understood by someone with a *noble and good heart* it brings forth fruit in their life. They *hear the word, retain it and by persevering produce a crop*. The key to effectiveness in the Christian life is to have God as King so you are living in the Kingdom of God; allow Him to work in and through your life, and to do the things He wants you to do.

A shining light. 8:16-17

Lamps are designed to share their light and not be hidden under a jar or bed. Light always dispels darkness so *there is nothing hidden that will not be disclosed, and nothing concealed that will not be known or brought out into the open*. This is a clear call for us to always be transparent before God and others.

God's priority. 8:18-21

Jesus now gives one of the most misunderstood verses in the Bible: *those who have will be given more; those who do not have, even what they think they have will be taken from them*. This just doesn't seem fair, but here Jesus is describing a key principle of the Kingdom of God. In the Kingdom, God blesses and grows what He initiates. Anything else is unimportant and will fade away. That's why it is so important for Christians to be finding God's will and then doing it. It even applies to family. When people told Jesus his mother and brothers were outside He said *My mother and brothers are those who hear God's words and put it into practice*.

Calming the storm. 8:22-25

One day Jesus and the disciples were crossing the Sea of Galilee in a great storm. Jesus rebuked the storm and *all was calm*. It is surprising that, by this time, the disciples were still amazed that Jesus could do such things.



Healing the demoniac 8:26-39

Jesus then cast demons out of a demoniac. The demons were sent into a herd of pigs which rushed into the lake and were drowned. When the owners of the pigs reported this to the townspeople they came and saw the man *dressed and in his right mind*. They were in fear and pleaded with Jesus to leave. The man wanted to follow Jesus but Jesus told him to *return home* and tell how much God had done for him.



Healing a dead girl and a sick woman 8:40-56

Jesus raised the daughter of Jairus, *a ruler of the synagogue*, from the dead. On the way to do this *a woman who had been subject to bleeding for twelve years touched the edge of His cloak*. Jesus recognised that *power had gone out* from Him and in healing her said *Your faith has healed you*. Jairus was informed that his daughter had died but Jesus said *Don't be afraid; just believe, and she will be healed*. Once again, these verses emphasize the importance of God's will, Jesus' power, and our faith, in bringing about wonderful healings.

Sending out the twelve disciples 9:1-9

Jesus called the twelve disciples together and *gave them power and authority to drive out all demons and to cure diseases, and He sent them out to preach the kingdom of God and to heal the sick*. They were to travel lightly and move on quickly if their message was not received. When Herod



heard *all that was going on* he was perplexed and wondered if John the Baptist whom he had beheaded had come back to life.

The disciples were sent out in Jesus' power and authority to do His works (and so are we!).

Feeding the five thousand 9:10-17

When the disciples returned they *reported to Jesus what they had done*. They all withdrew to a Bethsaida but a crowd followed them and Jesus *spoke to them about the kingdom of God and healed those who needed healing*.

Late in the afternoon the disciples wanted to send the crowd away but Jesus told them to *give them something to eat*. There were *about five thousand men*, plus women and children. Jesus multiplied the five loaves and two fish that they had and the disciples set it before the people. *They all ate and were satisfied*. Afterwards there were *twelve basketfuls of broken pieces that were left over*.

Jesus is the Messiah 9:18-27

Jesus asked His disciples *Who do the crowds say I am?* Some said He could have been John the Baptist, Elijah or one of the prophets. Jesus asked *But what about you?* *Who do you say I am?*

This is a key question; and the answer we give to it determines our destiny!

Peter answered *The Christ, of God*. He was acknowledging that Jesus was the Messiah; the Anointed of God, and that He was God. Jesus is the Messiah and He is God! We also need to know and acknowledge this. Jesus then warned the disciples *not to tell this to anyone* (presumably as the time had not yet come for this to be revealed), and explained that He would *suffer many things and be rejected by the elders, chief priests and teachers of the law*, and that He *must be killed and on the third day be raised to life*.



To be a follower of Jesus means that we must go through the same things He did. *"Whoever wants to be My disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow Me. For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for Me will save it. What good will it for you to gain the whole world, yet lose or forfeit your very self?* We must be willing to lay down all aspects of our lives to Jesus' leadership and control. Only what is of God is eternal and will last. Jesus must be Lord of our lives! If we do this we will fulfil God's purposes for our lives and won't be ashamed when Jesus comes again.

Jesus is transfigured 9:28-36

Jesus took Peter, James and John up a mountain to pray. His appearance changed and *His clothes became as bright as a flash of lightning*. Moses and Elijah then appeared and talked with Him about His departure which was about to take place in Jerusalem. The three disciples were very sleepy and Peter wanted to make booths for Jesus, Moses and Elijah. A cloud appeared and covered them all and God spoke from the cloud saying *"This is my Son whom I have chosen; Listen to Him!"*



Why did the transfiguration take place? At this stage the disciples were becoming clearer that Jesus really was the Messiah, and the Son of God. Peter, James and John now had extra confirmation of this because God Himself reinforced it to them. He said *"This is my Son* (just as He had said earlier at Jesus' baptism). The three disciples didn't tell others about Jesus' transfiguration until after Jesus had been raised from the dead. Peter, James and John thus had a special revelation of Jesus which must have been extremely valuable for them as they all, later, became leaders of the early Church.

Healing a boy with an evil spirit 9:37-45

Jesus' disciples couldn't drive the evil spirit out of a boy. Jesus was a bit exasperated by their unbelief and drove the demon out *and they were all amazed at the greatness of God*. He took this opportunity to remind the disciples that He was going to be betrayed but the disciples still didn't understand.

The greatest in the kingdom 9:46-50

When the disciples had an argument about who among them would be greatest Jesus took a little child and said *Whoever welcomes this little child in My name welcomes me; and whoever welcomes Me welcomes the One who sent Me. For He who is least among you all is the greatest.*

Spiritual pride is a great enemy for all who seek to follow Jesus. As soon as you seek to build yourself up, you are taking away from the Lordship of Jesus in your life. He, and He only, is to be Lord!

Jesus ministry as He moved from Galilee to Jerusalem. 9:51-19:27

The cost of following Jesus 9:51-62

Jesus began to head towards Jerusalem, fully knowing what would await Him there. As He passed through Samaria He was not welcomed by the locals and the disciples wanted to call down fire from heaven and destroy them. Jesus rebuked them and continued on. When some people said they would follow Jesus *wherever you go*, Jesus faced them up with the consequences. They would (like Him) have nowhere to lay their head, and would not be able to carry out family responsibilities. Following Jesus has a cost. We must lay down everything to be His disciple. *No-one who puts a hand to the plough and looks back is fit for service in the kingdom of God.*

Sending out the seventy disciples 10:1-24

Jesus then appointed seventy two others and sent them out to *heal the sick* and tell people *'The kingdom of God is near you'*. They were to reap a harvest for the kingdom of God: *The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field.* They were to travel light, stay with people of peace, and move on if they were rejected. If people would listen to them they would be listening to Jesus, but those who rejected them would be rejecting Jesus and the One who sent Him. Those who reject the message would be like Korazin, Bethsaida, Tyre, Sidon and Capernaum which had seen God's power but rejected Him and suffered the consequences.

The seventy two returned with joy because demons submitted to them in Jesus' name. Jesus said He had given them *authority to trample on snakes and scorpions and to overcome all the power of the enemy*; and nothing would harm them. But they were not to *rejoice that the spirits submit to them*, but that their *names are written in heaven.*

Jesus was *full of joy through the Holy Spirit*, and praised God that He had *hidden these things from the wise and learned, and revealed them to little children.* He explained that everything had been committed to Him by the Father. *No one knows who the Son is except the Father, and no one knows who the Father is except the Son and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.* The disciples were blessed because they were among those who saw what they did. *Many prophets and kings wanted to see what you see but did not see it, and to hear what you hear but did not hear it.* If we want to see more of God and be more effective in doing God's works we also need to be in close relationship with Him.

The parable of the good Samaritan 10:25-37

An expert in the law asked Jesus *What must I do to inherit eternal life?* Jesus asked him to answer his own question and he quoted from Deuteronomy 6:5 and Leviticus 19:8 in saying *'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind'*; and, *'Love your neighbour as yourself.'* Jesus then said *You have answered correctly. Do this and you will live.* (This is another indication that Jesus' way of love fulfils all of the Old Testament Law. See page 7 above).

The man wanted to justify himself and asked *Who is my neighbour?* In reply Jesus told the parable of the Good Samaritan, (only found in Luke's gospel). A man going down from Jerusalem to Jericho was robbed, stripped and left half dead. A priest and a Levite passed by but a Samaritan stopped and helped the man, even paying for his needs to be met. Jesus asked *Which of the three was neighbour to the man?* When the expert of the law replied that it was the Samaritan Jesus said *Go and do likewise.* Jews and Samaritans despised each other and tried not to have any contact with each other. The religious leaders followed this approach but the way of love demonstrated by the Samaritan crossed over all barriers, even religious ones. Jesus way of love is always the best way!



Mary and Martha 10:38-42

Jesus and the disciples stayed at the home of Mary and Martha. Practical Martha was concerned that Mary had left her to *do the work by myself*. Mary, however, was focused on sitting at Jesus feet *listening to what He said*. Some people focus on earthly things while others focus on heavenly things. Jesus said that Mary's way was *better*.

Teaching on prayer 11:1-13

The disciples asked Jesus to teach them how to pray.

Luke records Jesus as giving them a shortened version of the "Lord's Prayer" compared to Matthew 6:9-13:

<i>Father, hallowed be your name,</i>	We begin by focusing on God the Father. Our prayer is towards Him, and for His glory, rather than being all about us.
<i>Your kingdom come,</i>	We ask God to bring about His Kingdom: His rule and reign in our hearts and in the world. We are seeking to align ourselves with God's will as we pray.
<i>Give us each day our daily bread.</i>	After focusing on God we can then bring our needs to Him.
<i>Forgive us our sins, for we also forgive everyone who sins against us.</i>	We ask God to forgive us for our sins as long as we have forgiven those who sin against us.
<i>And lead us not into temptation.</i>	After asking God to forgive our sin we ask Him to protect us from sin by keeping us from temptation.

Jesus then expands on this by explaining that we can come to God in prayer with *boldness*. We are encouraged to *ask* God for what we need; continually *seek* His will, and *knock* on His door till we receive what He has for us. The tense here is present continuous. Ask, and keep on asking; seek and keep on seeking; knock and keep on knocking. If we do we will receive what we ask; find what we seek and the door will be opened to experiencing God's will for our lives. This is because God loves us and delights in giving us *good gifts*, (including the Holy Spirit). *For everyone who asks receives; those who seek find; and to those who knock, the door will be opened.*

For and against Jesus 11:14-28

When Jesus cast out a demon some said He did by *Beelzebub the prince of demons* (the 'lord of the flies'), and others wanted a sign from heaven. This was done to test Him but Jesus explained that *any kingdom divided against itself will be ruined and a house divided against itself will fall*. If Jesus cast out demons it must have been *by the Spirit of God* and that meant the *kingdom of God* had come to them.

Jesus then gave a direct challenge: *Whoever is not with Me is against Me and whoever does not gather with Me, scatters*. When evil spirits are cast out they *seek a place to rest*. If they return they bring seven other spirits back with them and *the final condition is worse than the first*. The same challenge applies to us: Will we follow Jesus or reject Him and take the consequences?

As Jesus said this someone called out a blessing on Jesus' mother but Jesus replied "*Blessed rather are those who hear the word of God and obey it*".

The sign of Jonah 11:29-32

In response to the crowd's desire to see a miraculous sign Jesus said "*This is a wicked generation. It asks for a miraculous sign, but none will be given it except the sign of Jonah. For as Jonah was a sign to the Ninevites, so also will the Son of Man be to this generation.*"

This is explained more fully in Matthew's gospel. There Jesus explained that the *as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of a huge fish, so the Son of Man*



will be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. Matthew 12:40. Jesus was to be in the tomb for 3 days and 3 nights and then would rise again, just as Jonah was in the belly of the fish for 3 days and 3 nights and then was given his life back. The resurrection of Jesus is God's greatest sign!

Light and darkness 11:33-36

Jesus brings light into every part of our lives. We are to see to it that this light within us is not darkness. *If your whole body is full of light, and no part of it is dark, it will be complexly lighted, as when the light of a lamp shines in you.* Yet another call by Jesus for Him to be Lord of every area of our lives!

Six woes 11:37-54

Jesus now pronounces six woes on the Pharisees and (so-called) experts in the Law. In each He was denouncing their hypocrisy because they:

- Cleaned the outsides of cups and dishes but were wicked on the inside.
- Gave a tenth of their produce but neglected justice and love of God.
- Loved the most important seats in the synagogue.
- Loaded others down with burdens and didn't try to help them.
- Approved of violence done to prophets in the past.
- Didn't seek knowledge or enable others to find it.

These are typical actions of hypocrites. In each case they were saying one thing but doing another.

In response the Pharisees and teachers of the law opposed Jesus *fiercely* and tried to *catch Him in something He might say*. In Chapter 12 Luke describes a number of warnings and encouragements that Jesus gave in response to their hypocrisy.

Hypocrisy 12:1-12

Jesus explained that *there is nothing concealed that will not be disclosed, or hidden that will not be made known*. This includes words that are said in secret. The consequences of our actions are severe so we should *fear the one who has power to throw us into hell*. God loves us, though, and doesn't want this, but if we:

- acknowledge Him before others He will acknowledge us before the angels
- disown Him before people He will disown us
- speak a word against Him we can be forgiven (if we seek forgiveness)
- blaspheme the Holy Spirit we can't be forgiven
- speak up for Him the Holy Spirit will teach us what to say at the time.

Greed 12:13-21

We are to be on our guard *against all kinds of greed*. That's because *life doesn't consist in an abundance of possessions*. This was illustrated with by a rich fool who thought he had *plenty of good things laid up for many years*. He wanted to *take life easy, eat drink and be merry*. But he died that night and missed out on all he has planned. *This is how it will be with those who store up things for themselves but are not rich toward God*.

Worry 12:22-34

Jesus then told the disciples not to worry about their lives, including about what they wear or eat. God loves us and knows our needs. He will provide for us as He does for all creation. *Who of you by worrying can add a single hour to your life?* .God knows what we need and loves us so if we seek His kingdom *all these things will be given to us as well*. When we fully trust Him *all these things will be given to us as well*. Rather than worrying we are to make sure that our hearts are focused on heavenly things. *For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also*.

Watchfulness 12:35-48

We must be ready, because *the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect Him*. This was illustrated by a parable in which a master returns home and finds his servants ready for his coming, even if he comes at an unexpected time.

Peter wanted to know if this was just for the disciples or for everyone so Jesus expanded on the parable. If a master returns and finds his manager doing well he will bless him. If he returns and finds the manager ill-treating his servants the manager will be punished. Christians must be like the good manager doing what the Master wants all of the time, even if He takes a long time to return. From everyone who has been given much, much will be demanded; and from the one who has been entrusted with much, much more will be asked. We must always "be about the Master's business".

Division 12:49-13:9

Surprisingly, Jesus says that He didn't come *to bring peace on the earth*. Rather He would come with fire and bring *division*, even within families. That's because some would follow Him and others wouldn't. Jesus said that those who don't follow Him may know how to interpret the appearance of the earth and sky, but they didn't know how to interpret what He was doing *at the present time*. Each one must *judge what is right*. For example in being reconciled to others, rather than taking them to court. Everyone must repent or they will perish. Jesus illustrated this with a parable about a fig tree that hadn't borne any fruit for three years. It would have one last chance to bear fruit; otherwise it would be *cut down*.

Legalism 13:17

Jesus was teaching on the Sabbath in a synagogue and healed a woman *who had been crippled by an evil spirit for eighteen years*. The synagogue ruler was indignant and Jesus exposed the hypocrisy of this by showing that everyone will care for their animals on the Sabbath, so shouldn't the woman *whom Satan has kept bound for eighteen long years be set free on the Sabbath*. Jesus' legalistic opponents were humiliated *but the people were delighted with all the wonderful things He was doing*.

The parables of the mustard seed and the yeast 13:18-21

The Kingdom of God is all pervasive. When Jesus is Lord it spreads out and grows to affect all aspects of life (if you will let Him be King!). This is demonstrated through mustard seed and yeast which are both tiny, but later grow into something greater. The more you let Jesus be King of your life the more effective you will be.

The narrow door 13:22-30

At this point many were realising that Jesus' way was very different to the prevailing views of the Rabbis. Some asked whether *only a few* would be saved. Jesus replied that we are to *make every effort to enter through the narrow door, because many will try to enter and will not be able to*. It doesn't matter who we are, where we have come from, or what we have done. Those who are not followers of Jesus will be *weeping and gnashing their teeth*, while those who are followers of Jesus will *take their place at the feast in the kingdom of God*. Jesus then give a sombre warning, that *those who are last will be first, and first will be last*. How important that we live our lives in a genuine and authentic way under Jesus' lordship.

Jesus sorrow for Jerusalem 13:31-35

When Jesus was warned that Herod wanted to kill Him Jesus replied that He would *drive out demons and heal people today and tomorrow, and on the third day would reach His goal*. He wasn't yet in Jerusalem where He knew He would die *for surely no prophet can die outside Jerusalem*.

Jesus then cried for Jerusalem: *O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you, how often I have longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing. Look, your house is left to you desolate. I tell you, you will not see me again until you say, 'Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord'*.

Jerusalem was (and is) the centre of God's purpose for the earth. God had longed to see this city accept His salvation and His ways, but, once again it was about to reject Him, and would soon suffer the consequences. Just a few years later, in AD70, Jerusalem was destroyed.



At a Pharisee's house 14:1-24

While eating at a Pharisee's house on the Sabbath, Jesus gave a number of very pointed lessons regarding the Pharisee's legalistic behaviour.

- Jesus healed a man suffering from dropsy, showing that caring for others is not something that can be legislated.
- When some took places of honour at the table, Jesus showed that humility was what really brings about honour. *For all those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted*.

- The Pharisee had invited friends, relatives and rich neighbours, - people who might repay his favour. Jesus showed that inviting those who can never repay - like *the poor, the crippled, the lame and the blind* – would be repaid by God at the resurrection.

Someone at the table recognised that *Blessed are those who will eat at the feast in the Kingdom of God.* In response Jesus' told a parable is about a wedding banquet that a king gave for his son. Those who were initially invited had many excuses why they couldn't come. The king then invited *the poor, the crippled, the blind and the lame* to the banquet so that his house would be full. The implication was that the invitation to come into the Kingdom of God is extended to all, but not all will accept Jesus and actually enter the Kingdom. Those like the Pharisees who reject Jesus and persecute His followers will miss out.

The cost of being a disciple 14:25-35

Jesus now shows how following Him means that we must lay down everything and let Him be Lord in all areas of our lives. *If anyone comes to me and does not hate his father and mother, his wife and children, his brothers and sisters-yes, even his own life-he cannot be my disciple. And anyone who does not carry his cross and follow me cannot be my disciple.* We need to count the cost of this so we don't start on the Christian way, and then later give up. Just as a king considers whether he will be able to win a war, so we must count the cost of being Jesus' disciple. *In the same way, those of you who do not give up everything you have cannot be my disciple.* Being a follower of Jesus demands that you lay down your life and lose everything. In return, you will gain eternal life, and your life will have meaning as you seek to fulfil God's purposes for your life.

Jesus now gives a number of parables to show how much God wants people to be saved. He will welcome anyone who repents and comes to Him, and when a sinner is saved there is great rejoicing in heaven.

The parable of the lost sheep 15:1-3

When some Pharisees judged Jesus for eating with "sinners" He told a parable to show that God wants all sinners to repent and enter His kingdom. In the parable of the lost sheep Jesus showed that a shepherd with 100 sheep will always go to find one sheep that gets lost and will rejoice when it is found. *In the same way there will be more rejoicing in heaven over one sinner that repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who do not need to repent.*



The parable of the lost coin 15:8-10

In the same way that a woman losing a coin will rejoice when she finds it *there is rejoicing in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents.*

The parable of the prodigal son 15:11-32

When a younger son asked his father for his inheritance the father gave it to him, and he wasted it *in wild living.* When he repented and returned home the father rejoiced *for this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.* The father put on a feast of a fattened calf to celebrate his son's return but the older son was angry and refused to participate, saying that he had worked for the father for many years and wasn't even given a goat to celebrate with his friends. The father reminded the older son that everything the he had would be his but that they should still celebrate the return of the younger son because *he was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.*



This parable can also be considered as "the parable of the incredible father". It demonstrates how much God the Father wants to be in a loving Father-Child relationship with us.

Our Heavenly Father:

- always acts towards us in love
- let's us choose to go our own way or to follow Him
- doesn't rescue us from bad choices
- is filled with compassion when we suffer the consequences of our sin
- rejoices when we repent and turn to Him
- always wants the best for us.
- Is focused on having a two-way, dynamic, heart to heart relationship with us.

He is an incredible Father!

The parable of the shrewd manager 16:1-15

In this parable a manager was accused of wasting his master's possessions and was called to give account. The shrewd manager was concerned that he would lose his job so he called in his master's debtors, and reduced the debt so each debtor made a payment. Jesus explained that, like the manager, *the people of this world are more shrewd in dealing with their own kind than are the people of the light*. He doesn't commend the dishonesty of the shrewd manager, but uses this story to challenge us to use worldly wealth for eternal purposes. *Whoever can be trusted with very little can also be trusted with much, and whoever is dishonest with very little will be dishonest with much*. He contrasts *worldly wealth* with *true riches* and gives a warning that *no one can serve two masters. You cannot serve both God and Money* at the same time. If God is truly your master then you will use your money to serve Him.

The Kingdom of God 16:16-31

Up till the time of John *the Law and the Prophets were proclaimed*, but now *the good news of the Kingdom of God is being preached*. To be part of God's Kingdom is so vital that everyone needs to aggressively seek to be included. The Law was totally fulfilled in Christ (Matthew 5:17) and its requirements are fully met in Him.

Jesus now tells a story about a rich man and a beggar to illustrate how some will enter the Kingdom and others will not. When the beggar died he was *carried to Abraham's side*. When the rich man died he was *in torment* in hell. There is a *great chasm* between heaven and hell that no-one can cross. When the rich man realised this he pleaded that his family would be warned so that *they will not also come to this place of torment*. If someone from the dead went to them he thought they would repent, but Abraham said that they hadn't listened to Moses and the Prophets so *they will not be convinced even if someone rises from the dead*.



The situation described in this story still applies. Today people still have the opportunity to accept Christ and enter the Kingdom of God. Jesus has risen from the dead to prove that this is true.

Unfortunately not all will accept Christ's offer of salvation. In rejecting Jesus they are choosing to live for eternity in torment.

How important that Christians share the good news so that everyone has the opportunity to accept Christ and gain eternal life!

Kingdom living 17:1-10

Jesus now describes three practical aspects of living God's way:

- Don't cause others to sin or there will be consequences.
- If someone sins against you *rebuke them and if they repent forgive them* repeatedly.
- Grow in faith. True faith can say to a tree *Be uprooted and planted in the sea, and it will obey you*. (That's because true faith is always based on acting in obedience to God's voice and in doing His will).
- Fulfil your duties faithfully as a servant of God.

Ten healed of leprosy 17:11-19

Jesus healed ten men who had leprosy but only one – a Samaritan - *came back, praising God in a loud voice* and thanked Jesus. Jesus has no favourites. He can heal anyone but this should always result in *praise to God*. The Samaritan was told to *rise and go; your faith has made you well*.

The coming of the kingdom of God 17:20-37

The disciples asked when the kingdom of God would come. Jesus replied *that the kingdom of God is within you*. (The *Kingdom of God* is when God is King of your life, so you are doing what He wants you to do, and being what He wants you to be. Jesus is Lord of every part of your life!).

The full revelation of the kingdom of God will come when Jesus returns. There will be many indications that this is about to take place:

- Signs in the skies.
- People engaging in many sinful and worldly practices.

To be prepared for this Jesus tells us that *Whoever tries to keep their life will lose it, and whoever loses their life will preserve it.* The kingdom of God requires full commitment to the Lordship of Christ!

Preparing for the Kingdom of God 18:1-34

Jesus now gives more parables to help us make sure we are ready for the Kingdom of God.

- The parable of the persistent widow shows that we should *always pray and not give up.* Just as a widow continually pleaded to a judge for justice, so *God will bring about justice for His chosen ones, who cry out to Him day and night.*
- The parable of the tax collector and the Pharisee shows that all who exalt themselves (like the Pharisee) *will be humbled,* while those who humble themselves (like the tax collector) *will be exalted.*
- When children were brought to Jesus for prayer He said *Let the little children come to Me and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. Anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it.* Jesus loves children! He also shows us that the way to enter His kingdom is with childlike openness, trust and faith.
- When a rich ruler asked Jesus *What good thing must I do to inherit eternal life?* Jesus immediately challenged him. The way to inherit eternal life is to believe in Jesus, not by trying to do good things! Jesus checked whether the man was following the commandments, especially those about moral behaviours. The man had kept all of these but Jesus then identified the key aspect of the man's life he had to lay down if Jesus was to be first in his life: his wealth. *Sell everything you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow Me.* The rich man couldn't do this and *went away sad.*



It is hard for rich people *to enter the kingdom of God. It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for the rich to enter the kingdom of God.* That's because the kingdom is all about trusting in Jesus (not riches) and putting Jesus first in your life but *what is impossible with man is possible with God.*

- In the kingdom everyone who has left worldly things behind for Jesus' sake will be rewarded with much more than they had *in this age* and will inherit *eternal life.*
- The way by which the Kingdom will come in is through the Cross. Jesus again explains that He will die on the Cross in fulfilment of *everything that is written in the prophets* and that on the third day *He will rise again.*

Does Jesus have first place in your life?

Healing of the blind beggar 18:35-43

A blind beggar cried out to Jesus, asking that He would *have mercy* on him. Even though the crowd told the man to be quiet he shouted all the more. Jesus called the man to Him and said *Receive your sight; your faith has healed you. Immediately he received his sight and followed Jesus, praising God.* Don't give up when your first prayers are not answered. Keep pressing in to Jesus!



Zacchaeus is saved 19:1-10

The tax collector Zacchaeus was short and climbed a tree to see Jesus as He passed by. Jesus asked if He could stay at Zacchaeus' house even though the people considered He would be the *guest of a sinner*. Zacchaeus repented of his sins and promised to give half of what he had to the poor and to repay what he had stolen. Jesus said *Today salvation has come to this house*.

Jesus can save anyone, regardless of how sinful they are. *For the Son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost*.



Being trustworthy 19:11-27

Jesus was *near Jerusalem and the people thought that the kingdom of God was going to appear at once*. He told a parable to show that we must remain trustworthy in preparation for the coming of the kingdom. When a *man of noble birth* (equivalent to Jesus) *went away to be appointed as King and then return* (which is what Jesus will do) he gave ten minas (about 30 months wages) to ten of his servants. They were to put the money to work till the master returned. The subjects *didn't want him to be King* (as with Jesus!). When the King returned some had faithfully served their master and produced growth. To these Jesus said *Well done*, and they were given more. Others produced no growth, so they lost what they had and it was given to those who had been trustworthy. *For everyone who has, more will be given, but for those who have nothing, even what they have will be taken away*.

This is a strong call for all Christians to be about the Master's business faithfully till He returns.

Jesus in Jerusalem 19:28 – 21:38

The triumphal entry 19:28-44

As Jesus approached Jerusalem for the final few days of His life on earth, He asked the disciples to fetch a donkey. This was so He could fulfil Zechariah 9:9. When He rode into Jerusalem on the donkey the crowds cried out *Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord*. (Psalm 118:26). At this stage many in the crowd were acknowledging that Jesus was the Saviour. The Pharisees tried to stop this but Jesus said *if they keep quiet the stones will cry out*.



Jesus at the Temple 19:45-48, 20:1-8

Jews had to change their money at the Temple so they could buy the animals needed for their sacrifices. The money-changers were robbing the people and Jesus overturned their tables saying *My house will be a house of prayer but you have made it a 'den of robbers'*. Isaiah 56:7.

Jesus taught at the temple every day. The Jewish leaders were trying to find a way to kill Him, but all the people hung on His words. When the leaders questioned Him about His authority to do what He was doing, Jesus asked whether John's baptism was from heaven or from men. They couldn't answer because either way their hypocrisy would be revealed. Jesus wouldn't tell them by what authority He did what He was doing (which was from God).



The parable of the tenants 20:-19

In this parable a landowner rented out his vineyard. When he sent servants to collect his returns the tenant killed them. Finally the landowner sent his beloved son and the tenants determined to kill him also. (This related to the Jews rejection of Jesus, God's Son, and the desire of their leaders to kill Him). Jesus said that the landlord would come and kill the tenants and *would give the vineyard to others*. i.e. all who would accept Jesus, rather than just the Jews. This was in fulfilment of Psalm 118:22.

Realising what He was saying the leaders then looked for a way to arrest Jesus and tried to catch Him in something He said.

Paying taxes to Caesar 20:20-26

First the Pharisees asked Jesus if it was *right to pay taxes to Caesar or not?* Jesus showed them a coin with Caesar's inscription on it and said we should *Give to Caesar what is Caesar's, and to God what is God's*. Our obligations to God don't preclude our obligations to human authorities.



The resurrection 20:27-40

Next some Sadducees (*who say there is no resurrection*) told a story about a woman who married a series of seven brothers in accordance with Deuteronomy 25:5,6. They asked *whose wife will she be at the resurrection?* Jesus explained that we will be *like angels* when we are in heaven, and there won't be any marriage. He then showed that there will be a resurrection by quoting from Exodus 3:6. *He is not the God of the dead, but of the living, for to Him all are alive.*

Who is Lord? 20:41-47, 21:1-4

Jesus then asked if David called the Messiah *Lord* (as in Psalm 110:1) how could He be David's Son? (Jesus, the Messiah, was David's son, because He was in the lineage of David. Matthew 1:1).

No matter how the Jewish leaders tried to trap Jesus, they couldn't because He knew the Word of God, He knew their hearts and He was who He said He was. He is Lord!

Jesus then warned the people about the Jewish leaders, because they always tried to take places of honour and power, but did this at the expense of the poor and powerless. This was highlighted when a widow made a gift of two small coins to the temple treasury. This was more than the wealthy gave, because *she out of her poverty put in all she had to live on.*



Signs of the end of the age 21:5-38

Jesus predicted that Jerusalem would be overthrown and its buildings destroyed. This was fulfilled about 37 years later in AD 70, when the Romans ransacked Jerusalem. The disciples asked *“When will these things happen? And what will be the sign that they are about to take place?”*

Jesus' reply, together with the equivalent passages in Matthew 24, 25 and Mark 13, gives a clear account of what will happen before He returns, and what will happen at the end of the age. It is better to build an understanding of the end times based around these verses, than from the Book of Revelation which is apocryphal and so contains much spiritual imagery. Also, it is wise to recognise that there are many theories for what will happen in the end times and we will only know which one is correct when Jesus actually comes again!

Here are the main events described in Luke associated with the Second Coming. In addition to these there are extra signs described in Matthew and Mark.

- Many will come claiming that they are Jesus and that *the time is near.*
- There will be a period of tribulation, with wars, famines, earthquakes, revolutions, wickedness and hatred.
- Christians will be persecuted, betrayed - even by family members - and put to death. But by *standing firm they will gain life.*
- Jerusalem will be *surrounded by armies and trampled on by enemies*, and there will be *great distress in the land and wrath against this people,*
- There will be unusual signs in the sun, moon, stars and sea which will cause much terror.
- Jesus will return from heaven *in a cloud with power and great glory.*

Jesus then used a fig tree to illustrate how we would know that the time is near. When you see these things happening, you know the kingdom of God is near.

In preparation for this:

- Jesus said His words would *never pass away.*
- We should remain careful (or watchful) so the day doesn't close on us unexpectedly.
- We should pray that we may be able to escape all that will happen and that we will be able to *stand before the Son of Man.*

Jesus continued to teach in the temple by day and stay on the Mount of Olives at night.

Exercise:

Read Matthew 24, Mark 13, Luke 21.

List all of the events that Jesus said would happen at the Second Coming. Then read Chapters 6-22 of the Book of Revelation and Daniel 9 in the light of this.

Jesus' death and resurrection 22:1 – 24:53

Judas agrees to betray Jesus 22:1-6

The Passover was approaching and the Jewish leaders were *looking for some way to get rid of Jesus*. Satan entered Judas Iscariot, one of the twelve disciples, and he agreed to betray Jesus for a sum of money.

The last supper 22:7-38

On the first day of the *Feast of Unleavened Bread the Passover lamb had to be sacrificed*. Jesus sent His disciples into Jerusalem to find a specific room where He could prepare for the Passover.

As they sat at the table Jesus said that He had *eagerly desired to eat this Passover* with them before He *suffered*, and that He would *not eat it again until it finds fulfilment in the Kingdom of God*. The kingdom would be ushered in through the death and resurrection of Jesus (which were about to take place).

Jesus *took bread, gave thanks and broke it*. He explained that the bread was His body, which was about to be broken for them (on the Cross). He then *took the cup*, saying it was the *new covenant* in His blood, which would be *poured out for you*.



In shedding His blood on the Cross Jesus was fulfilling the Old Covenant (which required the blood of a lamb to be shed for to make atonement for the sins of the people), and bringing in the New Covenant whereby His blood was shed once for all so we can have full and complete salvation. See Hebrews 9:11-28.

A dispute then arose among the disciples about who was the greatest. Jesus turned this right around by saying that the greatest among them would be the one who serves just as He was among them *as one who serves*. He was going to confer on them a kingdom so they could all sit at table with Him, presumably in heaven.

Jesus then prayed for Simon Peter that his faith would not fail, as, in future, he was going to *strengthen his brothers*. Peter said he was ready to follow Jesus even to prison and death but Jesus said he would deny Him three times that very night, *before the cock crows*.

Jesus asked if the disciples had lacked anything when He sent them out previously. (10:1-24). He had provided all they needed then, and now they were to go out and fight for His cause, because everything written about Jesus was *reaching its fulfilment*.

Praying in the garden 22:39-46

Jesus then went with His disciples to the Garden of Gethsemane at the base of the Mount of Olives. He prayed that the disciples would not *fall into temptation* and then prayed *Father, if You are willing, take this cup from me, yet not my will, but Yours be done*. He prayed so earnestly His sweat was *like drops of blood falling to the ground*. Jesus knew that He was about to undergo the greatest suffering the world has ever known. In His humanity He wanted the Father to take this from Him, but He submitted Himself to the Father's will because He loved us and wanted to save us. Amazing love!

The disciples fell asleep and Jesus told them to *get up and pray* so that they would *not fall into temptation*.



Jesus arrested 22:47-53

Judas arrived with a crowd, sent from the chief priests, the teachers of the law and the elders. He had arranged to betray Jesus with a kiss. Jesus was arrested and there must have been some fighting because someone cut off the right ear of a servant of the high priest. Jesus healed the man and explained that He had not come to bring about rebellion. This was an hour when *darkness reigns!*

Peter denies Jesus 22:54-62

Later that night Peter denied Jesus three times and then the cock crowed, just as Jesus had predicted. Peter was distressed when he realised what he had done and *wept bitterly*.

Jesus tried before the Sanhedrin and before Pilate and Herod 22:63-23:25

Jesus was taken before the council of elders who asked directly if He was the Christ. Jesus answered that He would be soon be *seated at the right hand of the mighty God*. The council considered this to be blasphemy but did not have authority to kill Jesus so sent Him to Pilate. Pilate could find *no basis for a charge* against Jesus and sent Him on to Herod, who was pleased by this as he *hoped to see Him perform a miracle*.

Herod and his soldiers mocked Jesus and sent Him back to Pilate, but again, Pilate could find *no basis* for the charges against Him, and *no grounds for the death penalty*. The people were incited by the leaders to demand Barabbas be released and Jesus be crucified so Pilate *decided to grant their demand*.

Jesus, as the innocent Son of God was tried by human courts and no charge could be brought against Him. But He was about to become the Lamb of God, the perfect sacrifice who would take away the sin of the world. John 1:29

The death and burial of Jesus. 23:26-56

Simon of Cyrene was forced to carry the cross for Jesus as He walked to Golgotha, the place of the skull (the local rubbish dump). Jesus told the women who mourned and wailed for Him to weep for themselves and their children because there would be difficult times ahead (presumably in relation to the future destruction of Jerusalem. 13:31-35).



Jesus was then crucified along with two criminals. At this terrible moment in history a number of things happened:

- Jesus cried out *Father forgive them for they do not know what they are doing*.
- The soldiers divided up Jesus' clothes by casting lots (fulfilling Psalm 22:18).
- Onlookers sneered at Jesus saying *He saved others; let Him save Himself if He is the Christ of God, the Chosen One*.
- The soldiers mocked Jesus and offered Him wine vinegar (a pain-killer), but Jesus refused to take it.
- There was a written notice above Jesus' head *This is the King of the Jews*.
- One of the criminals insulted Jesus but the other one recognised they were getting what they deserved while Jesus *had done nothing wrong*. To this one Jesus said *Today you will be with Me in paradise*.

Jesus was crucified at the third hour of the day (9am) on Nisan 14th, the day of Preparation. Between the 6th and 9th hour (noon till 3pm) there was *darkness over all the land*. This was truly mankind's darkest hour.

- As Jesus died He called out *Father, into Your hands I commit my spirit*.
- The curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom. This showed that now all people could have direct access to God through the Lord Jesus Christ. No longer was a priest needed as an intermediary between God and His people.
- The centurion exclaimed *Surely this was a righteous man*.
- The women who had come with Jesus watched from a distance.
- Joseph of Arimathea went to Pilate and asked for Jesus' body so he could bury it. Joseph took down the body, *wrapped it in linen cloth, and placed it in a tomb cut in the rock*.
- This took place on *Preparation Day*, the day before the special Sabbath that occurred as part of the Passover celebrations. Jesus was crucified on Wednesday Nisan 14th and His body had to be placed in the tomb before the *special Sabbath* on Thursday Nisan 15th. John 19:31. This meant that Jesus was in the tomb for three days and three nights. 11:29-32, Matthew 12:40. He rose from the dead on Sunday Nisan 18th, after the regular Sabbath on Saturday Nisan 17th.
- The women prepared spices and perfumes in preparation for the traditional Jewish burial customs.

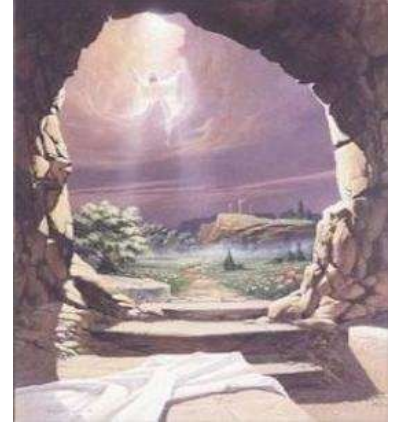


On the cross, in His full humanity Jesus took upon Himself all of the sin of the world and took the punishment that all sinners deserve. God's righteous anger at sin was poured upon Jesus and was then fully satisfied. When Jesus died the wages of sin were paid. On this basis, God could declare us righteous in Christ. Our salvation was won for us by Jesus at the Cross. Hallelujah! See Romans 6:23, Romans 3:25, Romans 5:12-19; 2 Corinthians 5:21; Romans 5:1.

Jesus' resurrection 24:1-49

Jesus rose from the dead *on the first day of the week*, and the women came to prepare His body for burial *very early in the morning*. They found the *stone rolled away from the tomb* but couldn't find Jesus' body.

- Two angels revealed that Jesus was not there: *He has risen!* They then remembered He had said He *must be crucified and on the third day be raised again*.
- The women went and told the others that Jesus was alive but initially they did not believe it.
- Peter ran to the tomb and saw that it was empty. He *wondered what had happened*.
- Jesus appeared to two of them while they were going to a village called Emmaus but initially they didn't recognise Him. He explained how *the Christ was to suffer these things* and then *enter into His glory* and *what was said in all the scriptures concerning Himself*. As they sat to eat Jesus broke bread and their eyes were opened and they recognised Him. He disappeared from their sight and they said *Were not our hearts burning within us while He walked with us on the road and opened the Scriptures to us?* They reported to the other disciples that *It is true! The Lord has risen* and that He had *appeared to Peter* and that He was *recognised by them when He broke the bread*.
- Later Jesus appeared to the Eleven saying *Peace be with you*. They were startled and He showed them His hands and feet and ate some fish with them. This showed it really was Jesus and not a ghost. He explained that *everything that was written about Him in the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled: that the Christ will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, and repentance and forgiveness of sins will be preached in His name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem*
- They were to be *witnesses of these things*. Jesus was going to send them the promised Holy Spirit, but they were to *stay in the city* until they received *power from on high*. (Luke describes how this took place in Chapters 1 and 2 of his next book: Acts).



The other Gospels record many other appearances that Jesus made after His resurrection. Jesus' resurrection proved that he was God. It also fulfilled many Old Testament prophecies and vindicated Jesus' own predictions that He would rise from the dead.

The resurrection of Jesus also shows that Jesus statement *I am the way, the truth and the life. No-one comes to the Father except by Me* is true. (John 14:6). There is no other Saviour; no other hope of salvation. Jesus is alive. He has risen from the dead. He alone is worthy of our love, devotion, obedience and praise.

Jesus' ascension 24:50-53

Jesus then led the disciples out near Bethany and blessed them. As He was doing this He *left them and was taken up into heaven*.

The disciples *worshipped Him and returned to Jerusalem with great joy. And they stayed continually at the temple praising God*.

Fifty days later they received the promised Holy Spirit and that led to the beginning of the Christian church. History would never be the same! Salvation was now available to all through the risen Lord Jesus Christ.



Discussion questions

The word *gospel* means *good news*. Identify the good news contained in Luke's gospel. What makes it good news?

Find out all you can about Luke. Why do you think he was chosen to write one of the gospels? What was the purpose of his gospel? How is His gospel unique? How is it similar to the others?

What are the major themes in Luke's gospel? How are these relevant for Christians today?

Luke's writes a lot about the "Kingdom of God". What is the Kingdom of God? What is it like? How was it ushered in? How can we enter it? How can we live in it? When and how will it be fulfilled?

Jesus is portrayed in Luke's gospel as 'The Son of Man'. How is this different to how He is portrayed in the other gospels? Identify parts in Luke's gospel where Jesus' humanity is especially evident. What is the significance of this for Christians today?

Identify Jesus' teaching, parables and miracles in Luke's gospel. What is their relevance and importance for us today?

What have you learnt from your study of Luke's gospel? How will you apply this in your life?