

Two Year Bible Trek
Week 82
Luke 1:1 - 9:50

Key Concepts: The key concept in this book is that Jesus the Christ is the completion of God's work with Israel and also the beginning of God's work with the Gentile world.

Central Concepts: We will look at different central concepts in each of the three lessons covering Luke. The first concept is that, like both Mark and Matthew, this gospel is not pure history. It is a theological work which arranges the stories of Jesus in such a way as to deal with particular issues. Some of these issues include the relationship of Jesus to the church, the church to the synagogue and the church to the wider world; the socio-economic and political implications of the good news; what it means to be a disciple in the world along with (as with the other gospels) attempting to situate Jesus in the salvation history of Israel and the world.

Brief Summary: Luke 1 - 2: These are the infancy and childhood narratives. Unlike Mark and similarly to Matthew, Luke offers us a theological/historical setting for Jesus' birth. Luke begins by offering us the story of barren Elizabeth (similar to barren Sarah and Hannah) who is given an angelic promise that she would have a son (John) who would be a prophet. The angel next announces to Mary, that though unmarried, she will have a child by the Holy Spirit and this child will be the Son of God. This designation is confirmed when Mary and Elizabeth (who are cousins) meet. Mary offers a song which is similar to that of Hannah's in 1 Samuel. Luke continues with the "Christmas Story" birth narrative and Jesus' parent's then engage in the Jewish rituals of circumcision and a trip to the Temple when Jesus is of appropriate age. Included in this portion are two prophetic announcements by Simeon and Anna who make it clear to the readers that Jesus is a light to the world and the one who has come to redeem God's people. Luke is the only gospel to include a story about Jesus' childhood.

Luke 3:1 - 4:13 Luke moves from the birth and childhood of Jesus to his preparation for ministry. We begin with the ministry of John the Baptist (just as we began with his conception and birth) which in Luke ends with his imprisonment. Jesus is introduced (only after John's arrest) with his genealogy which stretches back not to Abraham, as in Matthew, but to Adam, the first human; thus Jesus represents the new human family. Jesus is then driven into the wilderness by the Holy Spirit in order to be tested by Satan. Jesus passes each test by relying on scripture.

Luke 4:14 - 9:50 We now enter Jesus' ministry in Galilee. It begins with Jesus returning "in power" (which is a significant concept in Luke-Acts) and teaching in the synagogues in Galilee. In Nazareth, his home town, Jesus defines his ministry as preaching good news to the poor, release to captives, giving sight to the blind, liberty to the oppressed and proclaiming the Jubilee year. Though the people seem to like him, he offends them, they want to kill him, but he escapes. The rest of this portion of Luke consists of Jesus fulfilling his stated purpose. Jesus heals, preaches, forgives sins, does some excellent Rabbinic interpretations of the Sabbath, chooses his followers, teaches with a sermon on the plain (not on the mount) in which he emphasizes care for the marginalized, carries out more healings, affirms his identity to John the Baptist's followers by referring them to the results of his ministry, calms the seas, raises a child from the dead, commissions his disciples, is confessed as messiah by Peter, is transfigured, reminds the disciples of his coming death and then instructs them not to interfere with anyone preaching in his name.

1. What differences do you see between Matthew and Luke thus far in the story?
2. What do you make of Jesus' description of his ministry? How are we living into that ministry?
3. How many ways do you see Jesus demonstrating his power in these stories?