

BIBLE OVERVIEW

PART VI: THE KINGDOM PROCLAIMED

What do you think?

1. How is Jesus' birth different from all other people?
2. Jesus' greatest opposition was from religious leaders. Why do you think this was so?
4. What makes a factors make a witness' testimony admissible as evidence?
5. Do you think the Gospel account is accurate? Why?

The primary concern of this study is to observe how the NT, and in particular Luke, indicates the fulfilment of the OT hopes in the person and work of Jesus. In Luke 1:1-4 Luke indicates his intention to present an orderly and well researched account of Jesus' ministry, based on the testimony of 'those who were from the beginning eye witnesses and ministers of the word.'

Luke 1:1 Many have undertaken to draw up an account of the things that have been fulfilled among us,² just as they were handed down to us by those who from the first were eye-witnesses and servants of the word.³ Therefore, since I myself have carefully investigated everything from the beginning, it seemed good also to me to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus,⁴ so that you may know the certainty of the things you have been taught.

When Jesus is baptised he identifies himself with those waiting for the coming salvation of God, and dedicates himself to making that salvation possible. The anointing of Jesus with the Holy Spirit and the voice from heaven identifies Jesus as the Christ and the one who fulfils the servant of the Lord 'You are my son whom I love, with you I am well pleased.' (3:22 & Isaiah 42:1).

The genealogy in 3:23-38 links Jesus back to Adam and stresses the universal significance of Jesus for the whole of the human race. The account of Jesus' temptations (4:1-13) shows that he came to defeat the devil and every power enslaving God's people, to make it possible for them to share the promise of the new creation.

Read Luke 4:14-30

Luke 4:14 Jesus returned to Galilee in the power of the Spirit, and news about him spread through the whole countryside.¹⁵ He taught in their synagogues, and everyone praised him.¹⁶ He went to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, and on the Sabbath day he went into the synagogue, as was his custom. And he stood up to read.¹⁷ The scroll of the prophet Isaiah was handed to him. Unrolling it, he found the place where it is written:¹⁸ "The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed,¹⁹ to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour."²⁰ Then he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant and sat down. The eyes of everyone in the synagogue were fastened on him,²¹ and he began by saying to them, "Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing."²² All spoke well of him and were amazed at the gracious words that came from his lips. "Isn't this Joseph's son?" they asked.²³ Jesus said to them, "Surely you will quote this proverb to me: 'Physician, heal



yourself! Do here in your home town what we have heard that you did in Capernaum."²⁴ "I tell you the truth," he continued, "no prophet is accepted in his home town."²⁵ I assure you that there were many widows in Israel in Elijah's time, when the sky was shut for three and a half years and there was a severe famine throughout the land.²⁶ Yet Elijah was not sent to any of them, but to a widow in Zarephath in the region of Sidon.²⁷ And there were many in Israel with leprosy in the time of Elisha the prophet, yet not one of them was cleansed--only Naaman the Syrian."²⁸ All the people in the synagogue were furious when they heard this.²⁹ They got up, drove him out of the town, and took him to the brow of the hill on which the town was built, in order to throw him down the cliff.³⁰ But he walked right through the crowd and went on his way.

What are we told about the nature and significance of Jesus' ministry?

Who did the prophecy in Isaiah originally apply to and how?

How does Jesus apply the prophecy?

Jesus pursues his ministry. He teaches with unusual authority and releases people from demon possession with a simple word (4:31-37). He heals the sick wherever he goes (4:38-40) and continually makes the preaching of the Kingdom of God his priority (4:42-44). He forgives people for their sins against God (5:20-26) and calls the outcasts of Jewish society to follow him (5:27-32). Jesus summarises his ministry by recalling Isaiah 29:18-19; 35:5-6 & 61:1 - in Luke 7:22 'the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, the poor have good news preached to them.'

The central section of Luke's gospel begins with this note: '*when the days drew near for him to be received up, he set his face to go to Jerusalem.*' The words 'to be received up' refer to the ascension which marks the climax of the gospel. Jesus resolutely sets his face towards Jerusalem knowing that suffering and death awaited him there - this would be the necessary preliminary to his ascension and heavenly rule as messiah. A high point of this section of the story is Zacchaeus.

Read Luke 19:1-10

Luke 19:1 Jesus entered Jericho and was passing through.² A man was there by the name of Zacchaeus; he was a chief tax collector and was wealthy.³ He wanted to see who Jesus was, but being a short man he could not, because of the crowd.⁴ So he ran ahead and climbed a sycamore-fig tree to see him, since Jesus was coming that way.⁵ When Jesus reached the spot, he looked up and said to him, "Zacchaeus, come down immediately. I must stay at



your house today."⁶ So he came down at once and welcomed him gladly.⁷ All the people saw this and began to mutter, "He has gone to be the guest of a sinner."⁸ But Zacchaeus stood up and said to the Lord, "Look, Lord! Here and now I give half of my possessions to the poor, and if I have cheated anybody out of anything, I will pay back four times the amount."⁹ Jesus said to him, "Today salvation has come to this house, because this man, too, is a son of Abraham.¹⁰ For the Son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost."

Who was Zacchaeus?

How is he described by Jesus in v10?

Zacchaeus turns to Jesus and welcomes him gladly - how is the consequence of this repentance described by Jesus?

What does this passage tell us about Jesus' mission?

The Son of Man

Why does Jesus describe himself as the 'Son of Man'? (cf. Daniel 7:13-14)

Jesus refers to himself as the Son of Man throughout his ministry. This title alludes to the vision in Daniel 7, in which 'dominion and glory and kingdom' are given by God to 'one like a son of man', so that 'all peoples, nations and languages should serve him'. Jesus claims that he is the one destined to be the world ruler and judge of all, and that the everlasting kingdom or dominion of God will be in his hands! However, paradoxically he must be betrayed and suffer as the son of man (9:22; 22:22) before he can enter into his glorious heavenly reign and return to earth to complete all God's purposes.

The King's Grand Entry

Jesus enters Jerusalem on a donkey - which recalls the prophecy in Zechariah 9:9, suggesting that he is indeed the promised King of the Jews (19:35-40). Jesus purifies the temple and makes it a centre for his daily teaching of the people. His popularity with the crowds is contrasted with the hostility of the religious leaders, who sought to challenge his authority and trap him with their questions (19:45-20:40). Jesus took the opportunity to talk about the trials that would come upon the world in general and his disciples in particular as the end of human history drew near (21:5-36). The final judgement and the 'redemption' of God's people will occur when the 'Son of Man' comes 'in a cloud with power and great glory' (21:27-28).



Read Luke 23:26-49

Luke 23:26 As they led him away, they seized Simon from Cyrene, who was on his way in from the country, and put the cross on him and made him carry it behind Jesus.²⁷ A large number of people followed him, including women who mourned and wailed for him.²⁸ Jesus turned and said to them, "Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me; weep for yourselves and for your children."²⁹ For the time will come when you will say, 'Blessed are the barren women, the wombs that never bore and the breasts that never nursed!'³⁰ Then "'they will say to the mountains, "Fall on us!" and to the hills "Cover us!"'³¹ For if men do these things when the tree is green, what will happen when it is dry?"³² Two other men, both criminals, were also led out with him to be executed.³³ When they came to the place called the Skull, there they crucified him, along with the criminals--one on his right, the other on his left.³⁴ Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing." And they divided up his clothes by casting lots.³⁵ The people stood watching, and the rulers even sneered at him. They said, "He saved others; let him save himself if he is the Christ of God, the Chosen One."³⁶ The soldiers also came up and mocked him. They offered him wine vinegar³⁷ and said, "If you are the king of the Jews, save yourself."³⁸ There was a written notice above him, which read: THIS IS THE KING OF THE JEWS.³⁹ One of the criminals who hung there hurled insults at him: "Aren't you the Christ? Save yourself and us!"⁴⁰ But the other criminal rebuked him. "Don't you fear God," he said, "since you are under the same sentence?⁴¹ We are punished justly, for we are getting what our deeds deserve. But this man has done nothing wrong."⁴² Then he said, "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom."⁴³ Jesus answered him, "I tell you the truth, today you will be with me in paradise."⁴⁴ It was now about the sixth hour, and darkness came over the whole land until the ninth hour,⁴⁵ for the sun stopped shining. And the curtain of the temple was torn in two.⁴⁶ Jesus called out with a loud voice, "Father, into your hands I commit my spirit." When he had said this, he breathed his last.⁴⁷ The centurion, seeing what had happened, praised God and said, "Surely this was a righteous man."⁴⁸ When all the people who had gathered to witness this sight saw what took place, they beat their breasts and went away.⁴⁹ But all those who knew him, including the women who had followed him from Galilee, stood at a distance, watching these things.

Despite the emphasis on Jesus' death as being determined by God, the role of Satan and Judas Iscariot in the betrayal of Jesus is stressed. The narrative goes on to indicate the responsibility of the Jewish leaders, of Pontius Pilate, and of Herod, in this miscarriage of justice. Although many scoff at the idea that this could be 'the Christ of God, his Chosen one' or 'the King of the Jews' one of the criminals hanging nearby acknowledges that 'this man has done nothing wrong'. His request for Jesus to remember him when he comes into his kingdom indicates a true perception of Jesus as the Christ. Jesus promises this man a share with him in the paradise of God, which is the NEW Creation.

Read Luke 24:36-53

Luke 24:36 While they were still talking about this, Jesus himself stood among them and said to them, "Peace be with you."³⁷ They were startled and frightened, thinking they saw a ghost.³⁸ He said to them, "Why are you troubled, and why do doubts rise in your minds?³⁹ Look at my hands and my feet. It is I myself! Touch me and see; a ghost does not have flesh and bones, as you see I have."⁴⁰ When he had said this, he showed them his hands and feet.⁴¹ And while they still did not believe it because of joy and amazement, he asked them, "Do you have anything here to eat?"⁴² They gave him a piece of broiled fish,⁴³ and he took it and ate it in their presence.⁴⁴ He said to them, "This is what I told you while I was still with you: Everything must be fulfilled that is written about me in the



Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms."⁴⁵ Then he opened their minds so they could understand the Scriptures.⁴⁶ He told them, "This is what is written: The Christ will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day,⁴⁷ and repentance and forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.⁴⁸ You are witnesses of these things.⁴⁹ I am going to send you what my Father has promised; but stay in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high."⁵⁰ When he had led them out to the vicinity of Bethany, he lifted up his hands and blessed them.⁵¹ While he was blessing them, he left them and was taken up into heaven.⁵² Then they worshipped him and returned to Jerusalem with great joy.⁵³ And they stayed continually at the temple, praising God.

The empty tomb and the resurrection appearances indicate Jesus' victory over death. The focus of Luke 24 is on Jesus' fulfilment of his own prophecy, and the teaching of the OT. Although it was hard for the disciples to grasp this truth, 'it was necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory'. God's plan of salvation, right from the beginning, required his sacrificial death so that the New Covenant should be inaugurated and 'that repentance and forgiveness of sins should be preached in (Christ's) name to all nations, beginning in Jerusalem' (22:47). With this commission and the promise of the Spirit's power to make this world-wide proclamation possible, Jesus ascended into heaven to 'enter into his glory' and exercise the kingly rule that will never end.

In the end

Revelation and the Glory of God, in Christ

Revelation 1:4-8

Revelation 1: 12-18

Revelation 4:11

Revelation 5:9-14

Revelation 11:15-19

Revelation 12:10-12

Revelation 15:2b-4

Revelation 19:6-8

The final scene

Revelation 21:1 Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. 2:I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. 3:And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with



them and be their God. 4:He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away." 5:He who was seated on the throne said, "I am making everything new!" Then he said, "Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true." 6:He said to me: "It is done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. To him who is thirsty I will give to drink without cost from the spring of the water of life. 7:He who overcomes will inherit all this, and I will be his God and he will be my son.

Revelation 22:1 Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, as clear as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb² down the middle of the great street of the city. On each side of the river stood the tree of life, bearing twelve crops of fruit, yielding its fruit every month. And the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations.³ No longer will there be any curse. The throne of God and of the Lamb will be in the city, and his servants will serve him.⁴ They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads.⁵ There will be no more night. They will not need the light of a lamp or the light of the sun, for the Lord God will give them light. And they will reign for ever and ever.⁶ The angel said to me, "These words are trustworthy and true. The Lord, the God of the spirits of the prophets, sent his angel to show his servants the things that must soon take place."

God's place

What is it called, how is it described? (cf Ezek 47:1-12)

God's people

Who are they, what are they doing?

God's blessing and rule

Where is God ruling from, and who and how does he deal with people?

Think about it

What is your view of heaven?

Do you know that you will go there?

