

Luke Bible Reading Plan

Summaries and Questions:

Week 1: Luke 1 – 2

Summary:

Like other Gospels, Luke's Gospel recounts the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus, the Son of God, who fulfills all of his Father's saving promises. Unlike other Gospels, Luke has a companion volume – Acts – in which salvation advances, in Jesus' name, to "the end of the earth" (Acts 1:8). Luke's Gospel invites us to be a part of this worldwide spread of the Christian message by showing how Jesus brings salvation to the last, the lost, and the least.

Luke's Gospel describes a world turned upside down. Sinners are saved while religious leaders are exposed as frauds. "Outsiders" embrace Jesus, while "insiders" reject him. The poor rejoice while the rich are "sent away empty". Because such paradoxes can create doubt, Luke writes to assure us that Jesus represents the fulfillment of God's saving purposes.

After a brief prologue (Luke 1:1-4), Luke recounts the births of John the Baptist and Jesus. This section forms a link back to the Old Testament, so that we see these two births as means of fulfilling God's Promises to redeem Israel, and through her, "all peoples" (2:31). The section also foreshadows major themes that will occur again and again throughout the Gospel of Luke as this "good news of great joy" unfolds (2:10). In particular, we learn that while the proper response to the coming of Jesus is exuberant praise for God, this newborn King will also incite painful opposition (2:34) – so that the shadow of the cross hangs even over the manger.

Questions:

1. The story of Jesus, and of John the Baptist as his forerunner, is a continuation of the story of the Old Testament. What features of Luke 1:5-38 as a whole make this clear especially in light of Malachi 4:5-6?
2. Salvation is a key concept in Luke – and a complex one. What aspect of salvation is emphasized in Luke 1:77? In verses 74-75?
3. Read Luke 2:21-52: In these verses, the tension between Jesus' true humanity and his divinity is especially clear. What features of this passage suggest that Jesus is an ordinary child? What features indicate that He is the unique Son of God?

Week 2: Luke 3 – 4

Summary:

Following the births of John the Baptist and Jesus, Luke focuses on three events that prepare for Jesus' public ministry. First, John's ministry prepares the people to receive Jesus' work as the Messiah. Second, Jesus' baptism shows him to be empowered by the Holy Spirit to serve the purposes of the Father who loves him. Third, Jesus' wilderness temptation demonstrates his readiness to defeat sin and Satan as our victorious, sinless Savior. Luke includes a genealogy that draws attention to Jesus as the "second Adam" who reverses the consequences of Adam's sin in Genesis 3. The section assures us that Jesus' work as Messiah – including his death, which is foreshadowed in important ways – is acceptable to God, and therefore able to redeem sinners. Jesus, then begins his earthly ministry.

Questions:

1. What hints does Luke 3:1-20 provide that Jesus' ministry will benefit a wide range of people, and not just those who are ethnically Jewish or outwardly religious?
2. Read Luke 3:21-38: How did Adam, whom Luke calls "the son of God", prove to be a faithless son, and what were the results of his failure (Genesis 3)? What does this imply about the ministry of Jesus, who is both the "second Adam" and the greater "Son of God"?
3. Read Luke 4:1-15: In Luke's day, it was commonly assumed that true greatness was incompatible with suffering, deprivation, and humiliation. How does Satan apply similar logic as he tempts Jesus? What details of Luke 4:9-13 foreshadow the fact that Jesus will endure ultimate suffering on the Cross.

Week 3: Luke 5 – 6

Summary:

In these two chapters, Jesus' public ministry unfolds even more. He calls his first disciples, cleanses a leper, heals a paralytic, answers various questions about the Sabbath and fasting, while claiming to be the Lord of the Sabbath. Each of these showing the power and purpose of Jesus. In short, these miracles are showing that Jesus has authority to proclaim – and effect – salvation. Then Jesus, after naming his 12 official disciples, closes this section with the "Sermon on the Plain" where Jesus summarizes the blessings and responsibilities that are ours as His disciples.

Questions:

1. Read Luke 5:1 – 6:16: How do Jesus' actions in this section confirm the message of his Nazareth sermon (Luke 4:16-30) – namely, that he will use his authority as a Messiah to extend salvation to the outcast and the needy?
2. According to Luke, some religious authorities fear that Jesus encourages (Luke 5:30), or even commits (5:21), sin. What is Jesus' true impact on sinners, as revealed in his interaction with Peter (5:8), the paralytic (5:20-24), and Levi (5:27-32)?
3. What are the duties of discipleship as presented in Luke 6:27-49? Put another way, what priorities should characterize the life of a "fully trained" disciple of Jesus?

Week 4: Luke 7 – 8

Summary:

This portion of Luke's Gospel weaves together Jesus' words and deeds in a way that repeatedly challenges our expectations: for example, Gentiles trust Jesus more than Israelites (Luke 7:9) and sinners embrace the forgiveness Jesus offers while religious leaders reject Him (7:29-35). We also get a glimpse at the power and authority of Jesus, that He can control nature, in calming the storm (8:24), while also raising the dead (8:55). We too should share the question of the disciples, "who then is this, that he commands even the winds and water, and they obey him?" (8:25)

Questions:

1. How does Jesus raising of the widow's son (Luke 7:11-17) show him to be a greater prophet than Elijah, who performed a similar miracle in 1 Kings 17:17-24? How does the centurion's faith in Jesus (Luke 7:2-10) illustrate the truth taught in 1 Kings 17:24?
2. Read Luke 8:1-21: According to Jesus, we should "take care then how {we} hear" the word of God (Luke 8:18). In these verses, what are some of the marks of careful hearing of the Word? What are some marks of careless hearing?
3. Read Luke 8:22-56: What is it about Jesus that comforts the fears of others – that is, how does Jesus call forth faith from those who might otherwise be overcome by fear?

Week 5: Luke 9 – 10

Summary:

This section begins with Jesus sending out his 12 apostles, with a foretaste of the pre-Pentecost taste of ministering power. But shifts into Jesus' feeding of the 5,000, showing again in a miraculous display of His power, the sufficiency of this Savior and King. And as Jesus goes about in his ministry, questions about who exactly he is spring up. When someone encounters Jesus truly, they must answer that question for themselves, who is this Jesus. But before answering that question, they must count the cost. Is Jesus worthy of my commitment and my life? Jesus foretells of his death but also reveals the life of a disciple is that of constant dying to self and following him. Jesus then commissions and sends out the 72, and they return with much joy at their fruit, by Jesus reorients them to simply rejoicing in the fact that their names are written in Heaven. By doing this, Jesus is revealing the true priorities of God's kingdom, and to reorient our lives to reflect those priorities.

Questions:

1. Read Luke 9:18-57: Jesus says that he will endure great suffering and death before he enters into his glory. What implications does this have for all who follow and serve Jesus (Luke 9:23, 48)? What factors keep Jesus' followers from embracing those implications (Luke 9:45-50)?
2. What does the parable of the good Samaritan, including Jesus' interaction with the lawyer who tests him, reveal about the nature of the kingdom of God? In other words, when God's reign is honored, what should life be like?
3. Martha is unable to focus on Jesus' teaching because she is distracted by many anxieties (Luke 10:41). What false priorities might cause Jesus' followers anxiety? How do Jesus' teaching throughout chapters 9-10 set us free from such anxiety?

Week 6: Luke 11-12

Summary:

In these 2 chapters, Jesus is continuing to highlight the priorities of those who are seeking to live in light of the Kingdom of God, while engaging those who seek to hinder those priorities, and preparing his followers for the coming Judgement.

Questions:

1. Why do you think the Disciples asked Jesus to teach them to pray? This is the first thing that the Disciples asked Jesus to teach them. Not to heal or preach, but to pray. What do you think that reveals about the priority of prayer in the life of the follower of Jesus?
2. Read Luke 11:33-54: In verses 33 – 36, Jesus describes the conflict between light and darkness. Based on the woes Jesus pronounces in verse 37 – 54 to the Pharisees and the lawyers, what are some indicators of a life that is “full of darkness”? By implication, what would a life “full of light” look like?
3. Read Luke 12:1-59: In these verses, Jesus' teaching invites repentance through a sobering portrayal of the judgement that awaits us at our death (Luke 12:20) and at his return (12:40), What details of the text make it clear that divine condemnation is something terrible, to be avoided at all costs? What details make it clear that God's people – that is, those who have genuine faith in Jesus – have nothing to fear?

Week 7: Luke 13 – 14

Summary:

The people of Jesus' time had a faulty view of life with God and Jesus came to address those problems while shedding on what the true Kingdom of God was. Those who would know God must first repent or perish in their sin. Jesus sheds light on the Sabbath and straightens the faulty view that the 'religious leaders' had. And in Luke 13:22, we see Jesus still journeying towards Jerusalem, therefore towards his death and resurrection. From this point until Luke 17, Jesus will continue to reshape our view of God, his grace, and what it truly means to follow Him.

Questions:

1. How do the promises of kingdom power in Luke 13:18-21 encourage us as we strive to maintain the kingdom priorities revealed in Luke 9 – 11?
2. Read Luke 13:22-14:24: This section of Luke's Gospel emphasizes two patterns of reversal – one involving a first/last interchange (Luke 13:30), and another a pattern of humiliation/exaltation (14:11). For whom are these patterns intended as warnings or rebukes? Who should hear these patterns as encouragements or as commendations?
3. In your own words, how would you summarize the demands Luke 14:25-35 places on those who follow Jesus? What is the significance of the fact that Jesus speaks these words to “great crowds”?

Week 8: Luke 15 – 16

Summary:

In Luke 15, we get a glimpse into the radical grace that God is offering in Jesus. In the various parables that Jesus shares and explains to his disciples, shed light on what he came to accomplish, which is to find those who are “lost” and bring them back to “the Father”. Jesus then moves to telling parables that cause his disciples to recognize the urgency of living in light of eternity, rather than for the comforts and riches of the world. Shedding light on the reality of an eternity of torment, Jesus is drawing out an urgency to repent and calling his followers to live in an urgency and eternal perspective.

Questions:

1. What indicates that the Pharisees and scribes of Luke 15:1-2 are unwilling to count the cost of discipleship? What factors make them reluctant to do so?
2. What specific features of the parables in Luke 15:3-32 indicate the radical nature of God's grace? How does this grace make us willing to meet the costly demands of discipleship?
3. Read Luke 16:1-31: According to these verses, what patterns in our lives might indicate whether we are serving God or money as our master? What does it mean to use money to “make friends” for ourselves (Luke 16:9) rather than to “exalt” ourselves “among men”?

Week 9: Luke 17 – 18

Summary:

With yet a third reminder of Jesus' progress toward Jerusalem (Luke 17:11), this section begins to conclude Luke's journey narrative, once again calling us to radically refashion our lives in light of God's character and kingdom priorities. Major themes of Jesus' teaching here include readiness for his second coming, the dangers of idolatry and self-righteousness, and the nature and effects of saving faith.

Questions:

1. Read Luke 17:11-19: While 10 lepers ask Jesus to “have mercy” on them, Jesus commends only one – a Samaritan (half-Jew). According to this story, what attitudes provide evidence of true (and saving) faith?
2. Based on Luke 18:10-17, how might we combat self-righteousness in our own hearts?
3. Read Luke 18:18-30: The rich ruler who approaches Jesus is prepared to “do” a great deal (Luke 18:18); why is he unwilling to do the one thing Jesus asks of him?

Week 10: Luke 19 – 20

Summary:

Like every Gospel, Luke gives a detailed account of the final week leading up to Jesus' death. Beginning with Luke 19:28, Luke will begin doing just that: Jesus' entry into Jerusalem and his subsequent ministry centered on the temple. At times this section emphasizes themes of triumph and joy, as the arrival of God's anointed King brings the fulfillment of God's redeeming promises nearer. At other times, this section sounds notes of sorrow, since Jesus experiences rejection that will lead not only to his death but also to divine judgment of Jerusalem itself. This section recounts Jesus' triumphant yet tragic ministry in Jerusalem, calling us to trust Jesus as God's anointed Savior-King.

Questions:

1. As Jesus enter Jerusalem, Luke emphasizes the joyful response of his disciples. What details of Luke 19:28-38 represent appropriate ways for disciples to honor God's anointed King?
2. Jesus shatter the mood of celebration by predicting the destruction of Jerusalem and enacting judgment on the temple. How do Isaiah 56:3-8 and Jeremiah 7:1-11 – texts that stand behind Luke 19:46 – shed light on the reasons behind the judgment Jesus brings?
3. In Luke 20:1-44, Jesus responds with remarkable wisdom and biblical reasoning to several attempts to entrap him. What biblical principle lies behind Jesus' logic in Luke 20:24-25? What biblical truth have the Sadducees missed, according to verses 37-38?

Week 11: Luke 21 – 22

Summary:

In this fast-paced section, Jesus foretells of the destruction of not only Jerusalem, but of the temple, God's dwelling place. Enacting that God's presence was among them in the person of Jesus. Jesus then challenges them to consider the judgement of this age, along with the next (His second coming). This section closes with the religious leaders plotting to kill Jesus, Jesus instituting the Lord's supper, foretelling of his denial by Peter, his future betrayal at the hands of Judas, and Jesus' arrest and first trial in front of the Jewish assembly of the elders.

Questions:

1. What should followers of Jesus do to prepare for the coming judgment (Luke 21:34-36)?
2. Read Luke 22:1-22: In this text, Jesus portrays his death as the center point of God's saving work. In what ways does he look backward, calling us to see his death as the fulfillment of Old Testament realities?
3. In what ways does Jesus look forward, suggesting that his death is essential for the future life and blessing of God's people?
4. At Gethsemane, Jesus asks the Father for strength to go willingly to his death. What evidence from Luke 22:43-65 indicates that God has answered Jesus' prayer?

Week 12: Luke 23 – 24

Summary:

In the culmination of Luke's word, here he tells the tragic crucifixion narrative, centering it on the truth that Jesus, as the true Son of God, suffered death on the Cross. Before that, he continues the story of the final night in the life of Jesus with further trials and judgment, ending in Pilates verdict of death. But this section doesn't end in gloom, but in celebration! Though it constitutes only one chapter, several factors place Luke's account of Jesus' resurrection among the most significant portions of his Gospel. First, the historical reality of Jesus' resurrection proves, despite the shame associated with crucifixion, that God is pleased with Jesus' work as our redeemer. Secondly, Jesus' teaching in this chapter (Luke 24) presents his death and resurrection as the focal point of all Scripture, inviting us to see the whole Bible through the lens of his saving work. Thirdly Jesus' resurrection prepares for the spread of the Gospel "to all nations" (Luke 24:47) and thus sets the stage for Luke's second volume, Acts. Finally, the closing verse of this chapter remind us of the only right response to the truth that Jesus is risen: **joy-filled worship of the God who has sent his Son to be our Savior.**

Questions:

1. In Luke 23:26-43, how does Jesus demonstrate concern for other people? What response would you expect in these circumstances from an ordinary human being?
2. Many in the first century would've seen Jesus' crucifixion, which represented a divine curse (Deut. 21:22-23; Galatians 3:13), as grounds to reject him. How should we respond to Jesus instead, based on Luke's descriptions of the repentant criminal (Luke 23:41-43), the centurion (23:47), and Joseph of Arimathea (23:50-51)?
3. Read Luke 24:1-12: What details from these verses indicate that the earliest eyewitnesses did not expect Jesus to be raised from the dead? What kind of evidence did these eyewitnesses see and hear that changed their mind?
4. Read Luke 24:36-43: Some people question the reality of Jesus' resurrection by saying, "Jesus' disciples were naïve, prescientific people." Others suggest, "Jesus' disciples were so grief-stricken that they were willing to believe anything." What details from these verses, or from Luke 24 as a whole argue against such conclusions?
5. According to Luke 24:44-53, what kinds of things will we believe when Christ opens our minds to understand the scriptures? What kinds of things will we do?

Week 13: Conclusion

Summary:

Luke's Gospel (like its companion volume, Acts) invites us to be a part of the worldwide spread of salvation through Jesus. To strengthen us for the challenges this involves, Luke demonstrates that Jesus brings to fulfillment all of God's saving purposes.

Luke 1:1 – 9:50 shows us that Jesus is fully prepared for his task, which is not simply to proclaim salvation but to accomplish it. He is the Son of God, more powerful than the greatest of prophets – and yet destined to die. As Jesus' disciples, we will inherit great blessing, but we must also take up a cross of our own.

In Luke 9:51 – 19:27, Luke provides a narrative of Jesus' journey to Jerusalem, and thus to his death. Along the way, Jesus reorients our vision of God's character and priorities, calling us to reflect this vision in our lives. Through parables (many found only in Luke) and through conflict with opponents, Jesus reveals both the extreme demands and the extravagant grace that characterize life in God's kingdom.

Finally, in Luke 19:28 – 24:53 we read a detailed account of Jesus' ministry in Jerusalem, culminating in his crucifixion and resurrection. Jesus clearly warns of the tragic consequences of rejecting him, but the overall impact of Luke's narrative is to call people everywhere – including the last, the least, and the lost – to put their trust in Jesus. Thus, the Gospel ends on a joyful note, with the promise that Jesus will send the Holy Spirit, who will empower God's people to proclaim, "repentance and forgiveness of sins... in [Jesus'] name to all nations" (Luke 24:47).

Questions:

1. Has our study of Luke given you a new appreciation for the breadth (God's willingness to redeem people of all kinds) and depth (God's willingness to forgive even the worst of sinners) of God's saving grace? How so?
2. What particular passages or themes in Luke deepened or strengthened your grasp of God's grace to us through Jesus?
3. What aspects of Jesus' person (who He is) and work (what He accomplishes through his life, death, and resurrection) stand out to you as particularly important in Luke?
4. God gave us Luke's Gospel to transform us. How is God using this study to call you to new ways of giving praise to Him, turning away from your sin, and trusting more firmly in His promises? As you reflect on our study as a whole, what other implication do you see for your life?
5. Based on your study of Luke's Gospel, how would you complete the following statement? "I rejoice to entrust all that I am to Jesus, and to honor him as Lord, because..."