

Study Questions

THE GOSPEL OF LUKE

by William Barclay

Introduction:

Lesson 1

A Lovely Book and its Author (pg 1)

Introduction & v. 1:1-1:56

up to but not including

His Name is John (pg 20)

1. a) Luke has been called the “Gospel of Women”, why?
b) What in Luke’s background might have contributed to this?
2. For whom was this Gospel written, Romans? Greeks? Jews? Egyptians? Gentiles?
3. What makes Luke different from all three other Gospel authors?
4. Why has this Gospel been referred to as the “Gospel of Prayer?”
5. Two of the Gospels, John and Luke, the authors tell us why they were written. John says he wrote his Gospel “that you might believe.” Why did Luke write his Gospel?
6. Our author, Barclay, a Presbyterian, enters into a discussion of the Virgin Birth. What did you learn?
7. What did you think of Mary’s lengthy statement to Elizabeth?

Lesson 2

His Name is John (pg 20)

v. 1:57-3:18

up to but not including

The Arrest of John (pg 42)

1. Why was Zacharias not allowed to speak until after John was circumcised and named?
2. In the past you may have heard that historians can find no record of a census in Judea in Jesus’ time. What do you think of Barclay’s discussion about censuses in neighboring Egypt?
3. What do you think it might mean that Jesus’ first visitors were shepherds?
4. What do the stories of Simeon and Anna say to you?
5. Barclay and the US Catholic Bishops’ NAB translate Luke 2:49 as “Did you not know I must be in my Father’s House?” Both of the older King James and older Catholic, Douay-Rheims as well as The New King James have it as “Did you not know that I must be in about my Father’s business?” Which is most meaningful to you?
6. Luke nails down John’s ministry with no fewer than seven historical figures as timeframe references? Why?
7. Matthew, Mark, Luke and John all include John the Baptist. Yet only in Luke do you find John talking about giving to the less fortunate. Why?

Lesson 3

The Arrest of John (pg 42)

v. 3:19-4:39

up to but not including

The Insistent Crowds (pg 63)

1. What do you think of the various relationships Herod Antipas had to Herodias?
2. Jesus started his ministry at about 30 years of age. Barclay discusses this at some length. What did you learning(s) did you get from this discussion?

3. Traditionally the Temptations of Jesus have been looked upon as evil tempting Jesus' humanity. Barclay adds a new thought. That of Jesus struggling with himself over the strategy to use in his ministry. What do you think? Is this helpful?
4. Our author gives a description of Galilee and its people in the 1st century. How does this better help you understand the "Good News" story.
5. The text gives three (3) possibilities about Jesus belief in evil spirits (commentary Lk 4:31-37.) What are your thoughts? Are there other explanations?

Lesson 4

The Insistent Crowds (pg 63)

v. 4:40-5:39

up to but not including

The Increasing Opposition (pg 82)

1. We learned about biblical parallelism in our study of John and other books. Proverbs 6:20-21 is a classic example:
 My son, keep your father's commands
 and do not forsake your mother's teaching.
 Bind them upon your heart forever;
 fasten them around your neck."
 During the discussion of Lk 4:40-44 our text discusses a parallelism from The Lords Prayer. Is this "definition" of God's Kingdom Helpful?
2. The text in its discussion of the curing of the paralyzed man, says that if Jesus had not, first, told the man his sins were forgiven "the man would not have believed that he could be cured." What do you think of this explanation? It is different from the traditional explanation that Jesus was interested in the man's salvation first and foremost.
3. The text, in its discussion of Lk 5:17, talks about the numbers of rules the Scribes had enumerated concerning the Sabbath, thirty-nine major types of work, thousands of rules, a tailor who left a pin in his/her robe was sinning. Does this discussion and that of "The Separated One's" help you understand the opposition to Jesus?
4. Barclay offers an explanation of the Parable of the Patches and Wine Skins that says Jesus is condemning the closed mind. Is this a new way of looking at this parable for you? What are your thoughts?
5. The text, in its discussion of Lk 5:17, talks about the numbers of rules the Scribes had enumerated concerning the Sabbath, thirty-nine major types of work, thousands of rules, a tailor who left a pin in his/her robe was sinning. Does this discussion and that of "The Separated One's" help you understand the opposition to Jesus?

Lesson 5 **The Increasing Opposition** (pg 82)
up to but not including
The Compassion of Christ (pg 102)

v. 6:1-7-10

1. How and why did the Pharisees come to learn that some of Jesus' disciples were eating grain (in old English, "corn" was a generic term for "grain") as they passed through a field? What does that tell you about the Pharisees?
2. In the discussion of eating grain on the Sabbath, the text says that the Pharisees read the Bible "not to learn God's will but to find proof texts to buttress up their own ideas. Have you ever done the same thing? Do you perhaps know of others who have?"
3. Did you know that *apostle* meant delegate, messenger and one sent forth with orders? Does this knowledge add to your understanding of Jesus' story?
4. "Love your enemies." Some of us have studied the term *agapē* (*agapan*) previously. Some have not. Does Barclay's discussion here add to your understanding?
5. Beginning with Lk 6:20 and ending with the run-on parable(s) of 6:39-46 Luke presents a rapid fire, almost overwhelming speech by Jesus. Why do you think Luke presents this material in this manner?

Lesson 6 **The Compassion of Christ** (pg 102)
up to but not including
True Kinship (pg 122)

v. 7:11-8:18

1. Our text suggests that the dead young man at Nain may have been only cataleptic. What do you think? Does one way of looking at this particular story versus the other way change Luke's Gospel?
2. The text offers several explanations of why John might have sent his followers to ask Jesus if he was "he is to come." Why do you think John sent his followers to question Jesus? Didn't he know Jesus was the promised one?
3. Luke says the Pharisees frustrated God's purpose. They listened but did not hear. They found fault with John for being too much and with Jesus for not being strict enough. Are we (or you) like that too? Sometimes?
4. Why do you think the Pharisee invited Jesus to dinner and then treated him so impolitely?
5. When asked to explain the parable of the Sower and the Seed, Jesus first says that he "presented in parables, so that they may see, and yet not see, and so that they may hear and yet not understand." What did Jesus mean by this? Your thoughts?
6. After Jesus explains the parable of the Sower and the Seed he talks about not hiding a lamp and then says; "There is nothing hidden which will not be made manifest; there is nothing secret which will not be known and brought into the open. Take care, then, how you listen; for to him who has it will be given; and from him who has not there shall be taken away even what he thinks he has." What, for goodness gracious sake, does Jesus mean?

Lesson 7

True Kinship (pg 122)

v. 8:19-9:22

up to but not including

The Conditions of Service (pg 143)

1. Is Jesus snubbing his family when he says, “My mother and my brothers are those who hear the word of God and do?”
2. What is your favorite or most meaningful part of the story about the hemorrhaging woman in the crowd?
3. In Luke’s Gospel the Twelve are sent out to minister and teach and come back. In other gospels the Twelve are not sent out until near the end. Which would make more sense? Why?
4. During the discussion that follows the sending out of The Twelve, our text states that their message, Jesus’ message, “was not confined to news of eternity” (that is God, Heaven, etc.) “it is proposed to change conditions on earth.” Do you think this is accurate? Why or why not?
5. Our text in its discussion of “Who do you say I am?” states that “Christianity does not mean reciting creed; it means getting to know a person” (Jesus.) What are your thoughts on this? Have you ever tried to get to know Jesus as a person, not as a historical character or as the Son of God, but as a person?

Lesson 8

The Conditions of Service (pg 143)

v. 9:23-10:24

up to but not including

Who is my Neighbor (pg 164)

1. Luke says in his Gospel that Jesus said, “I tell you truly, there are some standing here who will not taste death until they see the kingdom of God.” Matthew has it, “will not taste death until they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom.” And Mark says it was, “will not taste death until they see that the kingdom of God has come in power.” Are these quotes different?
This promise confused early Christians. Some thought that the second coming would occur before John’s (who lived the longest) death. Which of the three (3) do you think had it more right? Why might the others have recorded what they did?
2. Verse 9:27 ends, “...some of these who are standing here who will not taste death until they see the kingdom of God” and verse 9:28 begins, “About eight days after these words, Jesus took Peter and John and James and went up into a mountain ...”. Might this suggest that Luke saw these two as related events? Might this also then explain why the second coming did not happen during the lifetime of the Apostles?
3. Buried in the discussion of TWO LESSONS IN TOLERANCE the text has the following quote, “Do I not destroy my enemies when I make them my friends?” Do you think this is what Jesus had in mind? Why or why not?
4. Some Protestant congregations meet with new members and tell them what involvement is expected. Our text advises (THE HONESTY OF JESUS); “It may well be that we have done great hurt to the Church by letting people think that Church membership need not make so very much difference. We ought to tell

them that it should make all the difference in the world” What do you think of this advice?

5. In Luke 10:21 Jesus cries out with joy, “I thank you, O Father, Lord of Heaven and earth that you have hidden these things from the wise and clever and that you have revealed them to babes.” What do you think Jesus was saying? If you’re stumped look at the New American Bible translation of the same verse.

Lesson 9 **Who is my Neighbor** (pg 164)

v. 10:25-11:44

up to but not including

The Sins of the Legalists (pg 186)

1. In the parable of The Good Samaritan our text says Jesus’ answer involves three (3) things. Which of these three is most meaningful to you?
2. Traditionally the story of Martha and Mary has been interpreted that Mary’s better choice was to learn more from listening to Jesus that she might be saved. Barclay has a different thought in which Mary was being kind by being the quiet listener that Jesus needed at that moment. The first thought is one of improving herself the second is of improving Jesus’ comfort. Which do you like better and why?
3. Our text discusses Jesus’ teaching and story concerning ASK AND YOU WILL RECEIVE at some length. What did you learn?
4. The story about the evil spirit who comes back because his old house is swept out and empty, there is in our text has the thought that, “It is not enough to banish the evil thoughts and the evil habits and the old ways and leave the soul empty.” It this perhaps the logic behind the reason a good man/woman should still go to church?
5. Concerning the story about Jonah, Solomon and the Queen of Sheba, why would the condemnation of the Jews be all the more great?

Lesson 10 **The Sins of the Legalists** (pg 186)

v. 11:45-13:5

up to but not including

The Gospel of the Other Chance and the Threat of the Last Chance (pg 207)

1. Why did Jesus apparently go out of his way to pick a fight with first the Pharisee and second the Scribe who came to the Pharisee’s defense by telling Jesus he was being insulting?
2. Luke 12:1-12 covers three topics that are covered separately in Matthew. The “leaven of the Pharisees” - Matthew chapter 16. The “proclaimed on the housetops”, “sparrows”, “hairs of your head” and “acknowledges me” – Matthew chapter 10. And finally speaking “against the Son of Man” and “irreverently of the Holy Spirit” – Matthew 12. Why did Luke present them together like this?
3. In THE CREED OF COURAGE AND OF TRUST section our text says that not listening to the Holy Spirit is the unforgivable sin because repentance is impossible. Do you agree or disagree?
4. Our author’s discussion of the parable(s) of the faithful servant and unfaithful steward seems to ignore that Peter asks the question, “Lord are you speaking this parable to us or to everyone?” Jesus speaks again after the question. Is it an

answer to Peter's question or had Jesus ignored the question and was finishing what he'd started to say? What is the implication?

5. In the SUFFERING AND SIN section our text concludes that individual suffering and sin are not directly related but if a nation chooses wrong ways it will inevitably suffer for that choice. Do you agree? Why or why not? What are the implications?

Lesson 11

The Gospel of the Other Chance and the Threat of the Last Chance (pg 207)
up to but not including v. 13:6-14:14

The Kings Banquet and the Kings Guests (pg 227)

1. The parable about the bent woman is in no other Gospel nor is it in the Sunday Gospel readings cycle so you may not be familiar with it (it is a weekday reading.) What do you think about this parable? Do you like it? Why or why not? Why do you think it did not make the Church's Top-52-List?
1. Luke turns the parable of the mustard seed, as told in Matthew, on its head, or so our author believes. What do you think? Was Luke's focus of the tree and its birds? Why or why not?
2. THE LEAVEN OF THE KINGDOM section lists four (4) things that can be understood about the Kingdom of God; it starts small, it spreads unseen, it works from the inside, and the power comes from the outside. Think back to definition of the Kingdom of God from Matthew's Lord's Prayer (THE INSISTENT CROWDS section), "the Kingdom of God is a society upon earth where Gods will is as perfectly done as it is in heaven." Can we apply that definition to each of these four. If so what does that say?
3. THE RISK OF BEING SHUT OUT section lists three (3) things about entering the Kingdom of Heaven that Jesus' answer contained; struggle - keep on striving, membership is not enough and first will often be last. Which of these three had the most to say to you?
4. The next section, COURAGE AND TENDERNESS, lists seven (7) kinds of Pharisees. Which of the seven is most like you?
5. Within the UNDER HOSTEL SCRUTINY text the author talks about the Jewish law on how not to and how it is allowable to keep food warm for the Sabbath. Does this give you further insight into the status quo that Jesus was challenging?
6. Our text says that there are four (4) reasons people give/contribute (DISINTERESTED CHARITY.) When you put your envelope in the basket on Sunday, which reason comes closest to your reason?

Lesson 12

The Kings Banquet and the Kings Guests (pg 227)

v. 14:15-16:13

up to but not including

The Law which does not Change (pg 249)

1. At the end of the THE KING'S BANQUET section Barclay says "A gloomy Christian is a contradiction of terms." Many of Christianity's formal religions (and our own at a time) have an aspect of denial of the pleasures of this life in order to attain life in the next. Is Barclay wrong?

2. Contrast the quote in #6, above with the end of the second paragraph of the next section (ON COUNTING THE COST.) It says that a follower of Jesus “must be ready for a loyalty which would sacrifice the dearest things of life and for suffering which would be like the agony of a person upon a cross.” How do you understand both to be true? How do you reconcile these two commentaries on Jesus’ message? Are both true? If not which one is misinterpreted?
3. Buried in the middle of the commentary on THE SHEPHERD’S JOY is the following, “strict Jews said not ‘There will be joy in heaven over one sinner who repents,’ but, ‘There will be joy in heaven over one sinner who is obliterated before God.’” In a nutshell this might be a pretty good encapsulation of the Old versus New Testament/Covenant. What do you think? Does this help your understanding?
4. If you look in a library or on the Internet you will find that Luke 16:1-13 is called; “The Parable of the Dishonest Steward”, “The Parable of the Clever Agent” and even “The Parable of the Shrewd Manager.” Which is it? Barclay sort of splits the difference with A BAD MAN'S GOOD EXAMPLE.

Lesson 13 **The Law which does not Change** (pg 249)

v 16:14-18:17

up to but not including

The Man who would not Pay the Price (pg 269)

1. The parable of The Rich Man and Lazarus tells of being condemned not for doing something bad but for the failure to do something good. How does this fit into the age-old debate of “Saved by Faith Alone” versus “Saved by Faith and Good Works”
2. The text in LAWS OF THE CHRISTIAN LIFE list four (4) such laws; condemnation of those who tempt others to sin, Christian forgiveness, faith, and never think of God somehow behind on the ledger-sheet. Which says the most to you? Why?
3. The Parable of the Ten Lepers section names three (3) kinds of lack of gratitude. Which gave you pause to think of yourself as you read it?
4. In THE SIGNS OF HIS COMING, Jesus tells the Pharisees, “the Kingdom of God is within you.” Look back to Lesson 8, Question 7. Same question here. Does the Lord’s Prayer definition of Kingdom of God fit this information ?
5. While discussing the prayer of the tax-collector in the Temple, our author writes that the parable “unmistakable tells us three (3) things about prayer. Which of these three did you learn the most from?
6. Luke’s Gospel does, perhaps, the best job of getting Jesus’ “like a little child” message across. In your own words, how do you understand this message? (Lk 18:17, see also Lk 9:48, Lk 10:21, Lk 11:13, Lk 13:34)

Lesson 14

The Man who would not Pay the Price (pg 269)

v. 18:18-20:8

up to but not including

The Parable which was a Condemnation (pg 290)

1. In THE WAITING CROSS section our author says the disciples were surprised when the cross came because, “The human mind has a way of listening only to what it wants to hear. There are none so blind as those who refuse to see. There is a kind of wishful thinking which believes that the unpleasant truth cannot really be true, and that the thing it does not want to happen cannot happen. A man must ever struggle against the tendency to hear only what he wants to hear.” What do you think? Has anything like this ever happened to you?
2. The parable of the King and his Servants illustrates four (4) facts of the Christian life. Which of the four (listed in the book) was most meaningful to you? Why?
3. Our text describes how Jesus return question in the BY WHAT AUTHORITY section was not simply to put off the chief priests, scribes and elders but rather was indeed the answer. What do you think?

Lesson 15

The Parable which was a Condemnation (pg 290)

v. 20:9-22:6

up to but not including

The Last Meal Together (pg 312)

1. Take a look at Psalms 1 18:22, Acts 4:11, 1 Peter 2:7 and Luke 20:17. Who is this stone that was rejected that became that “which everything else depends on” (Cambridge Dictionary –cornerstone)? What do you think of this “title” for Jesus? It was popular in the early Church.
2. The parable of Owner Of The Vineyard discussion lists three (3) things about man, two (2) about God and three (3) things about Jesus that the parable tells us. Which did you find most insightful?
3. Barclay tells us what the issuance of money meant to men in the first century A.D. Does this background add to your understanding of the power of Jesus’ answer concerning taxation?
4. Our Gospel reading later this year on November 14th will come from Luke 20:27-38. The discussion of this section in our book tells us a little bit about the Pharisees and the Sadducees and quite a bit about heaven. What did you learn from this section?
5. Our author says that Luke, chapter 21 is difficult because there are four (4) conceptions that are interwoven. Which of these four (Day of the Lord, Fall of Jerusalem, Second Coming and Persecution) do you have the most trouble following in the Bible text?
6. Within the commentary section on WATCH! there is a comparison between the Stoics concept of time and the Christian concept of time. It says the Christian concept is that the earth/time itself, “has a goal and at that goal Jesus Christ will be Lord of all.” What does this mean to you?

*up to but not including***The Road to Calvary** (pg 334)

1. According to Barclay two events that often have been explained in miraculous terms were in fact prearranged (the colt on Palm Sunday and the upper room for the Last Supper.) Take a look at both of these passages again; Luke 19:30-31 and Luke 22:10-11. Does the idea that the room and colt were prearranged add to or detract from these stories?
2. In THE LAST MEAL TOGETHER section our author offers a meaning for the term “sacrament” (immediately following (i) “He said of the bread ‘This is my body’”). What do you think of this definition of “sacrament”?
3. Our text says that when Jesus said, “This cup is the new covenant made at the price of my blood, which is shed for you” that he meant "By my life and by my death I have made possible a new relationship between you and God. You are sinners. That is true. But because I died for you, God is no longer your enemy but your friend." What do you think? Is this a good and sufficient explanation?
4. The New American Bible (Catholic Bishop’s) translates Luke 22:19 as “do this in memory of me.” Barclay translates it as “Do this and it will make you remember me.” Which translation works better for you personally?
5. Toward the end of PETER’S TRAGEDY (with in (iii) Peter was over-confident) the text states, “Satan is subtle. He attacks the point at which a man is too sure of himself, for there he is likeliest to be unprepared.” What do you think? Is this true?
6. Twice in the garden on the Mount of Olives Jesus says “Pray that you may not enter into temptation.” Is prayer an effective way to not be tempted? Does prayer help you prevent temptation at the time? Does prayer help you prevent temptation in the future?
7. Our text has it that “The man who walks with God can cope with any situation and look any foe in the eyes, unbowed and unafraid.” - THE TRAITOR’S KISS section. Is this true? Take a look at Psalm 23, NAB Translation (it is only 6 verses and it is a very nice Psalm.)
8. In the TRIAL BEFORE PILATE AND SILENCE BEFORE HEROD commentary Barclay says that Herod did not take Jesus seriously and then goes on to say, “The plain fact is that the vast majority of men still refuse to take Jesus seriously. If they did, they would pay more attention” Do you know anyone like this? Does this apply to you? (sometimes?)
9. The text advises, “If a man has been guilty of certain actions there are certain things which he has no longer the right to say, otherwise his past will be flung in his face. We must have a care not to allow ourselves any conduct which will someday despoil us of the right to take the stand we know we ought to” (THE JEWS’ BLACKMAIL OF PILATE.) Has this ever been the case for you? Does this apply to you?

*

1. We are given quite a bit of background on Simon, who helped Jesus. Supposing that the Rufus whom Paul wrote to was the same that Mark writes of, what do you imagine Jesus did or said to Simon (Rufus' father) that had such an impact that it changed the lives of his wife and son as well as Simon? As far as Simon knew upon first meeting Jesus he was nothing but a condemned criminal.
2. Many of us have been taught that we know of only one person who is for certainty in heaven, the other criminal crucified with Jesus. Barclay says Jesus promise was more than simply the promise of heaven. What do you think?
3. The book lists five (5) things that Luke recorded that occurred when Jesus died. Which did you find most meaningful?
4. Why does Luke feel compelled to point out that Jesus' tomb had not been used before as if this is something different?
- * 5. In Mark the messenger in the tomb is a young man in a long white robe (Mk.16:5); in Matthew he is the angel of the Lord (Matt.28:2). Here in Luke is two men in flashing garments (Lk.24:4); and in John it is two angels (Jn.20:12). If the Bible and the Gospels in particular are the inspired word of God, why are there discrepancies like this?
- * 6. In the WRONG PLACE TO LOOK section lists three (3) ways people regard Jesus; greatest man, a man who's life must be studied and a perfect example. Which comes closest to the way you personally regard Jesus?
- * 7. Our author says that when Jesus blessed and broke bread in Emmaus it was an ordinary meal and not a Eucharistic meal. What do you think? Others would disagree (e.g. Mauricio Perez.)
8. Our text says that resurrection remains a mystery but that "something such (as the resurrection) should happen was essential." The text gives three (3) reasons. Do you agree? Which of the three reasons given did you like the most?

Note:

Page Numbers are for the Paperback *The Gospel of Luke*, The New Daily Study Bible, 2001

The Gospel According to St. Luke is written by the only Gentile, Holy Spirit inspired New Testament writer for his target audience of Gentile Christians. St. Luke's Gospel provides the most complete account of the advent and earthly life of the Messiah - from the divine announcement and birth of His precursor, St. John the Baptist, to the Annunciation, birth and early childhood of Jesus, to His ministry to the lost sheep of Israel, and finally with the climax of his Gospel in Jesus' victorious death, glorious Resurrection. and heavenly Ascension. St. Luke presents Jesus of Nazareth a The Gospel according to Luke, also called the Gospel of Luke, or simply Luke, tells of the origins, birth, ministry, death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus Christ. Together with the Acts of the Apostles it makes up a two-volume work which scholars call Luke's "Acts"; together they account for 27.5% of the New Testament. The combined work divides the history of first-century Christianity into three stages, with the gospel making up the first two of these - the arrival among men of Jesus the Messiah. The Gospel According to Luke [Greek: Ἐὐαγγέλιον κατὰ Λουκάν, ἡ ἀποστολικὴ ἰστορία... ἡ ἀποστολικὴ ἰστορία κατὰ Λουκάν], commonly shortened to the Gospel of Luke or simply Luke, is the third and longest of the four Gospels accepted as canon by most Christians. This synoptic gospel is an account of the life and ministry of Jesus of Nazareth, detailing his story from the events of his birth to his Ascension. Certain popular stories, such as those of the Prodigal Son and the Good Samaritan, are found only in this gospel. Jesus is