

THE GOSPEL OF LUKE

God's Plan of Salvation #2

Purpose for Writing

- Luke's gospel describes God's **fulfilment of OT promises and his plan of salvation**, climaxing in Jesus Christ through his life, death, resurrection, and ascension. Luke aims, therefore, to show the continuity of the OT and Jesus
- God's plan, for 1st century Jews, involved some surprises:
 - A crucified Messiah
 - A gospel that includes Gentiles without first being Jews (Acts 15)
 - Jesus' conscious pursuit of the fringe in society

Preface of Luke's Gospel

- “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 eyewitnesses and servants of the word. ³ With this in mind, since I myself have carefully investigated everything from the beginning, I too decided 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” (1:1-4)

Jesus and the Certainty of God

- In writing *his* account, Luke did research—interviews (Peter, Paul, Mary), asked questions, and read church documents
- He set out to write an “orderly account,” meaning a systematic, thoughtful presentation of what happened
- He did so in order that Theophilus (and us) might know for certainty of the things taught
- In the NT, one increases faith by being taught truth
- All this was done in fulfilment of what has already been predicted concerning the life, death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus

Jesus Fulfilled the OT

- ²⁵ “He said to them, ‘How foolish you are, and how slow to believe all that the prophets have spoken! ²⁶ Did not the Messiah have to suffer these things and then enter his glory?’ ²⁷ And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures **concerning himself**” (Lu 24:25-27)

Jesus Fulfilled the OT

- 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” (Lu 24:44-45)

Jesus Fulfilled the OT

- ⁴⁶ He told them, “This is what is written: The Messiah will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, ⁴⁷ and repentance for the 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.”

Fulfilling God's Promises

- Of the four gospels, Luke places heavy emphasis on God's fulfilment of his plan of salvation. He does this by two means:
- By alluding to the OT throughout the birth narratives (1-2), he makes the point that Jesus is the fulfilment of OT promises and the climax of salvation history
- He repeatedly uses the term *dei* (it is necessary or must, see 2:49; 4:43; 9:22 with reference to the plan of God)

The Birth of John the Baptist

- All four gospels tell the story of John the Baptist
- ⁵ In the time of Herod king of Judea there was a priest named Zechariah, who belonged to the priestly division of Abijah; his wife Elizabeth was also a descendant of Aaron. ⁶ Both of them were righteous in the sight of God, observing all the Lord's commands and decrees blamelessly. ⁷ But they were childless because Elizabeth was not able to conceive, and they were both very old. ⁸ Once when Zechariah's division was on duty and he was serving as priest before God, ⁹ he was chosen by lot, according to the custom of the priesthood, to go into the temple of the Lord and burn incense. ¹⁰ And when the time for the burning of incense came, all the assembled worshipers were praying outside. ¹¹ Then an angel of the Lord appeared to him, standing at the right side of the altar of incense. ¹² When Zechariah saw him, he was startled and was gripped with fear. ¹³ But the angel said to him: "Do not be afraid, Zechariah; your prayer has been heard. Your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you are to call him John (Lu 1:5-13)

The Birth of John the Baptist

- Zechariah and Elizabeth were people of priestly lineage
- Luke opens with Zechariah serving in the temple (1:8ff)
- They are people advanced in age and without children
- Gabriel appears to him, insisting that he will have a child
- ¹⁶ “He will bring back many of the people of Israel to the Lord their God. ¹⁷ And he will go on before the Lord, in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the parents to their children and the disobedient to the wisdom of the righteous—to make ready a people prepared for the Lord” (1:16-17)
- JTB serves as a bridge between promise and inauguration, and is regarded as the greatest prophet of the OT era (7:27; cf. Mal 3:1)

The Birth of Jesus

- Six months later, Gabriel also confronts Mary that she will conceive
- ³¹ You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to call him Jesus. ³² He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, ³³ and he will reign over Jacob's descendants forever; his kingdom will never end" (1:31-33)
- ³⁴ "How will this be," Mary asked the angel, "since I am a virgin?" ³⁵ The angel answered, "The Holy Spirit will come on 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 (1:34-35)

The Birth of Jesus

- Jesus will be born miraculously by a virgin
- While John the Baptist comes from a priestly line, Jesus is a descendant of a kingly line—in the line of David
- He will come to inaugurate the Kingdom of God, restore the Davidic kingdom, and reign forever (1:32-33; cf. 2 Sam 7:8-17)
- He will be called the Son of God (1:35)
- Mary's song is about the dawning of the Lord's reign on earth, bringing justice and righteousness (1:46-55)
- Shepherds and wise-men will come and worship him (2:8-20)

Jesus and the Mission of God

- As the time approaches for him to be taken up to heaven, Jesus resolutely sets out for Jerusalem (9:51)
- Then Jesus went through the towns and villages, teaching as he made his way to Jerusalem (13:22)
- After Jesus had said this, he went on ahead, going up to Jerusalem (19:28)
- As he approached Jerusalem and saw the city, he wept over it (19:41)

Jesus and the Cost of Discipleship

- ⁵⁷ As they were walking along the road, a man said to him, “I will follow you wherever you go.” ⁵⁸ Jesus replied, “Foxes have dens and birds have nests, but the Son of Man has no place to lay his head” (9:57-58)
- ⁵⁹ He said to another man, “Follow me.” But he replied, “Lord, first let me go and bury my father.” ⁶⁰ Jesus said to him, “Let the dead bury their own dead, but you go and proclaim the kingdom of God” (9:59-60)
- ⁶¹ Still another said, “I will follow you, Lord; but first let me go back and say goodbye to my family.” ⁶² Jesus replied, “No one who puts a hand to the plow and looks back is fit for service in the kingdom of God” (9:61-62)

Jesus and the Mission of God

- ⁴⁶ He told them, “This is what is written: The Messiah will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, ⁴⁷ and repentance for the 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” (24:46-49)

The Mission of God and Doxology

- ⁵¹ While he was blessing them, he left them and was taken up into heaven. ⁵² Then they worshiped him and returned to Jerusalem with great joy. ⁵³ And they stayed continually at the temple, praising God (24:51-53)