

## School of the Word 2018

God has visited his people (Luke 7:16)

Taking another look at Luke's Jesus

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### (1) A (re)introduction

#### Programme

1. Luke: a (re-)introduction
2. Setting the scene: Luke 4:14-30
3. Teaching in parables: Luke 18:1-8
4. Prayer in Luke's Gospel
5. The death of the Prophet Messiah Luke 23:1-56
6. On the road to Emmaus: Luke 24:13-35
7. *Getting ready for Christmas (Luke 1-2)*
8. *Getting ready for Christmas (Luke 1-2)*

#### How to read Luke

- Marcion
- Luke-Acts
- Luke's purpose
- How to read Luke
- Luke's Jesus
- Conversation

#### Marcion

- Born in Sinope in Asia Minor
- Marcion was expelled from the Roman Christian community sometime near AD 140.
- Marcion founded a rival church based on his theological principles.
- Marcion's teaching proved very popular
- He produced his own "New Testament."
- By so doing, he triggered the fixing of the canon.
- The **Evangelikon** (Luke with parts removed that did not agree with his views).
- The **Apostolikon**, a selection of ten epistles of Paul the Apostle (also altered to fit his views).
- The Creator God of Judaism is not the same being as the Father of Jesus.
- The OT represents true revelation only for the Creator, and thus Marcion rejected the value of the Old Testament for Christianity.
- Further, he asserted a docetic christology, denying Jesus' corporeality.

#### More details

- In contrast to other leaders of the emerging Christian Church, Marcion declared that Christianity was **in complete discontinuity** with Judaism and entirely opposed to the Hebrew Bible.
- Marcion did not claim that the Jewish scriptures were false. Instead, he asserted that they were to be read in an absolutely literal manner, thereby developing an understanding that Yahweh was not the same god spoken of by Jesus.
- For example, Marcion argued that the Genesis account of Yahweh walking through the Garden of Eden asking where Adam was, had proved Yahweh inhabited a physical body and was without universal knowledge, attributes wholly incompatible with the Heavenly Father professed by Jesus.
- According to Marcion, the God of the Old Testament, whom he called the Demiurge, the creator of the material universe, is a jealous tribal deity of the Jews, whose law represents legalistic reciprocal justice and who punishes mankind for its sins through suffering and death.

- In contrast, the God that Jesus professed is an altogether different being, a universal God of compassion and love who looks upon humanity with benevolence and mercy.
- Marcion also produced his Antitheses, contrasting the Demiurge of the Old Testament with the Heavenly Father of the New Testament.

**Luke-Acts**

- Definitely post 70 because he uses Mark; the destruction of Jerusalem is already a past event.
- Many scholars: 85-90 AD.
- Probably a good deal later, because:
  - The author uses Josephus, so later than ad 93.
  - The author has access to the Pauline corpus.
  - Cf. Reaction to Jewish revolts in the Diaspora (115-117).
  - Cf. Context of the Pastorals (“wolves”, heresy, rejection of the OT, uneasy with the empire, yet no direct persecution).
  - The author of Luke-Acts, was not an eyewitness and not a companion of Paul.
- So who was the author?
  - Well-educated.
  - Well-travelled.
  - Good Greek.
- At home in the upper middle class of the Hellenistic world.
- Admirer of Paul but does not share Paul’s view of himself, has a very different theology and does not represent Paul’s theology with accuracy.
- Highly gifted narrator.
- For convenience “Luke”, but really unknown.
- Papyrus 75 (Egypt).
- Earliest known copy of Luke.
- Names Luke as the author.
- John follows Luke.
- Contains about half the Gospel.
- 175-225 (disputed).
- Very similar to the Codex Vaticanus.
- In the Vatican Library since 2007.

70 years				45 years							
Jesus 6 bc — ad 30		Paul 6 bc — ad 64		Mark 70		Matthew 85-90		John 95—100		Luke-Acts 110—115	
Galilee, Judea		Syria, Asia Minor, Greece, Italy		Syria? Rome?		Syria		Syria, Asia Minor		Rome?	
Augustus	Tiberius	Caligula Claudius	Nero	Vespasian	Titus	Domitian	Nerva, Trajan	Trajan			
31-14	14-37	37-41 41-54	54-68	69-79	79-81	81-96	96-98, 98-117	98-117			

**Luke’s purpose**

Now many have undertaken to compile an account of the things that have been fulfilled among us, like the accounts passed on to us by those who were eyewitnesses and servants of the word from the beginning. So it seemed good to me as well, because I

have followed all things carefully from the beginning, to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus, so that you may know for certain the things you were taught. (Luke 1:1-4)

I wrote the former account, Theophilus, about all that Jesus began to do and teach until the day he was taken up to heaven, after he had given orders by the Holy Spirit to the apostles he had chosen. To the same apostles also, after his suffering, he presented himself alive with many convincing proofs. He was seen by them over a forty-day period and spoke about matters concerning the kingdom of God. While he was with them, he declared, "Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait there for what my Father promised, which you heard about from me. For John baptised with water, but you will be baptised with the Holy Spirit not many days from now." (Acts 1:1-5)

Now while Zechariah was serving as priest before God when his division was on duty, he was chosen by lot, according to the custom of the priesthood, to enter the holy place of the Lord and burn incense. (Luke 1:8-9)

So they worshiped him and returned to Jerusalem with great joy, and were continually in the temple courts blessing God. (Luke 24:52-53)

So he said to them, "You foolish people-how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Wasn't it necessary for the Christ to suffer these things and enter into his glory?" Then beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them the things written about himself in all the scriptures. (Luke 24:25-27)

Therefore let all the house of Israel know beyond a doubt that God has made this Jesus whom you crucified both Lord and Christ." (Acts 2:36)

They set a day to meet with him, and they came to him where he was staying in even greater numbers. From morning until evening he explained things to them, testifying about the kingdom of God and trying to convince them about Jesus from both the law of Moses and the prophets. Some were convinced by what he said, but others refused to believe. (Acts 28:23-24)

### **How to read Luke**

- In dialogue with the Hebrew Scriptures.
- Awareness of the other Synoptic traditions.
- Luke's own theological narrative.
- Gospel and Acts to be read in tandem.
- For example, the Infancy Narrative (Luke 1-2)

### **Luke's Jesus**

- Paul, as the earliest Christian writer
- The Synoptic Gospels
- John
- Hebrews
- Revelation
- Quite different pictures, reflecting the historical Jesus, the risen Lord, and the spiritual experiences of communities and leaders
  
- Jesus is the fulfilment of the Jewish prophecy (Luke 1-2, 4, 24)
- Jesus is a spirit-filled prophet (Luke 3-4)
- Jesus is the Son of God, for all people (Luke 4)
- Jesus is the Christ, who will suffer (Luke 9)
- Jesus is the Son of Man, who will return (Luke 21)
- Jesus is risen from the dead (Luke 24)
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- Jesus, the promised Messiah of Israel, comes with a gracious offer of salvation from God

- He is called God's Son because he has been born through the power of the Most High God.
- He is the saviour of his people
- The Messiah of Israel is a prophetic figure who calls Israel to repentance

**New Testament Christology**  
Frank Matera

## **Conversation**