

Introduction to the New Testament History and Literature

Lecture 9: The Gospel of Luke

Transcript

<https://oyc.yale.edu/religious-studies/rlst-152/lecture-9>

Overview

Luke and Acts, a two-volume work, are structured very carefully by the author to outline the ministry of Jesus and the spread of the Gospel to the gentiles. The Gospel of Luke emphasizes the themes of Jesus' Jewish piety, his role as a rejected prophet, and the reversal of earthly status. The Gospel ends in Jerusalem, and the Acts of the Apostles begins there and then follows the spread of the Gospel, both conceptually and geographically, to Samaria and the gentiles. By closely analyzing the Gospel and Acts, we see that the author was not concerned with historicity or chronological order. Rather, he writes his "orderly account" to illustrate the rejection of the Gospel by the Jews and its consequent spread to the gentiles.

1. *The Structure of Luke and Acts*

- [1] **Professor Dale Martin:** Turn to the beginning of the Gospel of Luke. We're going to go through a lot of Luke and Acts today. Today I'll—I sort of lied on the syllabus. You know how untrustworthy I am by now. I said on the syllabus that we're going to talk about Luke today and have a lecture on Acts on Wednesday. That's not quite true because you can't really talk about Luke without also talking about Acts and you can't much talk about Acts without talking about Luke because they're written by the same person. Almost no scholar doubts that they're written by the same person. There are some scholars who actually argue that you shouldn't read them as two volumes of the same work. Some people even say they think Acts was written a good bit after the Gospel of Luke, but I'm going to treat them as basically two volumes of the same work. Part of the lecture today will focus on Acts, but a whole lot of the lecture will also focus on—I mean part of Luke but also on Acts, and then next time, also, though talking about Acts I'll go back and talk about Luke. Did everyone get a handout of the outline of Luke and Acts? If anybody doesn't—didn't get a handout hold up your hands and we'll get the teaching fellows to hand them around.
- [2] Look at the beginning of Luke. "Since many have undertaken to set down an orderly

account—" now what will "orderly account" mean? "—of the events that have been fulfilled among us, just as they were handed onto us by those who were from the beginning eyewitnesses and servants of the word." When he tells you that he's gotten some things from—handed down, traditions, accounts from eyewitnesses what's the first thing that that tells you about this author? He's not an eyewitness, precisely.

- [3] I, too, decided, after investigating everything carefully from the very first, to write an orderly account [there again] for you, most excellent Theophilus, so that you may know the truth concerning the things about which you have been instructed.
- [4] There are several things that this prologue to the Gospel of Luke tells us. One of the things of course, as you just noticed, it's not written by someone who was there. Some people will say that when we get to Acts, at least part of Acts seems to have been written by a person who was actually there, because about halfway through the book of Acts he starts about "we." We did this, and we did this, rather than just Paul or other people in the third person. I don't believe that's the case. I believe he may have used some kind of written document that was—that used the term "we" or sometimes an ancient text, I think sometimes a person would

just insert themselves into the narrative to give it a more directness. So I'm not going to teach that this author was an eyewitness of any of the stuff that he writes about, but certainly he's not an eyewitness of the stuff that happens in the Gospels, as he also says. That's one thing that it tells us.

[5] This also tells us that this is a compilation of sources. Now already, when you've been working on the synoptic problem and how to write an exegesis paper, you have figured out that the Gospel writers used other sources. Some of them are written sources, some of them are oral sources. This guy actually admits it up front, so it sounds like he's using both written sources and oral sources. What's one of the written sources we know he used? Mark, exactly, and we think that there's another written source that we call Q that he may have used. What does he mean by "orderly account"? Does it mean that Mark kind of wrote things in one order and this guy knows a better chronological order, a historical order? Is he talking about, I'm writing to you an account that's more like what actually happened when it happened? That's the way this has sometimes been interpreted by people. As we'll see today that's not likely right because we can even tell when this author is creatively shifting events around for his own purposes. He's claiming to write an orderly account, but if he is claiming that he's giving us a more chronologically accurate account then he's wrong, as we'll see. Probably he doesn't even mean that, probably this is no claim to historicity. He's probably just saying that, the way I tell this is better than the way that Mark or Q or some other sources tell it. He's thought about the order in which he puts it and he's thought about how he wants to write his Gospel.

[6] This also tells you what literary form this is. He knows he's writing something that's like other literature in the ancient world. The Gospel of Luke is not a biography but it could have been thought of as a life. In fact, the Greek word for life is *bios*, where we get biology. *Bios* could be the name of genre of literature that told about some great man. We separate it from biography because it doesn't have the same kind of concerns that a modern biography does. It seems like he knows that for the Gospel of Luke anyway he's writing a *bios* of Jesus, a life of Jesus. How do we

know that? Because he starts off later in the Gospel with the same kind of stuff that you would see if you read a book about Augustus the Emperor, or Plato the great philosopher. That is, he starts off with narratives about a miraculous birth. Telling stories about a great man and his miraculous birth was a not uncommon way to start a life of someone. Then in Acts it also looks like he knows he's writing something that would look something like a history, and we have histories also from the ancient world. This guy is—much more than Mark, this author is much more self conscious in setting himself forward and setting his work up as a literary work, it has literary form.

[7] Who is Theophilus though? Some people would think, well maybe this is the guy's patron, because often in the ancient world when you wrote a book you started off with the dedication. The dedication, you didn't say, dedicated to so and so, what you said was Dear Theophilus, I am writing this because you've asked me to set down my thoughts. In other words you give a fiction, it's a fiction that your patron, maybe the person who supports you financially or socially, or whatever that person has asked you to set down an account of something. You would start off, Dear Mr. Smith you've asked me repeatedly when we had lunch at Mori's, to describe my recent trip to Africa, so I'm writing this down at your request. That's a dedication to your patron. Who is Theophilus, though? Some people say maybe he's an actual historic person, he calls him "most excellent," the Greek word would seem to imply that this guy is of fairly high class or that our author wants us to believe that he's high class. It's also, though, possible, some people have said, maybe he's a fiction because Theophilus comes from two Greek words meaning *theos* which is God, and *philos* beloved or friend. Some people have said he's making up a name that's sort of a fictive name for any God loving or beloved by God reader. We really don't know, so scholars are completely at sea as far as if Theophilus a real person or is he not. Those are several things about that we need to notice. He sets himself up as writing a history by the ancient standards of history, but is it history by our standards of history? The only way to figure that out is to analyze the text itself, so that's what we're going to do.

- [8] On your outline you have—on your handout you have an outline of Luke and an outline of Acts. I think I didn't get one, I gave mine away, can I have one? Thank you, Michael. Notice how it's divided up. First you get the beginning of the Gospel which actually starts off with the birth and childhood narratives, and Jesus and John the Baptist, in chapter 1, and then in chapter 3 you get Jesus meeting—Jesus relationship to John the Baptist. All of this starts off partly in Galilee but also partly in Judea. The birth of John happens in Judea, the birth of Jesus, according to Luke, happens in Galilee [correction: Judea]. Luke also, though, has Jesus family go from Judea to Galilee [correction: from Galilee to Judea] for the birth. Now that's different from Matthew, Matthew just started off with the holy family living in Bethlehem. Luke has the idea that this family is living in Galilee and, because of a census, the family is required to go to Bethlehem, which is in Judea. The family is from Galilee, but Luke really starts the action of his Gospel, both for John the Baptist birth and for the birth of Jesus in Judea. That's going to be important.
- [9] Then you have, starting in 3:23, the beginning of Jesus' Galilean ministry and that goes all the way to 9:50. You have the beginning of the ministry, there's an announcement in 3:23, this is Jesus began to—in the fifteenth year of reign of Tiberius, then you have a genealogy, then you have the temptation story in chapter 4, and then you have Jesus' inaugural address, which we'll talk about both this time and next time. In 4:14-30 is Jesus' first sermon, it's very clear Luke wants to set this up as Jesus' first sermon and we'll talk about why later. Then you have 4:31 to 8:56, the Galilean ministry proper. That is, this is Jesus going around Galilee, healing people, preaching, teaching. Now look in chapter 9, though, then you get a transition period. Most of chapter 9 is a transition from the Galilee ministry to the other main part of Jesus'—of Luke's passage in the Gospel which is Jesus' trip to Jerusalem. 9:1, "Then Jesus called the twelve together and gave them power and authority over demons and cured diseases." Notice now, he's not really doing the Galilean ministry anymore, he's setting up other things to happen.
- [10] Look at—now look all the way at the end of that chapter at 9:51. This is a very big verse in Luke although—but you'd never know it unless you had a scholar kind of point it out to you; 9:51: "When the days drew near for him to be taken up, he set his face to go to Jerusalem." Now what is that? "Taken up,"—does that refer to Jesus ascension into heaven? Is it for his crucifixion because you put somebody up on a cross? Whatever it is, but notice, we're not even toward the end of the Gospel here, we're only about halfway through—we're not even halfway through the Gospel. We're at still very early in the Gospel compared to what the rest of it is, and yet, what Luke is doing is turning your attention as a reader now to Jerusalem. "When the days drew near for him to be taken up, he set his face to go to Jerusalem, he sent messengers ahead of him," and they go through the villages. So all the rest of the next ten chapters Jesus is on the road. [Sings] "On the road again." It's on the road to Jerusalem. Now this big ten chapter on the road trip, Jesus' road trip to Jerusalem, is not found in the other Gospels, it's only in Luke. What does—what is it there for?
- [11] Then in 19:45, Jesus finally gets to Jerusalem, and from 19:45 until the end of Luke you have Jesus in Jerusalem. Then Acts starts out, and as I've said before, the next volume Acts starts by retelling a bit of what happened at the end of Luke. You know you're in the second volume of a two volume work here because he rehashes at the beginning of Acts. First you get the time—from one, Acts 1:1 to 9:43, I've designated as the time before the Gentiles. The church is all a Jewish community, they all live mainly in Judea and Jerusalem, they worship together, they even spend a lot of time in the temple, in the Jewish temple. This is very much a Jewish organization, the Gentiles haven't been brought in, and then you have another transition period just like when we had a transition period in Chapter 9 of Luke, in Chapter 10 of Acts you have a transition period from 10:1 to 12:25. First you have the conversion of the first Gentile convert, he's a Roman Centurion, Cornelius, and you have Peter defending his conversion of Cornelius, because this is controversial to bring someone into the church without them being circumcised at this point, according to Luke's narrative. Then you have 11:19-30, look at that, Acts 11:19-30:
- [12] Now those who were scattered, because of the persecution that took place over Stephen, traveled as far as Phoenicia,

Cyprus, and Antioch. And they spoke the word to no one but Jews. But among them were some men from Cyprus and Cyrene who on coming to Antioch spoke to the Hellenists also, proclaiming the Lord Jesus.

[13] Now you may have a footnote after the word “Hellenists,” does anybody have a food note after the word Hellenist there in your—what does your footnote say?

[14] **Student:** [Inaudible]

[15] **Professor Dale Martin:** Greeks, so some texts have “Hellenists” which would be sort of Greek speaking Jews and other manuscripts have just the word “Greeks.” In fact, you can even take this term “Hellenist” to be just Greeks themselves. At least there’s some idea that these people were speaking not just too Greek-speaking to Greek Jews but also to Greeks. That introduces, then, this period of the Gentiles. You have the introduction to a predominantly Gentile church in Antioch, and that’s what you get from 11:19-30, and then you get some persecution in Jerusalem in Chapter 12, and then you get a shift of attention from Jerusalem to the Gentiles in 12:25:

[16] But the word of God continued to advance and gain adherence. Then after completing their mission, Barnabus and Saul returned to Jerusalem and brought with them John, whose other name was Mark.

[17] I actually think that’s supposed to be “returned from Jerusalem to Antioch.” There’s again some manuscript problems because in 13:1 you have, “Now in the church at Antioch there were prophets and teachers.” From chapter 13 to the rest of Acts, the attention is not in Jerusalem. They go back to Jerusalem, Paul goes back to Jerusalem a few times, and Paul is eventually arrested in Jerusalem and there is a trial, and there’s all kinds of interesting, exciting riots and things that happen in Jerusalem. But the rest of Acts the attention is away from Jerusalem and to the rest of the world, the rest of—all the way there. Then you have from 13:1 you have the period called “after the Gentiles,” this is after Gentiles have been brought into the church and then the focus is going to be on the Gentile church for

the rest of Acts. You get, for example, the first missionary journey of Paul, then you have the Jerusalem conference in chapter 15, which we’ve talked about already. Then you have the second missionary journey of Paul, and then the third missionary journey of Paul, and then you have Paul in Jerusalem and then arrested and taken to Rome, and then you have Paul in Rome and ending the whole book, chapter 28:17-31.

[18] Notice what’s going on here. Luke constructs his two-volume work like this. It starts off in Judea, it keeps coming to Jerusalem, Jerusalem, Jerusalem, it focuses you on Jerusalem, through all the Gospel of Luke, and then the last week of Jesus’ life in Jerusalem where he’s crucified, he’s resurrected. Where did Jesus appear to his disciples after his resurrection according to Matthew? Galilee, exactly. Did Jesus appear to any of his disciples in Jerusalem according to Matthew? No. All the appearances of Jesus—the resurrected Jesus in Matthew take place in Galilee not Jerusalem. Just the opposite of that, at the end of Luke and the beginning of Acts, Jesus tells his disciples after he’s risen, several of them see him, and he says, “Stay in Jerusalem, don’t go out of Jerusalem or Judea until the Holy Spirit comes.” And it says, they stayed in Jerusalem the whole—he—Jesus appeared to his disciples for a stated period of time, according to Acts; I think its forty days. Is that right? Something like that. After that period of time Jesus no longer appeared to his disciples, according to Acts, he ascended into heaven, but that whole time they stayed in Judea, so all the appearances of the resurrected Jesus, according to Luke, take place in Jerusalem. That’s interesting see that he starts off in Galilee, he ends up in Jerusalem, and then Acts starts off again in Jerusalem and then it goes out and—to part of the world—it expands its vision to Antioch, to Asia Minor, to Greece, to Europe, and finally Paul ends up in Rome at the end. There’s a very schematic geographical system to the way Luke has organized this two volume work, and that’s even reflected in the layout of the outline of the book, which is why I wanted to give you that very simple outline.

2. *The Themes of Luke*

[19] Now let’s go back and see how this is reflected in other parts. Look at Jesus’ inaugural speech

as put forward by Luke in chapter 4 of Luke. Now we're going to spend a lot of time talking about this because you're going to imitate me when you write your exegesis papers. You're going to pay really good attention to all the details of the pericope. You've learned now that *pericope* is just a fancy Greek word for section, it's the Greek form of section, both of them mean something cut out, and so pericope is what we biblical scholars often call a little piece of text that you do an exegesis of. You want to concentrate on the details of your pericope to try to find out what the message is. So that's what we're going to do with this passage 4:16-30. Now it would help if you also compared this—we're not going to do that so much right now—with Mark 6:1-6 because Luke is getting this scene from Mark. What's going to be interesting to us is, what does Luke change about the scene he gets from Mark? What does he add to the scene he gets from Mark? You could also compare it with Matthew 13:53-58 because that's where Matthew has it. If you were to compare Mark and Matthew, what you would see is Matthew pretty much just follows Mark here. He takes this story about where he finds it in the story of Mark, and he puts it in his story at chronologically about the same place. And he doesn't have Jesus give a long speech, he just has him appear there and that sort of thing.

[20] Now notice what Luke does. Luke takes this text and he does a lot more with it, so we're going to read it and talk about that. "When he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, he went to the synagogue on the Sabbath day, as was his custom." Now if you were a good exegete you would notice, "as was his custom"—you might need to look up in a concordance to see if Luke likes that phrase, because he does.

[21] He stood up and read, and the scroll of the Prophet Isaiah was given to him. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it is written, "The spirit of the Lord is upon me because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor." And he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant and sat down. The eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on

him. Then he began to say to them, "Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing." All spoke well of him and were amazed at the gracious words that came from his mouth. They said, "Is not this Joseph's son?" He said to them, "Doubtless you will quote to me this proverb, 'Doctor, cure yourself!' And you will say, 'Do here also in your hometown the things we have heard you did in Capernaum.'"

[22] That's interesting, because he hasn't really got to Capernaum yet in Luke's Gospel.

[23] And he said, "Truly I tell you, no prophet is accepted in the prophet's hometown. But the truth is, there were many widows in Israel in the time of Elijah, when the heaven was shut up for three years and six months, and there was a severe famine over all the land. Yet Elijah was sent to none of them except to a widow at Zarephath in Sidon. There were also many lepers in Israel in the time of prophet Elisha, and none of them was cleansed except Naaman the Syrian." When they heard this—

[24] Now notice they started out the scene, they're all happy, he's the hometown boy, he's come home, they are amazed at his teaching, the mood changes. Why does the mood change right there?

[25] When they heard this, all in the synagogue were filled with rage. They got up, drove him out of town, and led him to the brow of the hill on which their town was built so that they might hurl him off the cliff. But he passed through the midst of them and went on his way. He went down to Capernaum, a city of Galilee, and was teaching them on the Sabbath.

[26] Notice, this is when he moves to Capernaum from Nazareth in Luke's Gospel. In all the synoptic Gospels, Jesus makes Capernaum his home base in Galilee, not his hometown of Nazareth. According to Mark and Matthew it's later in their Gospels that Jesus is rejected in Nazareth and makes his—then moves and makes his home in Capernaum. Notice that Luke knows this, Luke is giving us a clue that he knows he's taking this passage out of its

context from where he found it because the people say, “Do for us what you did in Capernaum.” Implying that they think of Capernaum as his home base, well that’s because by that time in Mark and Matthew, it was his home base, by the time he gives this speech in Nazareth. Luke takes this passage that he finds later in Mark and he moves it and plops it down at the beginning of Jesus’ Galilean ministry. He wants this speech to be Jesus’ first speech, this sermon, Jesus’ first sermon. Maybe that means that if we analyze the content of the sermon we can try to figure out, why did Luke change the setting of the story to be at the beginning of the ministry and then also why did he make it so much bigger? It occupies only a few little verses in Mark, and Luke expands it into this whole speech and makes it this big conflict, so let’s look at several different things.

[27] First, I said—he says, “as was his custom.” As we’ll talk about next week, one of the main themes of the Gospel of Luke and Acts is that good Jewish boys do good Jewish things. They go to synagogue, they know their scripture, they’re circumcised, they keep kosher, they worship in the temple. So Jesus also is depicted by Luke as a good Jewish boy. We’ll see next time, and I’m going to talk about some of these themes a bit more fully in both Luke and Acts. And I’ll talk about, for example, why is it only in Luke that he tells us that Jesus’ parents, after he was born, circumcised him on the eighth day like they were supposed to, after a month they take him to the temple for the presentation. All of this, and Luke even tells us, this is to fulfill the scripture and to fulfill the law, and he’s referring back to Leviticus. So Jesus’ mother and father are good Jewish parents, they do exactly what the law tells them to do, and Jesus is a good Jewish boy, so another clue here, “as was his custom,” this is like Jesus goes to temple every Saturday.

[28] Look also, “the spirit of the Lord,” he says in verse 18, he cites the text, “The spirit of the Lord is upon me because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor.” Again, if you took a concordance and searched all the times in Luke and Acts, when the spirit either called the Holy Spirit or sometimes just the spirit or the spirit of God occurs, you’ll find this is one of Luke’s favorite themes. The Holy Spirit, in fact, is the main actor in the book of Acts. Jesus is the main actor in the Gospel of Luke,

Jesus leaves the scene, he kind of talks from offstage every once in a while—talk to Saul, Saul why do you persecute me? But Jesus is kind of saying that from offstage. The real actor in the book of Luke is the Holy Spirit. — So, again, at the beginning of this lecture, this sermon, Jesus talks about the spirit. Notice also the—“sent me to bring good news to the poor, he has sent me to proclaim release to the captives, recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free.” Any of you know the Magnificat? The song that’s sung by Mary when she’s told by the angel that she is pregnant? It’s a very important liturgical piece; I’ll talk about it again next time in a little bit more depth. If you go to a Catholic church or an Episcopalian church, chances are you’ll say the Magnificat, “My soul blesses the Lord.” It’s called the Magnificat because “my soul magnifies the Lord.” In the Latin the first word of the song that Mary says is *magnificat*, that is “magnifies,” “my soul magnifies the Lord.” That song that Mary says has all this stuff about God will—that her son will lift up the poor and oppressed, God will help the poor; he will send the rich away empty. Over and over again that song by Mary, this idea that God’s going to perform this great reversal of rich and poor, the poor will be helped and made rich, the rich will be made poor, the high will be sent down low, the low will be raised up high, so we’ve already seen this theme already in the Gospel of Luke, and now it’s right here in Jesus’ first sermon. That’s another theme.

[29] Look at verse 19, “To proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.” If you use an older translation, like the King James Version, anybody else have—what do you have for 19, “To proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor,” anybody have a different translation? Nope—yes sir?

[30] **Student:** [Inaudible]

[31] **Professor Dale Martin:** “The year acceptable to the Lord.” A lot of translations—the older translations will say, “To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord.” That’s—as we’ll see—that’s another theme of Luke. He’s quoting it from scripture but then he incorporates it. For example, there will be a time later where we’ll see that at one point Jesus condemns Jerusalem because “they did not recognize the time of their visitation.” Jesus’ being there on earth represents this special time. It’s a focus of history on one

point of time. Again, Jesus in his first sermon quotes this “acceptable year of the Lord” as being his year; it’s the Jesus year in Judea.

[32] Then another theme that you see here is what happens to Jesus. First Jesus sets himself up as a prophet, right, by quoting—by citing stories about Elijah, who helped the woman—the widow’s son, and Elisha, so Elijah and Elisha are important prophets for Luke and Jesus portrays as being like that, so that’s why he says:

[33] No prophet is accepted in the prophet’s hometown. But the truth is there were many widows in Israel in the time of Elijah when the heaven was shut up for three years and six months, there was severe famine, yet Elijah was not sent to them.

[34] Elijah wasn’t sent to the Jews, to any Jewish widows didn’t—weren’t there Jewish widows who needed a little help too, God? Well yeah, but he wasn’t sent to the Jewish widows he was sent to a non-Jewish widow, a woman who lived in Sidon. “There were many lepers in Israel in the time of prophet Elisha.” Elisha was the junior prophet to Elijah, Elijah anointed Elisha—not anoint him, he gave him his mantle and so Elisha, after Elijah went up in the fiery chariot, the flying fiery chariot you’ve heard the story, “swing low swing chariot, coming for to take me home.” Elijah doesn’t die at the end of his life he’s swooped up in a fiery chariot into heaven and, right before that, he gives his mantle to his disciple Elisha and then Elisha is the prophet from there. Elisha also, weren’t there many Jewish lepers Elisha? Couldn’t you take a nice Jewish leper to heal Elisha? No Jesus says, he wasn’t sent to them he was sent to Naaman the Syrian. So I said, when they heard this, all in the synagogue were filled with rage, and I said, why this? What were they so upset with? Now you tell me, why does he say they were filled with rage right then? What, just say it, shout it out. You know. Are there are no Jewish lepers, Elisha? Are there no Jewish widows, Elijah? Why are they mad?

[35] **Student:** He’s saying he’s not there for them.

[36] **Professor Dale Martin:** Yeah, Jesus is saying, I’m not here for you, or at least he’s saying Elijah and Elisha were sent to Gentiles, not to Jews. Notice what Luke has done here.

He’s set up Jesus as a prophet like Elijah and Elisha, and he had Jesus himself predict that the message will go out to the Gentiles. It hasn’t gone out yet to Gentiles, in the Gospel of Luke Jesus pretty much sticks with the Jews. In fact, Peter has to have a revelation in Acts before he will go preach to a Gentile, as we’ll see next time. The Gentiles are not receiving the Gospel yet but Jesus is predicting that they will, so that’s another theme here that Luke is playing on. Notice the other thing, what happens when Jesus does this? He’s rejected by his own people. So another theme of Luke and Acts is true prophets get rejected by their own people. A prophet in his own country is not accepted. Jesus is a great Prophet like Elijah and Elisha, he’s not accepted in his own country, he’s rejected, and the Gentile mission happens after the rejection by the Jews. That’s going to be a theme that we’ll see over and over in Acts; not so much in the Gospel of Luke. Luke is foreshadowing the book of Acts in this chapter with Jesus’ sermon because Jesus himself doesn’t go preach to Gentiles. You have to wait until Acts to get that. But Luke is foreshadowing the rejection of the Gospel by Jews and the taking of the Gospel to the Gentiles that you’ll then see in Acts, and he foreshadows it all right here in this first sermon by Jesus.

[37] Then the last theme that you have here is them trying to kill Jesus for what he says, which that’s going to foreshadow the theme all the way through that the Gospel—wherever the Gospel goes you get persecution. When we get to Acts you’ll see this in a way that just drums it into your head: Paul goes to a town, he goes first to the synagogue in the town, he preaches to the Jews in the synagogue, they get all mad, some of them usually accept, a few of them will accept, we’ll see that as a theme in Acts also, but the majority of them don’t. They reject Paul, they throw him out, they try to stone him, or they try to persecute him, or they try to throw him out town and then Paul turns and preaches the same message to the Gentiles, and they accept, and they form a church. He goes to the next town, he does this in Thessalonica, he does it in Philippi, he does it in Corinth, he tries it in Athens but he’s not successful because nobody pays any attention to him in Athens. That’s a university town after all, they know better, right? This theme of the prophets being rejected and it’s the

rejection of the message by the Jews that causes the message then to be taken to the Gentiles. That will play out over and over again, and here again you get it here. So Luke has transposed the story about Jesus preaching in Nazareth from where he finds it in Mark, which is later in Jesus' ministry, and he puts it at the beginning of Jesus' ministry, and he packs it up with all this other stuff. That should be a very good clue to you if you're comparing Luke with Mark; you just know this must be important; this must be a way where we really see what this author is about.

[38] Notice: is Luke concerned about when the event in Nazareth actually historically happened? No, he's even—you can tell he's even getting it out of his source from one spot and consciously transferring it to another spot, which tells us one thing, is that to him it's not that important chronologically when this story actually happened. What's important to him is using the story to emphasize the theological message that he wants to emphasize. Now let's look at another place where Luke does this. You have to turn to Acts for this though, look at Acts 11. Any questions about that before I go on? No questions? I love good docile students, always happy with everything I say.

3. *The Geography of Acts*

[39] Look at Chapter 11:19. Now I already read this earlier and then I read it actually in another lecture, but it's very important to see what Luke is doing.

[40] Now those who were scattered, because of the persecution that took place over Stephen, traveled as far as Phoenicia, Cyprus, and Antioch, and they spoke the word to no one except Jews. But among them were some men of Cyprus and Cyrene who, on coming to Antioch spoke to the Hellenists also, proclaiming the Lord Jesus. The hand of the Lord was with them, and a great number became believers and turned to the Lord. News of this came to the ears of the church in Jerusalem, and they sent Barnabas to Antioch. When he came and saw the grace of God, he rejoiced, and he exhorted them all to remain faithful in the Lord with steadfast devotion for he was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and of faith. And a great many ... Then

Barnabas went to Tarsus to look for Saul, and when he found him he brought him to Antioch. So it was that for an entire year they met with the church and taught a great many people, and it was in Antioch that the disciples were first called Christians.

[41] Isn't that a nice little encapsulation? In that little paragraph Luke, the author, who we still tend to call these Gospel writers by these names even though we don't believe historically that this was the historical Luke, but I'll still keep calling him Luke because it's easier than saying "the author" each time. Luke takes a little paragraph in which he shifts your focus here from the whole Jerusalem, Judea, Jewish oriented form of the movement, and now he goes to Antioch and now you get this Greek kind of movement, it's predominantly in a Greek speaking city, Antioch. This is one of the reasons that I think that that word that my translation translates, "Hellenist," they spoke to Hellenists in verse 20; I think that's not correct. I think that either in the original Greek, and some manuscripts have this, or you just would translate this word, it must be that they—it's saying that they spoke to Greeks, that is ethnic Greeks. Why do I think this is a reference to ethnic Greeks and not just Greek speaking Jews? Anybody have an idea? Because this isn't the first time that people—that followers of Jesus have spoken to Greek speaking Jews. We already have in Jerusalem—he has already told us in the earlier part of Acts that in Jerusalem there were already Greek speaking Jews part of the community. In fact it says that, Stephen himself would have talked with these Greek speaking Jews. So we already have before we get to chapter 11, the idea that the Gospel of Jesus has been taken both to Aramaic speaking Jews and Greek speaking Jews because it's already there in Jerusalem. He's talking about something new happening here, this is people not just speaking to Aramaic speaking Jews or to Greek speaking Jews, they're actually speaking to non-Jews. This is the first time you get this indication in the book of Acts, that the movement has now spread out from Jerusalem, and it's also being spread to Greeks, ethnic Greeks. And I think by "Greeks" he just means Gentiles, not just Greeks ethnically but anybody who wasn't a Jew is what he mainly means here.

- [42] What's interesting is that this is kind of out of place. One of the things I'm arguing is that unlike this translation I just read, which might lead you to believe that the author is telling us this is the first time they spoke to Greek speaking Jews, I think that the original text must have meant that, this is the first time that these people are speaking to actual non-Jews. Now it's not the first time, though, that people in Acts have spoken to non-Jews, right? When's the first time, according to Acts, that people actually speak to non-Jews and preach the Gospel to non-Jews, and non-Jews become members of the church? When? Have you read Acts yet? Cornelius, the centurion, the Roman centurion. Remember I said, Peter has to have a whole series of revelations on top of the roof before he's convinced to finally go preach to a Gentile and convert him and that takes place in Acts 10. Now keep your finger on Acts 11:19 and flip over to Acts 8:1-4. I think I may have mentioned this already but let's look at it a bit closer now. Acts 8:1-4, this takes place right after the stoning of Stephen. Hmmm. Stephen, is that a good Hebrew or Aramaic name? No, does anybody know where the word—where the name Stephen comes from? Raise your hand, yes sir?
- [43] Student: Crown.
- [44] **Professor Dale Martin:** Crown, are you a Stephen? No, you just know. Yes, it comes from the word *stephanos* in Greek, which means "crown." Notice already there are Greek speaking Jews who have Greek names in the church, and Stephen's one of them. In fact, the seven deacons who are appointed that we could have read about just right before this in Acts, those are appointed precisely in order, according to Acts, to be able to minister to the Greek speakers, because some Greek speaking widows were being neglected in the distribution of food and funds, according to the text. The seven deacons are appointed. Those seven deacons some of them have—they have Greek names, so there are Greek speaking Jews in Jerusalem already. So right after the stoning of Stephen you have this, chapter 8:
- [45] And Saul approved of their killing him. That day a severe persecution began against the church in Jerusalem, and all except the apostles were scattered throughout the countryside of Judea and Samaria. Devout men buried Stephen and made loud lamentation over him. But Saul was ravaging the church by entering house after house, dragging off both men and women, he committed them to prison. Now those who were scattered, after the stoning of Stephen, went from place to place proclaiming the word.
- [46] Phillip, who was one of those deacons along with Stephen, Phillip, that's a good Greek name right? At least it's a Macedonian name, named after the king of Macedon. "Phillip went down to the city of Samaria and proclaimed the Messiah to them." Then you get Phillip going to Samaria and so forth and you'll have other things happening. Now keep your finger—you had your finger there, notice that he's saying, "Now those who were scattered went from place to place proclaiming the word." Flip over without thinking anything, don't think anything, Acts 11:19, "Now those who were scattered because of the persecutions that took place over Stephen traveled as far as." You see Luke seems to have had a source, maybe a written source, that had this message about the stoning of Stephen, the persecution that arose in Jerusalem, and then the dispersal of Greek speaking followers of Jesus, and they don't just go to Samaria as Phillip did, it actually says, "Then, they went to Phoenicia, Cyprus, Antioch ... speaking to no one but Jews," but then it has this message to the Greeks and the Gentiles.
- [47] In other word, from 8:4 it must have originally joined on to what goes with 11:19 because you can just see this narrative stops, and then it picks up again in 11:19. Luke took what was a text or a source for him that had this story that this kind of thing in order. Stephen preaches the Gospel to the Jews, they get mad at him, they persecute him and stone him. The persecution of Stephen leads to more persecution of the church in Jerusalem, the rejection of the Gospel by the Jews, the disciples are scattered and they go and who do they preach too? The Gentiles. Haven't we seen this pattern before? We all saw it in the very first sermon of Jesus, right? What Luke has done is he's split this thing which showed that pattern, and in it he put all the stuff that's in chapters 8, 9, and 10 and the first part of 11 in between there. Now you tell me, why did Luke split a narrative and put this material in between those two sentences? What's in that

material between 8, 9, 10, and 11 that was—that Luke wanted to insert there? What? Pardon?

[48] **Student:** [Inaudible]

[49] **Professor Dale Martin:** Peter preaching to Cornelius, the Gentile. What Luke is doing is he has a source that basically—who were the first people to preach to Gentiles? They're anonymous, according to his source; we don't know who they are. Just some people, some followers of Jesus, Greek speaking followers of Jesus who were—left Jerusalem and Judea, they traveled around different parts, they went to the Eastern Mediterranean, and as they went they took the Gospel with them, and along the way they even spoke not only to Greek speaking Jews but they even spoke to Gentiles, that's what his source says. Luke splits that and—he doesn't want to do that. First he wants to say, well Phillip went to Samaria and he preached to Samaria, so you have Samaria there. Then you have this whole thing with Peter. And you know the story about Peter, he's up on the rooftop praying and this sheet with all these unclean animals, with alligators and snakes, and stuff that was somehow some Sunday school material I had, had a sheet with alligators and snakes and stuff coming down for Peter. It doesn't tell us in the text that there were alligators and snakes, it just part of my Sunday school memory. There are unclean animals, and he's commanded to kill them and eat them, and he says, I'm a good Jew, I don't eat that, that's not kosher, and a voice from heaven says, what God has cleansed don't you declare unclean. The vision happens three times. Why? Because Peter does not want to take the message to Gentiles. Is your hand up? Nope okay.

[50] So finally Peter is forced to take the message to Gentiles, by God, by revelation, and then you have the story of the baptism of Cornelius and his house, the first Gentile converts. And then Peter goes back to Jerusalem and all the people—the Jews in Jerusalem say, why did you do that, you're not supposed to bring in uncircumcised people in the church. And Peter has to defend the whole thing and then finally Peter wins the argument, and even James, the conservative head of the church, turns to them and says, okay well God must have been including the Gentiles also. Luke wants Peter to be the first person to take the message to Gentiles, and he wants Peter to do so only after

being compelled by God to do so. Luke knows that the first people who took the message to Gentiles were probably just anonymous followers of Jesus, because in the source it's there. He splits that source and he puts all this stuff about Peter there because he wants Peter to be the first and only then the others. In other words, what you get there is a key to what is the entire outline of Acts.

[51] Look back at Acts 1:8. Acts 1:8 gives you, in a sense, the outline of Acts. This is Jesus about to ascend into heaven, talking to his disciples, right outside Jerusalem in the suburbs of Jerusalem. “But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit,” again there's that Holy Spirit important for Luke, “has come upon you. You will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and all Judea, and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.” That's exactly the way he will construct the book of Acts. Jerusalem–Judea is the country of Jerusalem; Samaria is actually another part here, but you have this idea that the message is going out in concentric circles. That's why Phillip went—he has Phillip going to Samaria right before Peter goes to the Gentiles with–Cornelius in chapter 10. In chapter 8, Phillip goes to Samaria and then chapter 10 Peter goes—and then so Gentiles—then you have the Gentiles, and you have Rome as where the book ends up. Rome sort of representing symbolically the very ultimate ends of the earth. This is the whole world so why—by looking at the details we can tell that the Luke is not telling us what happened by chronological or historical accuracy. He puts it in an order—even in the order he puts it, even the outline on his books because he wants to have this message of the Gospel centering on Jerusalem, that's why the whole first part of Luke centers in—that's why he has ten full chapters on the journey to Jerusalem. He wants to focus your attention on Jerusalem—through the book, the Gospel. But then what he does is once you're in Jerusalem he focuses your attention on the fact that the Gospel goes beyond Jerusalem.

[52] One last thing, look at Luke 21:20-27. We'll unpack a lot of this much more—next time when we talk about both Luke and Acts as far as what are the major thematic issues in these two. I'll start in again next time with this, or I'll reiterate this, but just to get you thinking look at Luke 21. Luke gets this from Mark 13. Do you remember when we talked about how

could we tell when Mark was written because it has this abomination of desolation being set up in the temple, which probably refers to—recalls this idea of the profanation of the temple by Antiochus IV Epiphanes, but Mark believed it was going to happen in the future, probably by the Romans. Right after that happens then the Messiah comes, you have all these terrible things happen and the Messiah comes. Luke is using Mark as his source, Mark 13, but notice how Luke changes it. Verse 20, “When you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies,” that’s not in Mark.

[53] When you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then know that its desolation has come near. Then those in Judea must flee to the mountains, those inside the city must flee, for these are the days of vengeance—

[54] I’m going quickly through this, you’ll have to read over it yourself. Look at verse 24, “They will fall by the edge of the sword,” so the Jews will be defeated, he says. Not only do you have Jerusalem surrounded by the Roman army, but

you have them defeated, fall by the sword. “They will be taken away as captives among all nations.” Yes, the Jews were taken as slaves to Rome, and then they were sold off and dispersed throughout the nations as slaves. “And Jerusalem will be trampled on by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.” None of that was in Luke’s source of Mark. This tells us that Luke is writing after the destruction of Jerusalem because he tells you it happens. It even says that there’s going to be a time of the Gentile domination of Jerusalem. If you read on it’s only after that that you have the Messiah coming on the clouds then as—he picks up again the story. Notice all over Luke and Acts, we can tell by looking at his sources, his editing procedure. Luke was written sometime after the destruction of Jerusalem, and the time he’s telling this story is here. What’s that time? “the time of the Gentiles.” Any questions? See you next time.

[end of transcript]

Outline of Luke and Acts

RLST 152 Introduction to New Testament History and Literature
Dale B. Martin

I. Luke

- A. Before the Ministry (1:1-3:22)
- B. Galilean Ministry (3:23-9:50)
- C. Transition section (mainly on discipleship and witnessing) (9:1-50)
- E. To Jerusalem (9:51-19:44)
- F. In Jerusalem (19:45-24:53)

II. Acts

- A. Before the Gentiles (1:1-9:43)
- B. Transition section (first conversion of a Gentile and the debate following) (10:1-12:25)
- C. After the Entry of the Gentiles (13:1-28:31)