

Synthetic Bible Studies

Containing an outline study of every book of the Bible
with suggestions for Sermons, Addresses and
Bible Expositions

By

James M. Gray, D.D.

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LESSON THREE

LUKE

Luke, like Mark, wrote for the Gentiles as is evident from a careful and comparative reading of his Gospel; but for a different class of Gentiles than Mark. The writers of the first three centuries of our era testify, almost without exception, that he wrote for the Greeks, presenting JESUS from the point of view of the Son of Man, the perfect, the ideal man.

This testimony is corroborated by the internal evidence of the book itself. Who were the Greeks? What were their characteristics or ideals as distinguished from the Romans, for example?

- as the latter represented the idea of activity or power, so the former represented that of reason and culture.
- as the ideal of the Roman was military glory and governmental authority, so that of the Greek was wisdom and beauty.
- as the Romans felt it to be their mission to govern, to give laws to man, so the Greeks felt it to be theirs to educate, elevate and perfect man.

Their thought did not include man considered as a race, but man as an individual. It was the man of genius in whom they were interested, not man as found in the common herd.

As illustrating their conception of man or of humanity in this sense, it may be remarked that, unlike the less intellectual nations round about them, they made their gods in the likeness of men. Of course, it should also be borne in mind that the ideal man, the human GOD they had

before them, was always of a worldly character, one in whom there was ever a mingling of virtue and vice, for as heathen they knew nothing better or higher.

The Gospel of Luke, therefore, meets this need on the part of the Greek in presenting JESUS as the perfect, the ideal, the universal man. He is not here the Jewish man, the Roman man, or the Grecian man as such, but all men at their best are summed up in Him - The Man.

Following Dr. Gregory here, the third Gospel meets this need of the Greek in several ways:

(1) *In its authorship*, Luke, it is thought, was himself a Greek and a proselyte to the Jewish religion; moreover, he was a cultivated man, more so than any other of the four evangelists. His cultivation is indicated in the profession he followed, that of a physician, and also in the general style of his composition.

Then, too, he was the traveling companion of Paul, himself a cultivated man, and the great apostle to the Gentiles especially the Greeks.

All these things go to show the adaptability of the third Gospel in its authorship to that representative class of people.

(2) *In its plan*. It is usually considered the most orderly history of the sayings and doings of JESUS among the four Gospels. It was evidently prepared for a thoughtful and philosophic people. A careful reading of such passages as 1:1-4, also 1:5; 2:1; 3:1, etc., will show what is meant by this remark.

(3) *In its style*. Allusion has already been made to this fact, but it may be well to further observe that it is remarkable for its poetry, song and eloquence. Also for the depth and sublimity of its thought.

Notice how many songs are recorded in its opening chapters, and consider their attractiveness to the people of the land of Homer. Close attention also will make clear even to the English reader that there is a flow to the speech of Luke, and a rounding off of his sentences that marks a higher grade of rhetoric than the other Gospels. And speaking of the depth and philosophic nature of his work, observe how he abounds in the discourses of JESUS, so different from Mark.

The people for whom he writes are those who think and meditate, hence he alone of the Synoptists records such wonderful utterances of the Saviour as the parables of the Prodigal Son and the Rich Man and Lazarus, and His teachings on prayer, and worship, and the HOLY SPIRIT.

(4) *In its omissions*. Luke omits the distinctively Jewish portions of the Gospel, saying little or nothing about the Old Testament prophets, or the Abrahamic lineage of JESUS; neither does he quote the parables condemnatory of Israel. He also omits distinctively Roman features, the vivid pictures and activity associated with Mark, and affects conciseness of description rather than scenic effect.

(5) *In its additions*. This Gospel gives those incidents in the life of JESUS which more especially demonstrate His interest in the whole race.

The genealogy recorded is that through Adam from GOD. The sending out of the seventy disciples as well as that of the twelve is mentioned, especially as the former were not limited in their work to "**the lost sheep of the house of Israel.**"

Likewise is a great deal of space, nine chapters (9:51-18:30), given up to the ministry of JESUS among the Gentile beyond the Jordan. The parable of the Good Samaritan and the healing of the ten lepers, whose records are confined to Luke's Gospel, are especially cheering to the same class.

(6) *In its presentation of JESUS Himself.* The third Gospel contains peculiar marks of His humanity, as notice 10:21; 22:43, 44; 23:46; 24:39. It emphasizes His affectionate regard for women and children (8:42; 9:38; 7:46; 8:3; 11:27; 10:38-42; 23:27). And also His sympathy with the despised and outcast (6:20-22).

Compare His discourses in the Pharisee's house (chap. 14), and the parables already noted as well as that of the publican (v. 18).

Some one has said that this Gospel more than any other has given birth to the philanthropic and reformatory movements of our day, a singular and interesting illustration of which is found in the numerous inscriptions from this Gospel found on the facades of public buildings devoted to such purposes.

(7) *And yet Luke emphasizes also the divinity of His person as do all the evangelists.*

I. Preface, 1:1-4

Notice the reference in the first verse to other Gospels, perhaps only the other two synoptics are meant, and yet the word "many" indicates more than these. Of the whole number, however the HOLY SPIRIT has chosen to preserve only these which are bound up in our Bible and have come down to us through the channel of the church.

Observe further, that according to verse 2, they who had set forth these things were eye-witnesses of what they recorded.

Moreover, Luke himself possessed practically the same qualification (v. 3). The expression thus referred to suggests an important peculiarity of Luke's Gospel, viz: its historical character. Accordingly, he had traced the course of all things accurately and was about to write them out "in order." There is more of the feature of sustained history in this Gospel than in any of the others.

Finally observe that it is addressed to an individual, possessing a Greek name, meaning a lover of GOD, and addressed to him for the purpose of working in him assurance of faith concerning the Gospel which he had previously heard by word of mouth.

II. Period of the Infancy, 1:5-2:52

Under this division we have ten leading facts:

- announcement to Zacharias (vv. 5-25);
- announcement to Mary (vv. 26-39);
- visit of Mary to Elizabeth (vv. 39-56);
- birth of John the Baptist (vv. 57-80);
- birth of JESUS (2:1-7);
- announcement to the shepherds (vv. 8-20);
- circumcision of JESUS (v. 21);
- presentation in the Temple (vv. 22-38);
- residence in Nazareth (vv. 39,40);
- visit to Jerusalem (vv. 41-52).

III. Period of Preparation, 3:1-4:13

The facts of this period may be outlined thus:

- ministry of John, (vv. 1-20);
- baptism of JESUS (vv. 21, 22);
- genealogy of JESUS (vv. 23-38);
- temptation of JESUS (4:1-13).

IV. The Period of the Galilean Ministry, 4:14-9:50

- ministry in Nazareth (16-30);
- ministry in Capernaum (vv. 31-44);
- call of Peter, James and John, (5:1-11);
- spread of JESUS' fame (vv. 12-26);
- call of Levi (vv. 27-39);
- opposition to the Pharisees (6:1-11);
- choice of the apostles (vv. 12-16);
- discourse to the disciples (vv. 17-49);
- miracles in Capernaum and Nain (7:1-17);
- discourse on John the Baptist (vv. 18-35);
- on the Two Debtors (vv. 36-50);
- ministry of the women (8:1-3);
- parable of the Sower (vv. 4-18);
- discourse on His relatives (vv. (19-21);
- stilling of the tempests (vv. 22-25);
- healing of the Gadarene (vv. 26-40);
- of the woman with the issue of blood (vv. 41-48);
- raising of Jarius' daughter (vv. 49-56);
- commission of the twelve (9:1-9);
- withdrawal to the desert (vv. 10-17);
- transfiguration (vv. 18-36);
- healing of the lunatic (vv. 37-42);
- counsel to the disciples (vv. 43-56).

V. Period of the Judean Ministry, 9:51-19:27

- journey toward Jerusalem (vv. 51-62);
- commission of the seventy (10:1-24);
- discourse on love to one's neighbor (vv. 25-37);
- visit to Martha and Mary (vv. 38-42);
- discourse on prayer, (11:1-13);
- on seeking a sign (vv. 14-36);
- dinner with the Pharisee (vv. 37-54);
- discourse on the Pharisee (12:1-12);
- on Covetousness (vv. 13-59);
- on Repentance (13:1-9);
- on the kingdom of Heaven (vv. 10-24);
- on the strait gate (vv. 23-30);
- challenge to Herod (vv. 31-35);
- discourse on hospitality (14:1-24);
- on self-denial (vv. 25-35);
- on the lost (15:1-32);
- on earthly riches (16:1-30);
- visit at Jericho (16:31-19:27).

VI. The Period of the Jerusalem Ministry, 19:28-24:53

- entry into Jerusalem (19:28-48);
- controversy with the leaders (20:1-21:4);
- discourse on the future (21:5-38);
- last Passover (22:1-38);
- betrayal (vv. 39-.53);
- trial before the high priest (vv. 54-71);
- before Pilate (23:1-26);
- crucifixion (27:49);
- burial (vv. 50-56);
- resurrection (24:1-48);
- ascension (vv. 49-53).

~ end of Lesson 3 ~
