Luke background and themes

Alright, let’s go ahead and get going. I do have bad news for you there is a quiz today, but you’ll get an idea what my quizzes look like. We’ll start with that and then I do want to move into the gospel of Luke. One other announcement as well is that there will be, for sure, although I still have not determined the time with my TA, there will be a review/extra credit session on Wednesday evening, sometime, probably in this room. As soon as I find out the details I will e-mail that to you. So, if an e-mail comes from the New Testament class make sure that you check that. Again, I remind you that some of you may be participating in other review sessions through the academics support center, those do not count for extra credit. The session that my TA will hold on Wednesday evening is the one that will count for extra credit. Again, I’ll let you know as soon as I find out when exactly it's meeting and where. It will probably be right here in this room.

Alright, let’s open with prayer. Father thank you again for revealing yourself to us in your written word, but we realized that simply functions to point us beyond that to your revelation and the disclosure of yourself in the form of your son Jesus Christ, your ultimate revelation to us. I pray that as we work through Gospels we will be confronted in a new way with that living word and will be more convicted and encouraged to respond in the way that the Scripture itself calls forth. In Jesus name we pray, Amen.

Please, make sure that you see the spaces on the left-hand column. Make sure you record your answer there. The correct letter, you can circle it if you want, but what will get graded is that left-hand column with those blanks. Make sure your answer gets recorded in that space on the left-hand column of the quiz. Again, it is based solely on
your textbook reading; any correspondence or overlap with what we’ve talked about in class is coincidental. 5 doesn't have answers, that is my freebie to you. Some of you have answers on it, but don't worry about that. Five is my gift to you. Number five, I’m not sure what happened there, my computer freaked out. The chapter on number six, if you have number six, it has two sets of answers under it. It’s the second set. Ignore that first line that says Mark, John, Acts, and Romans. The correct questions for numbers or answers for number six are that Jesus was a Rabbi, the Old Testament law must be obeyed. Okay, I should almost collect these and start over; no that wouldn’t be a good idea. You’re right, on number six it is the first set that's right. This is quiz B. For number five that is a freebie for everybody. Number 6B is the first set of answers Mark, John, Acts, and Romans are the options that you choose from. There are two different quizzes there is a letter A and letter B at the top. If you have letter B. If you have letter A, you’re fine, don’t worry about it you still get number 5 free, but if you have B, number six it’s the first set of answers Mark, John, Acts, and Romans that's what you're selecting from. The rest of them you can ignore.

You have about one more minute. Alright, hand those in. Hand them to the end then forward. I promise you that the next quiz will hopefully be less confusing. I’m not sure what happened; I always blame it on my computer.

I want to continue to talk about the Gospels. We’ll move on to gospel number three, and what we've been doing is focusing on what is distinctive in each of the four Gospels as far as the way they may be put together, what kinds of themes they emphasize, etc. So, we'll do the same with Luke. We’ll ask the question, “What is unique about Luke?” What does it seem to emphasize over Matthew and Mark and John? What is the unique way it portrays Jesus? We saw that Matthew portrays Jesus as primarily the son of David, the Messiah for Jews and Gentiles. Matthew portrays Jesus as a teacher; he portrays Him, one of the favorite terms that Matthew uses to designate Jesus is, “the son of God.” He's also the fulfillment of the Old Testament. All the Old Testament stories find their climax in Jesus, and he's the new Moses. We saw that Mark primarily portrays
Jesus as both God and triumphant, yet also as a human being. Perhaps there is an emphasis on his suffering and his passion due to the situation of the audience that Mark is addressing. So what is unique about the way that Luke portrays Jesus?

We'll start by looking at what kind of book is Luke. First of all, and hopefully you picked up this up in your reading in your introduction to the New Testament on Luke, and I think we talked about this way back near the beginning of the semester, Luke is actually part of a two volume work comprising Luke and Acts, so when you read the first chapter of Luke and then you go to the first chapter of Acts it's obvious that they belong together. They were originally a two volume work, and there are theories as to why they were split. At least one of the reasons why Luke and Acts are no longer together is Luke, in the New Testament, goes with the other books that it resembles. The other Gospels Matthew, Mark, and John and then Acts provides, as we saw, a fitting introduction, to especially Paul's letters, but in some respects to the rest of the New Testament. It's a fitting bridge between the Gospels and the followers of Jesus who carry out that work that Jesus began, extending then into the letters that some of the main characters of Acts actually wrote such as Paul's letters, the letters of Peter, etc. So, Luke and Acts actually belong together. Luke was volume 1 of a two volume work that when they were included in the New Testament were split, and Luke goes with the other books that it resembles Matthew, Mark, and John.

Luke, unlike the other Gospels, actually tells us quite a bit about how it was that he wrote his Gospel, and why he wrote it. The very first four versus of Luke bear a lot of resemblances to a typical first century Greco-Roman biography because of the vocabulary that Luke uses in these first four verses. Luke clearly tells us why he's writing, and how he went about writing his works. So starting out, I'll just read the first four versus.

Luke 1:1-3 New Revised Standard

“Since many have undertaken to set down an orderly account of the events that have been fulfilled among us, just as they were handed on to us by those who from
the beginning were eyewitnesses and servants of the word, I too decided, after investigating everything carefully from the very first, to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus,

[Theophilus may have been the patron, the person that funded the writing of Luke.]

so you may know the truth concerning the things about which you have been instructed.”

What these verses tell us is a number of things. First of all, Luke is apparently aware of other written sources, and I think we talked a little bit already about Luke 1:1-4 when we discussed the reliability of the Gospels. But, Luke tells us that he is aware of other written sources that address the issue of the life of Christ or other accounts of Christ's life and teachings. One or more of these may have been Mark or Matthew; Luke doesn't tell us. Luke’s simply aware of other accounts of the life of Christ that he apparently draws upon, and the suggestion is that Luke finds them inadequate to some degree. So, that now he will supplement them or write an account of the things that he wants to emphasize about the life Christ. Second, Luke is apparently dependent on eyewitnesses as well; he talked about the things that have been handed down by those who were first witnesses of these events. So apparently, Luke relies also, not only on written sources and written accounts, on eyewitness reports. Some think that the material in the first couple chapters, especially, where you have some of the detailed words of Mary or Elizabeth that surround the birth of Christ were probably passed down to him by eyewitnesses--that is a possibility. Luke clearly is aware of the dependence of eyewitnesses upon whom he relies in the writing of his own gospel.

Interestingly, Luke himself decides to write his own account of the life of Christ. Again, Luke may have found that the other sources of the other accounts were inadequate, or at least not addressing the concerns that he wants to address about the life Christ. Luke, himself, decides to write his own account. It's interesting that very early on a number of early Latin manuscripts of the gospel of Luke actually included that phrase “it seemed good to me.” There's a number Latin manuscripts that say “it seemed good to
me and to the Holy Spirit” as if verses 1 to 4 sound too much like this is Luke's own doing, and in order to sanction this as inspired Scripture, a couple of documents early on in Latin add “and to the Holy Spirit”, which actually is a phrase you find in Luke's other writing: Acts chapter 15. Interestingly, Luke does not tell us or give any indication that he's writing under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. You’ll see not all writers are aware that they are communicating what is nothing less than the very revelation of God, and Luke doesn't seem to think he's writing anything other than the normal first century Greco-Roman biography. Yet, at the same time God’s spirit, although not explicit in Luke, is still involved, so the product is nothing less than both Luke’s words and the words of God to his people. Finally, Luke will write an orderly narrative with the emphasis on the accuracy and the order of the book. Although, by orderly we should not take it to mean necessarily chronological order; sometimes Luke, as it was typical at times of first century biographies, arranges material thematically or topically rather than chronologically. Sometimes, some of the material you find in one place in Matthew will be in a different place in Luke, or if it's one place in Mark it may be in a different place in Luke. Again, that's not because Luke was confused or didn't understand when these things took place; it is at times one of the gospel writers Matthew, Mark, or Luke may choose to arrange things topically rather than in the order in which they occurred. The fact that Luke writes an orderly account does not necessarily mean that Luke is more chronologically precise than the other Gospels; again he may sometimes arrange his book topically and go by theme rather than the order in which the events occurred.

What about the author? What do we know about Luke? Luke, as your textbook told us, as tradition has it, was a physician, but more importantly Luke was an associate of Paul which may explain why Luke's gospel would be included in Scripture. Even though Luke himself was not an apostle of Jesus, he apparently was a close associate of Paul who was one of Jesus’ apostles. It's likely that that had an influence on the inclusion of Luke's book with the other Gospels of Matthew, Mark and John. To demonstrate that Luke and Acts go together, when you put Luke and Acts together there is an interesting
structure or arrangement that emerges that looks something like this: first of all Luke, and this is, well I’ll talk about the pattern in a moment, Luke begins with Jesus in the context of the Roman world. Did you remember how chapter 2 begins? The so-called Christmas story “it happened or came about in those days when Caesar Augustus”, Luke references Caesar Augustus, and the references to Quirinius the Gov. of Syria. In other words Luke makes a big point of taking Jesus birth in Bethlehem and placing it in the context of the entire Roman world. That’s why he mentions Quirinius and Caesar Augustus as the Emperor during that time because he’s making it clear by placing Jesus birth in the context, not just of Bethlehem and Jerusalem and Judea but in the context of the entire Greco-Roman world.

So, Luke starts with the broader Roman world in the first couple chapters. Then Luke ends with an emphasis on Jerusalem. Everything that happens towards the end of Luke happens in Jerusalem. In fact, there's an emphasis in Luke on Jesus traveling or having a journey towards Jerusalem, so everything ends in the city of Jerusalem. Now, the book of Acts begins right where Luke leaves off with Jesus appearing to his followers in Jerusalem. Acts begins in Jerusalem and with the pouring out of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost that happens in Jerusalem, but interestingly Acts ends within the broader Roman world with the gospel finally, through the apostle Paul and the preaching of the apostles, reaches the Roman world. So, this is known as a literary structure called:

Addressing the Class: Anyone know what this is called?
It’s called a chiasm. Where the beginning and end are the same, and then the middle sections are the same as well. It's when a work moves inward and it repeats itself and moves back outward. That's known as a chiasm. Luke and Acts seem to be arranged according to this. Again, it starts in the context of the broader Roman world, ends up in Jerusalem, and then Acts begins in Jerusalem and the gospel spreads to embrace the Roman world. That appears to be intentional on Luke's part.

What I want to do is emphasize and talk very briefly about a handful of important or key passages in Luke that really seem to reflect what he's trying to do, or at least some
of the unique things he wants to do. The first stopping point is Luke chapter 2.

Referring to an outline: Before I look at that does everyone see, I think it's on page 16 in your notes. I have this outline, it actually comes from a book on Luke from one of the professors here named Borgman, a professor of English, and he suggested a key, notice what this outline looks like in your notes. It looks like a chiasm, the beginning and end are the same and it works into the middle. The outline is strictly an example: I am not to putting this here because I agree with all the details of it. It's just an example of how Luke can be understood, and how one can arrange a work according to this principle. Again, you start and work to the middle and then the book works back out, and sometimes it's what's in the center, as I have here in bold, that is often what gets emphasized at times.

Let’s go back to the key passages. Luke chapter 2 begins with Luke's account of the Christmas story. It introduces you to something that's important for Luke, and that is that Luke makes a big deal out of the fact that Jesus unlike the account you read in Matthew where Jesus gets a royal reception. He's in Bethlehem, but he's a threat to Herod, the king. He’s visited by these foreign dignitaries that bring him expensive gifts in fulfillment of Isaiah chapter 60, but in Luke it's the exact opposite. Jesus is portrayed as being born in rather not just humble but humiliating circumstances. This is a very important key for Luke that he is going to emphasize. He’s going to emphasize not only the humiliating circumstances of Jesus, but the fact that the gospel takes root in circumstances and in people groups that are considered to be disgusting and on the fringes of society. Why is it that Luke doesn't talk about the Wiseman coming to visit Jesus? Maybe he didn't know about them or maybe he did, but they certainly did not fit his purpose. Instead, Luke has the shepherds come and visit Jesus because this fits his purpose perfectly. Luke wants to emphasize, we’ll see this and in a couple of other places, that the Gospel goes out to the social outcast, to the disgusting elements of society. He has the shepherds, who I know we’ve glamorized the shepherds to be these wonderful people living in the cozy mountainsides of Bethlehem who come to see Jesus in the manger, but the shepherds
would've been on the lowest rung of the social ladder. They were the down-and-outers or the disgusting in society, so Luke makes a point of having the shepherds come and worship Jesus because that will fit his scheme throughout the rest of the gospel that Jesus reaches out to the fringes of society to those that everyone else rejects as a social outcast. He begins that theme by drawing attention to these disgusting shepherds coming and visiting Jesus and worshiping him at his birth.

So, Luke 2 is very important for setting the scene of what Luke's going to do, and how he's going to portray Jesus and how he's going to understand the salvation that Jesus brings to his people. I talked a little bit about the central section, again, this example here I’ve given you the book by Prof. Borgman if you want to look at that. Again, it is just one way of understanding the central section. It's well known that Luke has a central section that's often called a travel narrative where Jesus is traveling to Jerusalem which will climax in his death and his resurrection. Again, when you look at it, it’s a chiasm; it looks just like this except a lot more detailed. That's one possible way of looking at the central section of Luke. Again, you can see Luke isn't just sitting down and writing a story off the top of his head. This is very well-crafted and put together and carefully structured as he writes his own orderly account of the life of Christ.

In addition to Luke 2, a couple of other passages to draw your attention to that are unique to Luke and one of them is Luke chapter 10. We've already talked about the parable of the Good Samaritan way back in the beginning of the semester as an example of how understanding the cultural background can illuminate the way we read a parable. For example, as I’ve said we've domesticated the Samaritan to make the Samaritan out to be a hero and someone who is desirable, but in the first century that would not have been so--at least to Jewish readers. The mentioning of the Samaritan would've been done in with great disdain and distaste. The Samaritan was the least likely hero of one of Jesus’ stories. It would've turned the readers off. They would have been disgusted that a Samaritan emerges as the hero of the story and not one of their Jewish heroes or leaders, like the priest or the Levites, but why is it that only Luke includes the story? Well, maybe
Matthew hadn't heard of it, that’s possible; maybe Mark didn't know of it. Maybe they did, but it fits Luke's purpose perfectly to demonstrate that salvation goes out to the social outcast. It's plausible that Luke would include a parable told by Jesus that has a Samaritan emerge as the hero of the story because that is the emphasis of his gospel that Jesus is the Savior not for the elite of society or for the popular, but Jesus is the Savior for the social outcasts and the disgusting those that everyone else rejects.

A couple other interesting stories that go along with that are: Luke, this isn’t a parable, goes on with this emphasis in chapter 10. Luke is the only gospel that has another interesting story that maybe the other Gospels didn't know about, but maybe they did and they just didn’t include it. It certainly fits Luke's purpose. There's one instance in Jesus’ life for where he heals 10 people with leprosy. Leprosy was serious skin disease in that day. Under the Old Testament law you were unclean and you were basically banished from society. There were strict regulations for how you could be integrated back into society under Old Testament law. Again, notice Luke has Jesus ministering to lepers those that would be social outcasts. It's interesting after Jesus heals these 10 people with this disease of leprosy; it says they were happy and thrilled and runoff and one of them comes back to thank Jesus for what he did.

Addressing the Class: Does anyone remember who that was? The text tells us clearly.

Student: It was a Samaritan.

It was a Samaritan, very good. It was a Samaritan that came back, out of these 10 lepers, only one came back to thank Jesus for what he did, and that was a Samaritan. Again, fitting Luke's emphasis that the gospel or Jesus reaches out to the disenfranchised, on the fringes of society, the undesirables, the social outcasts, and the misfits of society; those are the people that Luke consistently has Jesus reaching out to.

Another example that isn’t a parable, but it's something that only Luke has. Do you remember the story of Zacchaeus? I don’t know if you still sing that song in Sunday school “Zacchaeus was a wee little man.” I'm not going to sing that for you, so don't
worry. The significance of that is: number 1 Luke is the only one that has that story; it's not in Matthew, Mark, or John. Only Luke has it. It fits his is purpose perfectly because tax collectors would not have gotten a much higher score on the social level than shepherds would have. Most tax collectors worked for the Roman government, and especially Jews would not have had very good rapport and would not have looked on them very favorably. Often, a tax collector would not only be collecting money for the Roman Empire and Roman government, but they also would've been collecting money for themselves under the table. Tax collectors would have been treated in about the same manner, although they would been very wealthy; they would have been looked at in the same way that Samaritans, shepherds, and lepers would've been looked at. They were the sinners and the undesirables and the Untouchables, but Jesus is portrayed as reaching out to these kinds of people. The gospel goes out to them as well.

You see, starting with Luke 2 with the shepherds coming to visit Jesus that theme just keeps getting picked up, so the Samaritans, the lepers, and even tax collectors are the recipients of Jesus ministry. Luke is trying to hammer this point home: that the gospel goes out to the social outcasts and the undesirables, not just the wealthy or the elite or the religious establishment of the day. Chapter 15

   Addressing a student: Yeah, go ahead.
   Student asks a question: Are the lepers in chapter 10?
   Answering the student: The lepers, off the top my head, I can't think where they're from or what chapter they’re in. It might come to me, and if it does I’ll let you know.

   Student asks a question: Is Zacchaeus in chapter 10?
   Answering the student: Zacchaeus isn’t in chapter 10 either, he’s in chapter 19 or something like that.

The next section I want to look at briefly is in relationship to parables. One of the unique features about Luke is that Luke does have a number of parables that you don't find in the other Gospels. Luke has Jesus teaching in parables numerous times. Some of them
overlap with what you find in Matthew, but Luke has Jesus teaching a number of parables that you don't find in any other Gospels.

One of them is one of three parables found in Luke chapter 15 where Jesus tells three parables. First of all, the first parable is the parable of the lost sheep where you remember the story. A Shepherd brings all of his sheep in, and out of a hundred sheep only 99 come in. He goes out and looks for the one that's lost until he finds it.

The next parable is the parable of the lost coin. A woman loses her coin and she sweeps her house and basically turns it upside down until she finds that coin. The theme of both of these parables is not so much of a focus on the coin or the sheep; the emphasis is on the rejoicing that takes place when it's found. The shepherd rejoices when he finds this lost sheep. This woman throws a party and invites her friends to celebrate just because she found this coin she lost, so there's an emphasis in these parables in Luke 15 on rejoicing because something lost is now found.

Now if you ask the question, “why did Jesus tell these parables?” Go back to the very first two verses of Luke chapter 15. It tells us Jesus was hanging out with some of these undesirable social outcasts. He was hanging out with and eating meals with tax collectors and sinners. Remember the Pharisees from our discussion back in the beginning of the semester? The Pharisees were those who pursued purity. They responded to Roman rule and to the situation of the day by focusing on keeping the law, and they thought transformation would come by focusing on personal purity and ritual purity and obeying the law. They see Jesus associating with these disgusting elements of society like tax collectors and sinners and Samaritans and people like that, and they're all upset. They wonder why in the world does this person, if he were truly one of us, certainly he knows the laws, the Old Testament laws, he certainly wouldn't be associating with people like this; especially these tax collectors who are our enemies and are ripping us off. So, in response to that Jesus tells a parable.

Basically, the emphasis is on the fact that Jesus must associate with them because that's why he's been sent. He has been sent to rescue just this kind of person even the
social outcast, and instead of the Pharisees grumbling and complaining and criticizing Jesus they should be rejoicing because this salvation is now spreading and going out to these people, even people like tax collectors and sinners. So, the Pharisees should not be griping and complaining; they should be rejoicing. That's why Jesus tells these parables. In the same way that a woman rejoices when she finds a coin and in the same way a shepherd rejoices when a sheep is found. Certainly they should rejoice at something greater when someone who is lost is now found and restored to a relationship with God.

But the climax of these parables comes in the last one, the third one, and that is the parable we call the parable of the prodigal son. I don't think I have a PowerPoint on this one. Oh, I don't. The parable of the prodigal son. Interestingly, when you read this parable usually the prodigal son, the youngest son, gets all the attention, and you know the story well. The son, the so-called prodigal son, goes to his father and asks for his inheritance which some suggest would have been equivalent to wishing for his death because it was only upon the death of the father that the son would receive his full inheritance. Whatever it is, it is certainly a sign of extreme disrespect.

So the son runs off and squanders all his wealth and ends up feeding the pigs and wishing that he could eat the food that he feeds the pigs. Finally, he comes to his senses, and he thinks I’m going to go back to my father and hopefully my father will at least accept me back as a slave even if he will not acknowledge I'm still his son. Maybe he'll hire me on as a slave because anything’s better than feeding these pigs and desiring to eat what they’re eating. So he goes back to his father, and you know the story well.

The father runs out to greet him. A little bit of background information: I used to read this parable, and my wife was raised in south-eastern Montana where, if you've ever been there, sometimes your neighbors were 20-30 miles away. Literally, that was her next-door neighbor a ranch which could have been 20 miles away. Sometimes the driveway off the main road, which is dirt, took you another 5 miles to get to the house. You couldn’t even see it from the road. I used to read this parable in that light that this guy was a rancher back in the middle of nowhere in Montana or something. However,
most likely this guy was living in a typical town in the Middle East. Not only did everybody probably know what the son did to him, but most likely everybody was watching when he ran out to greet his son. If you were a wealthy father in the ancient near East and your son treated you like that, you did not run out and greet him. Yet, that's exactly what the father does in the story, and that’s the whole point. The father humiliated himself in front of the whole community by going out and receiving back his son, but that’s the whole point. Even if a human father doesn't do that, God does that whenever he accepts a sinner back that has treated him the way we have; God likewise humbles himself in receiving anyone back that turns to him in repentance.

Often, we focus on the prodigal and the father. What we often miss is a third character in this parable. Does anyone know who it is? It's the oldest son. The father's interaction with the older son dominates the rest of the parable. Of course, the older son comes in and wonders what's going on. He sees his father throw this big elaborate party for the younger son, this younger son who has betrayed him and squandered his wealth treated him with disrespect. Now, the father accepts him back as his son and throws this party and that has the older son jealous and angry, because of what reason? The younger son didn't deserve this is. The younger son deserves punishment and doesn't even deserve to be treated as a slave.

What is interesting then is that the parable ends with the father addressing the oldest son that’s so jealous about what is happening. This is what he said to him, “Son you are always with me and all that is mine is yours, but we had to celebrate and rejoice because this brother of yours was dead and is come to life. He was lost and he has been found.” End of parable and then on to Luke chapter 16. Now as you listen to that what is missing from this parable? There's actually something missing. The tension is almost palpable if you read this story for the first time. I think we’re so used to it, and we’re so focused on the prodigal son and the father that we miss it. Again, you have this older son, he’s out in the field working, hears this party going on, he comes to see it, and he says what's going on? This son of yours that’s treated you like that, and you throw a party for
him. Well, what about me? The father says, “you have always been with me but we had to rejoice because this brother of yours has been lost and now he's found. He was dead and now he's alive.” End of parable. What's missing? For those of you who are literary critics and adept at analyzing stories, what's missing from this parable? What's the older brother’s reaction? Did he join, the father’s inviting him to join the party, or not; or did he go back out to the field? The parable doesn't tell you. It's almost as if the parable is intentionally open-ended, so the Pharisees will respond appropriately. They will in a sense finish the parable. Will they respond? Will they join in the rejoicing when a tax collector or sinner responds in repentance, and God extends his grace? Will they continue to complain and distance themselves from Jesus and from God's purpose in saving the world? I think Jesus intentionally leaves the parable open-ended to ask the readers to finish it. Will they join in rejoicing because God extends his grace to someone that doesn't deserve it or will they continue to complain and therefore distance themselves from Jesus?

Those are some of the unique texts in Luke. One of the questions that I think was on your quiz that hopefully you picked up from your reading is: “What's intriguing about Luke?” Half of Luke's gospel is not found elsewhere in the rest of Matthew. It's not found in Mark or in John. So Luke has a lot of material that is very unique to him. What's unique about Luke's Gospel? What are some of the themes that Luke tries to communicate? What does he emphasize that is not present in the other Gospels or at least not to the same extent, or at least even if they are emphasized in another gospel Luke seems to want to emphasize them as well?

First of all, as we’ve already seen, Luke has a strong emphasis, starting with Luke chapter 2, on the birth of Jesus, and I would even suggest in chapter 1 also. Chapter 1 is no less humble. It takes place in no less humbling circumstances than chapter 2 does. Luke wants to emphasize that Jesus; he portrays Jesus as one who has compassion for the outcasts of society. Again, we've already seen Jesus with the shepherds, these humiliating, disgusting shepherds that come and worship Jesus in Luke chapter 2. Jesus is
caught by the Pharisees associating with tax collectors and sinners. He has Zacchaeus come to him and he actually goes and eats a meal is with Zacchaeus, this tax collector. Jesus is the one who heals lepers. The Samaritan is a hero of Jesus’ parable. So Jesus is consistently portrayed throughout Luke as reaching out and having compassion for the outcasts of society. Again, Jesus is portrayed as associated with people that perhaps would've been forbidden under the Old Testament law. The primary way that Luke wants to portray Jesus, if Matthew portrays Jesus primarily as the son of David for Jew and Gentile as well as the new Moses and teacher, if Mark portrays a balance between Jesus’ humanity and deity, Luke portrays Jesus as Savior of the world. That seems to be one of Luke's favorite terms the word “Savior” or the verb “to save.” He uses that proportionally more than any of the other gospel writings. Luke portrays Jesus as the one who brings salvation to the world. He's the savior of the world and especially of social misfits and social outcasts like tax collectors and sinners.

Jesus is also portrayed as fulfilling the Old Testament. If you remember at the end of the gospel at the climax of this, after his resurrection Jesus appears along with two individuals who are walking along what is known as the Emmaus Road. Jesus appears in their midst, and they don't perceive who it is right away. It says Jesus explained from the law and the writings and the prophets how they all spoke of Him. In other words Luke portrays Jesus much like Matthew did as the climax of God's revelation that is as the goal and fulfillment of the Old Testament Scripture, so much like Matthew one of the ways Jesus is portrayed in Luke is as the son of David. That's one of the themes that Luke shares with Matthew, and Matthew has more of it when he does talk about Jesus as Messiah and King. Sometimes he has a strong Gentile emphasis, but Luke likewise portrays Jesus, especially in the in the first two chapters, as the son of David in fulfillment of the Old Testament promises of the Davidic King who would sit on the throne and rule over Israel and eventually rule over the entire creation. Jesus is portrayed as the fulfillment of those promises of the Messiah.

Referring to a picture: That’s just the picture of a first century coin.
Another emphasis on Luke is money and possessions. Not only are many of Jesus’ parables directed to that end, notice, when we read through Luke, which you should've done by now, how many parables addressed issues of wealth and money. Furthermore, back to Zachhaeus, who is as a tax collector, is a rather wealthy individual. As the story goes after Jesus meets with him and after he responds in faith to Jesus and becomes a follower of Jesus Christ; he sells half of his possessions or gives half of his possessions to the poor. He even restores anything that he's stolen from anyone or ripped people off. He restores that four-fold, and I would guess that he was still fairly wealthy even after all of that. Zacchaeus is portrayed as a rather wealthy individual. Now, there's been several suggestions as to why this is the case that I'm not interested in trying to pin down right now. Someone has suggested this may reflect the fact that Luke is addressing the wealthier members of the Christian community or at least that’s part of his audience by this emphasis on wealth. Nevertheless, Luke clearly in his Gospels has demonstrated in the Zacchaeus story that he is against the hoarding of wealth and instead emphasizes sharing wealth with the poor which fits his emphasis on social outcasts. In Luke's teachings on wealth there's a strong emphasis in places on condemning the hoarding of wealth and the collecting of wealth and instead be willing to share it with the poor. So recognize that as one of Luke's primary themes that is material possessions, wealth and money. Again, that may be because of the audience or at least part of the audience that Luke was addressing.

Finally, one of the themes that is emphasized all throughout Luke is this theme of prayer and praise. First of all, Luke, more than the other Gospels, portrays Jesus as praying at key points in his life especially the lengthy account of Jesus’ prayer in the garden of Gethsemane prior to his arrest and crucifixion. This theme of prayer and praise continues in the book of Acts as well. Jesus is portrayed as praying. He points at crucial points in his life, but also starting with chapters 1 and 2 especially if you go back and read chapters 1 and 2 notice how many times individuals respond with hymns of praise. The most well-known one is Mary's, the Magnificat. Read chapter 1, even the shepherds
when Angels appear they sing a hymn “glory to God in the highest” The shepherds returned glorifying and praising God, so all through the gospel you have this emphasis on the fact that this is salvation that God provides. God is the savior of the world, and it should evoke not the response of complaint because God is reaching out to people that don't deserve it. Instead, it should evoke the response of praise and worship in God's people. That seems to be a very key emphasis throughout Luke is prayer and praise. There are other themes regarding Luke that we could probably emphasize, but I’ve tried to hit on what I think are the key ones you need to know.

Any questions? We still have three minutes.