

New Testament History, Literature, and Theology

Session 13: Luke -- Characteristics of Luke

By Dr. Ted Hildebrandt

A. Review and Introduction [00:00-2:38]

Welcome back, this is our second in the series of lectures on the book of Luke. So far we've done a historical background on who Luke was and his relationship to Paul. We noticed that he was now Jewish and that he was picked up probably at Troas on the Second Missionary Journey [2MJ] of the apostle Paul which is in northwest Turkey and then goes over to Philippi. Luke stayed at Philippi and then a Third Missionary Journey [3MJ] Paul picks him up, brings him back to Israel where he probably did a lot of research while Paul was in prison for a couple of years at Caesarea after being captured in Jerusalem. Then we said Luke probably interviewed Mary and other people like that. He was a physician and Paul calls him "the beloved physician" and also then goes to Rome on this shipwreck voyage in Acts 27 to Rome.

So Luke is a historian, he writes in a historical way, we said. We looked at carefully Luke 1:1-4 in which Luke says that he's aware of many other accounts. So we know Luke knew of other accounts and he uses them. He particularly talks about the eyewitnesses and apparently he interviewed eyewitnesses. We suggested at that time Mary was probably one of them just because Luke seems to tell Mary's story and you pick up the voice of Mary.

We now are jumping into the characteristics of the book of Luke and we've talked about his emphasis on the Holy Spirit. Luke writes the book of Luke and Acts. In this, in this book he talks about the Holy Spirit and in the book of Luke the Holy Spirit comes on various people as we saw last time. So we saw John the Baptist has the Holy Spirit coming on him, Zacharias, John the Baptist's father, Mary, the Spirit comes on her, Simeon, and Jesus himself. Acts 2 is probably the most famous passage about Pentecost. Acts 2 when the Spirit comes down and they speak in tongues and the apostles receive the Holy Spirit at that time after Jesus has ascended into heaven 40 days later and then 50

days Pentecost was after that. So Acts 2 is famous for its expression of the Holy Spirit.

B. The Divinity and Humanity of Christ [2:38-4:44]

Now, today what we want to do it kind of finish up these characteristics and I'm working through this acrostic H H C D S S P P P kind of this so you can just organize it like that and we'll go through this acrostic. The book of Luke picks up on the humanity of Christ and this is an important thing for us as Christians. We, we've got this divide going on where secular people, people of other religions they love Jesus as a good prophet, everybody loves Jesus the lovey-dovey Jesus, you know forgive you enemies seventy times seven forgive, love, kindness, love your neighbor as yourself and that kind of thing. They love the lovey-dovey Jesus, the Beatitudes, the Sermon on the Mount, you know turn the other cheek. So everybody loves Jesus the human prophet, but as soon as you say Jesus is God, then all of a sudden you've got major problems with Islam and other religions Jesus Christ is God in flesh. That's hard for people and when people love Jesus as a good prophet but they cannot take him as being God and even liberal critics often times will focus on the humanity of Christ and say that the later church turned him into a God. In the early part of the twentieth century people were saying that kind of thing and even till this day. So we as Christians have often emphasized the deity of Christ, "in the beginning was the Word [*logos*] and the Word was with God [Jesus] was with God and the Word was God," and we've got a ton of other places that we go to show his divinity.

Now here, what Luke is doing--what Luke picks up on Jesus' humanity and I think this is very important thing for us as Christians to think about, Jesus being a human being. Sometimes I'm afraid we deify him so much and we think about his divinity, that we lack thoughts about his humanity.

C. Jesus Grows in Wisdom and Stature [4:44-7:57]

So here's Luke and here's what Luke says. This is a famous verse that Luke says, "And Jesus grew in wisdom, Jesus grew in wisdom." In other words, he didn't have it all

together and “Jesus grew in wisdom and in stature.” Now we can understand when Jesus was born he was born as a baby, he wasn’t born as a 6 foot man. He grew in stature but he also grew in wisdom.--we need to try to understand that and “in favor with God and with men.” And so I just want to think about this growing in wisdom. I think that it’s important for us as Christian’s to think about.

When Jesus was born as a baby, when he came out from his mother’s womb and was circumcised on the eighth day, did he know how to speak Hebrew already? You say, “Well he’s God in flesh,” but he’s also human. So this is kind of an important idea here. Jesus had to learn how to speak Hebrew, Aramaic, probably, and Greek. Okay, my guess is he was probably trilingual-at-least and those were the languages that were used. So he had to learn those languages and then this raises another question too, if Jesus learned these languages, then Jesus would have to learn scriptures just like anybody else would. Now granted he’s got a special mind, his mind isn’t marred by sin but still when Jesus was born, at one year old, he did not know the scriptures and had to learn them, he had to be taught them and learned to read. He would have to learn to read, he would have had to learn to speak.

So then, another question comes up, Jesus would have to learn to read to speak, he would have to learn the scriptures himself, but what about his self-understanding. When did Jesus understand or come to knowing that he was the Messiah? Did his understanding of his own Messiahship, did that grow over time? In other words, when he was first born at one year old he probably wasn’t thinking about his deity and his incarnation, his Messiahship and that he was going to die on a cross, when he was one year old. So how did he come into that self-understanding of who he was? I think that that is pretty important to think about. Okay, so you want to think about Jesus in terms of his own self-development of his thinking and his humanity as he was a human being. Jesus was a child; he was a Jewish child and grew. So thinking about the humanity of Christ is pretty important thing. So, “Jesus grew in wisdom and in stature and in favor with God and man.” What I’m saying is sometimes we jump in and we assume at 30 years old or however old Jesus was, 30-32 years old when he comes on the scene in Galilee, we give

him all this, he has all this tremendous understanding of things. But we realize that he, as a child, would have had to come into knowing what it was that he was to do as the Messiah, so something important to think about I believe.

D. The Humanity of Christ—Genealogy [7:57- 10:01]

Now, here are some other statements in terms of Luke stressing the humanity of Christ. In Matthew, the genealogy in Matthew 1:1 starts out, Jesus Christ the son of David, and links you back into David because Matthew is trying to show that Christ is king. So he links back the genealogy to David specifically David and we said the 14, 14, and 14 probably was that the DVDs stood for David. That's important. Also Abraham, he was the son of Abraham and therefore fulfilling of the Abrahamic promise to go out into all the world and that Abraham would be a blessing to all the nations as part of the Abrahamic covenant and also the covenant that was given to David on the throne. But in Luke it's different, Luke is a Gentile. He's not that tied into the Jewish perspectives on life, although he was around Paul long enough he probably learned some of it, but with Luke you've got the genealogy going back not just to David or to Abraham say 2000 BC and 1000 BC respectively for David 1000 and Abraham 2000 BC but with the book of Luke he goes all the way back to Adam. He shows them that Christ is human going all the way back, tracing the genealogy back to Adam. So I think that's interesting.

You also get one other early story of Jesus, when Jesus was twelve years old they bring him perhaps for Bar Mitzvah and he comes to the temple and do you remember that his parents left him and he was left behind in the temple and when they came back and when they saw him he was teaching in the temple at twelve years old. His parents were shocked and said, "hey, we've been looking around all over for you, where've you been?" And he said, "you know I have to be about my Father's business." That story, at twelve years old, is one of the unique stories not found anywhere else. It's found in the book of Luke. Luke stresses the humanity of Christ and tells us what Christ was doing when he was 12 years old in the temple.

E. The Humanity of Christ—Synagogue and Emotions [10:01-12:27]

Here's another one that mentions, "as was his custom" in chapter 4 verse 16 "as Christ's custom was, he was in the synagogue." So every Shabbat, every Friday night through Saturday, at the Jewish synagogue's services Jesus was there. I think this verse in Luke chapter 4 verse 16 that Jesus was in the synagogue as was his custom, I think that's an important thing for us to realize too. I know that when I was younger I struggled to sometimes making it to church. And sometimes I'd go to church and say, "I'm really not learning anything here," and so then I would, I would downplay the notion of church. But here you have Jesus going to the synagogue and I can say Jesus knowing probably by this time much more than the Rabbi did and yet Jesus goes every week to the synagogue. I think that that's a critical thing and it is knowing his habits of life. If Jesus himself went to the synagogue to be with the people of God on a regular basis, then it seems to me that we should be going to be with the people of God on a weekly basis as well. So that's Luke, Jesus was in the synagogue, as was his custom.

Luke also has some really beautiful statements where Jesus comes up over the Mount of Olives and he goes down to Jerusalem and as he comes down the hill of the Mount of Olives it basically says Jesus wept over Jerusalem. "O Jerusalem, O Jerusalem you've killed the prophets. I would have gathered you as a mother hen gathers her chicks but you would not." So Jesus shows his compassion for Jerusalem knowing that he was going to die there. As Jerusalem killed the prophets, now it's going to kill him and knowing that walking into that but you see his great compassion.

You see the agony of Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane praying, "Father remove this cup from me, Father remove this cup from me." Then Judas coming and betraying him in the Garden of Gethsemane on the bottom side of the Mount of Olives there in the olive groves. Luke picks up a lot of these human stories of Jesus and it's really wonderful, absolutely wonderful that Luke picks this up. So the humanity of Christ is emphasized in the book of Luke and that's a good thing.

F. Distinct Miracles—The Widow of Nain [12:27-15:56]

Now, onto the D here, Luke provides us with a lot of unique material, distinct material, and we've got seventeen parables that are unique. We'll talk more about the parables in a minute, but he's got seventeen parables that are unique to him. Also, miracles, there are a number of these miracles. There are seventeen parables that are unique largely in chapters 9 to 18 in Luke. That section in Luke, 9 to 18 has a lot of unique material. There are six miracles that are unique to him and you've got things like the catching of fish, telling his disciples to throw their nets in and they have a big catch of fish. The widow of Nain's son and I want to look at this and see what types of things Luke picks up on. This is in Luke 7:11 it says, "Soon afterwards Jesus went down to a town called Nain and his disciples and a large crowd went along with him. As he approached the town a dead person was being carried out." Okay so this guy is being hauled out of town, he's dead. They're going to go out and bury him and it says now look what Luke picks up here. Now he's the only one who picks up this resurrection story but he says this person who is dead was the only son of his mother, and she was a widow. Luke seems to pick up this fact that here is a woman in need. Her husband is gone, she is a widow; she is vulnerable in that culture. She is a widow, Luke picks that up. He doesn't just say a woman lost her child. He says, "No, this woman is a widow. So she's lost her husband already and now notice also that he points out that her son has died. Normally we would just admit we don't know if she's got other kids or what the deal is. Who's taking care of her? But notice, it says that this child who's died, this young man who's died, is her only son. Luke picks up on this only child of a mother who's a widow. Luke gives you those kind of details. So in Luke, it's these particular details that he gives you, and this whole story here is just amazing. "A large crowd from the town was with her and the Lord saw her, his heart went out to her and he said, 'Don't cry.'" You say, "that's not very good counseling." You know you go up to somebody who's child just died and you say 'don't cry,' that's what we're told in counseling. You don't do that. You listen when somebody's weeping, what do you do? You don't tell them not to cry, you weep with them. But Jesus comes up, "Don't cry," because you know what he's going to do. Then he went up and touched the coffin and those carrying it stood still, he said "young man, I

say to you get up.” And here you have Jesus now saying to this kid who’s dead speaking between two worlds this guy is dead but Jesus speaks to the other world and says, “Hey, hey, come back from that other world. You come back into this body, get up. And so you get Jesus’ tremendous resurrection power, the dead man sat up and began to talk and Jesus gave him back to his mother. This is the beautiful compassion of Jesus. Jesus uses this miracle and bringing back this young man--just a wonderful story. Luke picks up the details on these kind of things and tells us special details.

G. Distinct Birth Stories – Shepherds and Elizabeth [15:56-18:37]

Here are some other ones, the birth stories. Many of the times in the gospels we’ve got the birth stories of Jesus. Most of us are familiar with the stories in Matthew. Herod and the wise men, “where is he that has been born king of the Jews?” and then he sends them down to Bethlehem and the Magi come with their gold, frankincense, and myrrh to Jesus. Joseph and Mary go down into Egypt and they can’t come back because Herod is going to kill Jesus. Herod does kill the infants in Bethlehem. Luke does not record that story of the Magi. The Magi actually, the story of the wise men probably took place a couple years later. So what you’ve got happening here is that Luke tells you who is first on the spot and it turns out that there were shepherds in the field when Jesus was born. The angels came to the shepherd and said, “go into Bethlehem and see what is born there in the city of David.” Micah 5:2, Jesus would be born in Bethlehem of Judea. So the shepherds come in. The shepherds are not recorded in the book of Matthew or the other birth narratives. Mark doesn’t record it. John doesn’t record it. Luke alone does the stories of the shepherds.

Similarly with Elizabeth and Zacharias, the parents of John the Baptist are only recorded in Luke. In the other gospel writers we learn about John the Baptist being out in the desert and eating locust and wild honey, and proclaiming the message, “behold the lamb of God which takes away the sin of the world.” So we get these statements about John the Baptist when he’s in full bloom with his ministry. But in the book of Luke it picks up on Elizabeth and Zacharias and tells us that they are the parents of John the

Baptist. John the Baptist's father apparently didn't believe when the angel announced it so he was smitten, so he couldn't speak until the child was born. Mary then goes to Elizabeth and John the Baptist's parents Zacharias and Elizabeth and it says the babe leaped in her womb and so you get some interesting birth stories in Luke. The birth of John the Baptist meshing with the birth of Jesus and they were within months of each other in terms of their age. John the Baptist is, of course, is going to be beheaded later. John the Baptist is going to be Elijah who is to come, Jesus would announce that. But you don't hear stories of John's birth anywhere else. Luke picks up on that with these interesting stories of Zacharias and Elizabeth. So Luke gives these birth stories of John the Baptist.

H. Distinct Birth Stories—Simeon [18:37-21:38]

Then there's this old guy Simeon. I love the story of Simeon and let me just read about him. He's an old codger who hangs out in Jerusalem. Here's Luke 2:25 and following. "Now there was a man in Jerusalem called Simeon who was righteous and devout. He was waiting for the consolation of Israel and the Holy Spirit was upon him." Now we already said, you see here's this guy Simeon, he's in Jerusalem, the Holy Spirit is upon him so we've already got the Holy Spirit in here. The Holy Spirit is one of Luke's themes. So that fits well. "It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not die before he had seen the Lord's Christ." Okay, so the holy Spirit told him, you're not going to die, you're going to see the Lord's Christ before you die. He's an old man, he's waiting for death. "Moved by the Spirit, he went into the temple courts and when the parents brought in the child Jesus to do for him what was the custom of the law required," now what was that? What did the law require? They had to go on the eighth day you had to get your boy circumcised. So he's there and Simeon took him in his arms and praised God saying, "Sovereign Lord, as you have promised, now dismiss your servant in peace." "Now dismiss" is actually in the Latin *nunc dimittis* and they actually have a little saying in the Latin about this guy Simeon. So now he holds the baby Jesus who is coming up for circumcision and he says, "Now I can depart in peace." So this is

again, birth story from the book of Luke that you find nowhere else. Nowhere else is Simeon found, this birth story is only in the book of Luke. So he seems to be sensitive to these early birthing kinds of things. Some people think it is possible too he's a doctor and so he picks up on birthing. If you've ever been to the birth of children, birth and death are really significant events. Things you remember the rest of your life in terms of the birth of your children and also the death of parents and siblings. You remember death as well as birth, those are human events that have tremendous meaning for people. Luke picks up on this with Simeon. "Now depart," for you've seen the baby Jesus. "'For my eyes have seen your salvation which you have prepared in the sight of all people. A light for the revelation of the Gentiles and for the glory of your people Israel.' The child's father and mother marveled at what he said." So here you get the inside of Joseph and Mary when their baby is found they're not sure exactly what all this going on. The father and mother marveled at what Simeon said about Jesus. So here you get this kind of early statement of Jesus when he's eight days old up in the temple.

I. Distinct Birth Stories: Anna [21:38-25:23]

Here's another: Anna. Anna is an elderly woman. So let me just read a little bit about her. Anna, this is Luke chapter 2:36 and following. She is also a prophetess. Now we've talked, many of you've had me for Old Testament and we've talked about prophetesses in the Old Testament, a prophet is a male prophet, like Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Hosea, Jonah, other prophets that spoke Elijah and Elisha were famous in Kings there. But, what about the prophetesses? Women spoke the word of God, "thus saith the Lord." What does a prophet do? Say, "thus saith the Lord" and so we get women prophetess. When I ask about women prophetesses, one that comes to mind for many people is Deborah back in Judges 4-5. There in Judges 4 it says that Deborah was a prophetess, the wife of Lapidoth. So she was a married women who was a prophetess and she was leading Israel at the time. She was doing judgment under the palm tree of Deborah. She was a judge, and she was a prophetess. She spoke God's word and she also gave judgment over Israel. She was leading Israel as it says in Judges 4. Judges 5 is the

battle with Barak and Sisera in song, Jabin king of Hazor and those types of things that we talked about earlier. But then there's another prophetess who's famous, coming more from the time around, the time around Hezekiah and after and the time of Josiah. So if you look in Kings you'll find this Huldah, the prophetess Huldah. Even until this day when you go up to Jerusalem and you go to the south wall excavations, you'll see three gates embedded in the wall and they call those the Huldah gates. So Huldah was a prophetess, just before they were carried away into captivity to Babylon.

So here now, here is a prophetess. There was also a prophetess Anna, the daughter of Phanuel of the tribe of Asher. She was very old. She lived with her husband seven years after her marriage.” So she was married so she lived with her husband for seven years and then and then was a widow. You pick this up again? Luke is picking up the fact that she's a widow. She's an elderly widow. It says then she was a widow until she was 84. 84 years old in that culture that is very old. That's even old in our culture, my mother just turned 80 and that's something, but this lady's 84 years old and in that culture without modern medicine, that was really something. But she was married seven years and then had lived all that time without a husband. She was 84 years old. “She never left the temple but worshiped day and night, fasting and praying. Coming up to them at that very moment she gave thanks to God and spoke about the child to all who were looking forward to the redemption of Jerusalem.” So Anna comes up and she speaks to them. She's a prophetess, she speaks over the Christ child and you get the story of Simeon and Anna, two old people greeting the baby Jesus. There's something really neat and Luke picks this up. He's got a real human touch where you've got these old people picking up the babies and so you often see this in a regular family where the grandfather picks up the child and it is something very special to the child to have the grandfather but then also the grandfather, grandmother picking up the child. You get kind of both ends of the generations. Luke picks that up and it's just really neat. Luke picks up these details.

J. Famous Lukan Parables—Good Samaritan and the Prodigal Son [25:23-28:44]

Now, the parables, there are seventeen parables that are unique to Luke. Luke

picks up these parables and I want to check this out a little bit in terms of the parables that are unique and which ones I'd like for you to know. These are famous parables and they're only found in Luke. These parables are only found in Luke. The first one is the parable of the Good Samaritan. We will talk more about that in just a few minutes here but the parable of the Good Samaritan. It is a well-known parable only found in Luke. That's one you should know. It's a famous parable. We'll talk more about that later but it's a famous parable. The Rich Fool's Barns, that's not quite as up to the level of the Good Samaritan but the rich fool's barns. This guy is rich, he considers everything. He's going to build bigger barns and God says, "hey, it's not going to do much good because your soul's going to be required of you tonight," and when you're dead, as they say, you can't take it with you. So, all these plans for the future and then building bigger barns are futile. He's going to die and this shows kind of the rich fool's barn is futile.

Here's another major one, this is the Parable of the Prodigal Son. There's a singer back from my generation back in the 60s and 70s called Keith Green. Keith Green has about a 15 minute song that he sings on the prodigal son where you've got a prodigal son coming to his father saying father give me wealth and give me all my inheritance and then this kid this kid goes off and squanders the inheritance and then he ends up eating with the pigs, he has all the fun while he's got money that his father provided for him. He party, party, parties and then he runs out of money. When he runs out of money, he runs out of friends. Notice the connection there. When he runs out of money, he runs out of friends. So, now he's eating with the pigs and he's realizing that this pig food just isn't good. By the way you get eating with the pigs and then you get all sorts of imagery with Jewishness and eating with pigs. The Jews don't eat pork obviously it's not kosher, ham is not kosher.

So here's this guy degraded to the point that he's eating with pigs and he says, "hey, I'll go back and, go to my father because even the servants in my father's house get better food than this." So he goes back and the father then runs out, welcomes him back. The father puts a robe on the son, throws a party for him. The father kills the fattened lamb for him.

Then all of a sudden you get the older brother and the older brother who's been faithful this whole time gets jealous and says, "You didn't ever throw a party for me like this." So you get this kind of older brother which then many would say typifies the Pharisees who, when somebody repents and comes back they can't, participate in the joy of their father. God being the father receives back this prodigal son and so in some senses we've all been prodigals. So this welcoming back by God with open arms is just a wonderful picture of, that we've, we go--we go our own way more often and do bad stuff and come back to God and he forgives with loving arms embraces us. As we say, there's 99 sheep and the one lost and he goes out and seeks and saves the one that's lost. So this is the prodigal son, the lost son. This is a parable you need to know, the prodigal son, along with the Good Samaritan.

K. Famous Parables—The Widow, Lazarus, and the Tax Collector [28:44-32:00]

The widow and the judge story is about a widow. We'll look at this under prayer but this widow basically pesters the judge and is just nagging is I guess what I want to say, nagging and nagging. What's the deal with nagging. Nagging works, that's why people do it and so this woman just nags and nags this judge and the judge finally says, "you know, I don't fear God; I don't fear man. This woman is nagging and is tiring me out, so I'll give her justice just to get her off my back." Then the story turns and says how much more will our loving heavenly Father give us what we seek if we come to him with persistence like this woman, this widow. Notice again who comes to the judge, it's a widow woman. A woman who has lost her husband is very vulnerable in that culture. She comes to the judge, the judge doesn't have to give her justice because she's low on the status totem pole and yet, because of her pestering she gets what she wants and so it's an example about prayer.

Now, the Good Samaritan, you need to know this one. The Prodigal Son is a big parable, the other big parable here is this Lazarus and Dives. We're going to be talking about the notion of hell in the book of Luke and this Lazarus and Dives notice--actually this Dives, is actually not named in the narrative and there's a rich man and the rich man

is Dives and Lazarus. Lazarus is a poor beggar who comes to beg for food from the guy and eat the scraps that falls under his table. Lazarus is a beggar. This is different from the Lazarus that Jesus raises from the dead. This is a parable. It's interesting, Lazarus, the poor man, is named but the rich man is not named although the church has given him this name Dives later on but he was not named in the text. What happens is they both die so Lazarus is poor in this life and the rich man is wealthy. They die and the roles get reversed and so the rich man is now in hell and Lazarus is in heaven in Abraham's bosom. The rich man starts asking and we'll look at this a little bit later on too when we're talking about heaven and hell. He asks Lazarus, "would you give me some water from that?. I'm burning to death here." He's already dead so he's burning and he says, "I want to go back and tell my brothers about this place so they don't come here. Go back and warn my brothers please." So you get this story of, of basically about hell. A parable about hell here and that's again found nowhere else. It's a famous parable. These are probably the three most famous parables that I'd like you to know: the Good Samaritan, the parable of the Prodigal Son, and Lazarus and the rich man.

Next is the Parable of the Pharisee and the Tax Collector. This is another parable on prayer and we'll look at that when we talk about prayer. The Pharisee prays to himself, he's just so self-righteous he thanks God that he is not like other men and the tax collector beats on his breast and says, "Lord, be merciful to me a sinner," and gives what's called the Jesus prayer coming out of the tax collector's mouth. So you notice kind of the status things that are being played off with here.

L. Why Jesus Used Parables [32:00-34:26]

So okay so that's some of these unique parables and things and now what I'd like to do it look at parables and talk a little about what is a parable and how do you interpret parable stories? We've seen them in Matthew 13 also Matthew 25 and now in Luke we see seventeen unique parables totally unique just to Luke. So why did Jesus use parables? Well we're not left to our imagination, Jesus actually tells us why he uses parables. In Mark 4:12 he says this: "When he was alone the twelve and others around him asked him

about the parables. He told them, ‘the secret of the kingdom of God has been given to you but to those on the outside everything is said in parables so that, “They may be ever seeing and never perceiving.”’” So they’re going to be ever seeing but never perceiving and ever hearing but never understanding. So they’re going to hear the parables but they’re not going to understand what it is. Jesus says he purposely speaks in parables so there’s obfuscation where they’ll hear but they won’t understand and otherwise they might turn and be forgiven. Actually, what Jesus is doing there he’s quoting Isaiah chapter 6 verses 9 and following where Isaiah is receiving of his call with the seraphims flying around God with their six wings and saying, “holy, holy, holy is the Lord God almighty.” These seraphim and this holiness of God and Isaiah says, “I’m a man of unclean lips and dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips.” God then takes the coal and makes him clean and then God commissions him and then is the great commissioning of Isaiah in Isaiah 6 that you’re going to come out Isaiah and you’re going to prophesy, but those people aren’t going to understand. You’re going to show them things, yet they’re not going to be able to see what you’re showing them and Jesus then participates in that. What this is saying is, that Jesus is participating in the prophetic tradition. That Jesus is the prophet who is going to participate in this prophetic tradition of speaking and not being understood and he knows that. So this is the function of the parables to kind of reveal and to conceal at the same time.

M. Four Types of Parables—Similes and Examples [34:26-37:52]

Now there are four different types of parables for those who have studied parables. The first is what’s called a simile, and all the parables are built on almost a metaphorical way of thinking. What is a metaphor? A metaphor is when you have one domain and you have another semantic domain and so you say he shall be like a tree, planted by rivers of water. You’re talking about a human being, how is a human being like a tree? He brings forth fruit in a season and “his leaf will not wither and whatsoever he does prospers.” So a person is like a tree, so it’s metaphorical. You’ve got a person here and you’ve got a tree here and it is related then in this metaphorical way. A parable is kind of like that. So

a simile parable is, “the kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed.” A mustard seed is, one of the smallest seeds. You put it in the ground and it grows up to be a big tree and then birds come and nest in its branches. This big plant grows up from the tiny little mustard seed. The kingdom of heaven is like that, it starts small, gets big and so the kingdom of heaven is like and that “like” or “as” as in “he shall be like a tree,” that’s called a simile. It’s a particular type of metaphorical construction. Simile uses “like” or “as.” The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed. So that would be the simile type. They are usually short, almost one liner’s in that the kingdom is like a mustard seed.

Now, second type is an example story. An example story is where of the message of the parable is: Now I’m going to tell you a story when I’m done with the story, go out and do likewise. In other words, take the hero of the story and you do the same thing he did. Take the hero of the story and go and do likewise. So he says I’m going to tell you a story. The story’s going to be over here but I’m really talking about you and using this parable as an example, as a model. So a model of the example story would be the parable of the Good Samaritan. This guy gets beat up. He’s lying on the road and a priest walks by and the priest says you know this guy isn’t clean. “He walks by on the other side.” A Levite walks by, a teacher, one who teaches the law in Israel. He comes by, sees this guy who’s been beat up. “He passes by on the other side.” So they all pass by on the other side. Finally, a dirty scuzzy Samaritan comes who’s like a half breed, good for nothing person comes, by a Samaritan. A dirty, stinking, Samaritan comes by. The Samaritan looks at the person who’s been beat up and the Samaritan has compassion and so he is the Good Samaritan. He takes the person, bandages his wounds, takes him to the inn, tells the innkeeper, “you take care of him, I’ll pay you whatever it costs. I’ll come back and pay you once he is healed up and is able to go.” The parable of the Good Samaritan ends then. What’s the message? We’ll look at this a little bit later, but you know what does it mean to be a neighbor and this Samaritan is a neighbor to this guy and so go and do likewise. You should be like the Samaritan and have compassion on those who are in need. So the Good Samaritan story is an example story. Go be like the Samaritan, do what he did.

N. Four Types of Parables—Parable Proper and Allegorical [37:52-43:34]

Now, there's a parable, what I'd call a parable proper and a parable proper has this is a story. It tells a story and it may not be an example go and do likewise but it tells a story where it tells something about the kingdom of God. For example, a guy goes out and has a wedding feast and he's inviting everybody to come to his wedding feast but they all return, the RSVPs come back." No, we don't want to go to your wedding feast and we don't want to come." So what he does is, he says, "Hey, go out into the highways and byways and find people and bring them into the wedding feast. So it's telling us something that the kingdom of heaven is like this wedding feast and the son is getting married and therefore invite everybody in and a guy comes in who isn't dressed properly and they throw him out and so this isn't a go and do likewise kind of parable. This is telling us something about the kingdom of heaven that there's going to be this invitation that goes out to everybody but the people are going to reject it and he's going to go out into the highways and byways. The ones who are the homeless people, the people that are no good, they're going to bring those people in. Those people are the ones that are going to enter the kingdom of heaven rather than the guests who were invited. So that would be a typical parable story. It's not something where you go out and do it yourself but it tells something about the nature of the kingdom of heaven or the kingdom of God.

Lastly, there is this allegory type. The allegory type and the parable type are close. The allegory type though I think is more--and actually the one I would like to use with that is Luke chapter 8 which is paralleled over in Matthew chapter 13. The parable of the seeds where a farmer goes out and he's casting his seeds and as he's casting his seeds you've got four scenarios developed and that's why it's an allegory. Allegory means that it's not just one story that's coming to you about the kingdom of heaven is like this guy and it goes all toward--how does one enter the kingdom of heaven? In other words, parable stories are very much focused on one point. The allegory parable will actually have four different things that it's communicating here.

So the guy throws some seed and it falls on the path. When it falls on the path nothing happens to it because the birds come and snatch it away. Later Jesus tells them

the birds snatching it away is Satan. The evil one comes and snatches before the word of God can penetrate their heart before they even hear the word of God. They're on the hard path, the bird snatches it, so it doesn't even get to grow at all so that's the first type of seed or soil and actually a lot of people said the parable of the sower is better called the parable of the soils because there are four different types of soils so some falls on the path, the bird snatches it away, the evil one snatches it away, other seed falls on a rock, on rocky soil and so with rocky soil what's the problem with rocky soil? You get a little bit of soil and you've got rocks underneath so there's not enough for the roots. So when the sun comes up it burns it off and there's no depth of root so this plant can get its moisture and so the plants die. They receive the word, these are those that receive the word and it's a good thing and they receive it with joy but when trouble comes, then they can't handle it. The sun shines down and beats on them. They wilt and wither and die. So they receive the word with joy and then they die because they don't have any roots and so that will be the second type of soil then, the one on the rocky soil. Then, you're familiar with the parable, and then some falls among the weeds and thorns and it grows up and it receives and it gets life, it comes alive but the thorns and the weeds choke it out and kill it off. That's the third type and Jesus says the thorns and the weeds are the deceitfulness of riches, the longing for things in this life and the things of this world, the lust of these eyes, the pride of life and the lust of the flesh and the things of this world drowned out and so the message is killed off, choked out by the weeds and thorns of the pleasantries of this world, side track the person to go away from the kingdom of God. Then, finally, the fourth type of soil then is said that the farmer cast his soil and some of it hits on good, good soil. There's not the weeds there and the seed then produces 60, 80, 100 times what it was and that hits on the good soil. What he's saying is, that you want to be the good soil.

So you've got the four different types of soil and that's why it's an allegory type. This isn't a full blown allegory. When I say allegory you probably think of things like John Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress* or you think of C.S. Lewis', *Chronicles of Narnia* or something like that or Tolkien's *Lord of the Rings* or something where there's a story told

that is multi-faceted. This is a parable story that's an allegory so there are four different types of soil. It's not singular, it's manifold in terms of its message.

Now, there's several things then. Now these are what the parables are like, again they're metaphorical at their root and they're taken as simple example stories, parable stories of the kingdom or whatever and then allegorical stories where there are actual messages to this.

P. Hyperbole in Parables [43:34- 47:34]

Now, there are a couple things here we need to talk about. When I originally took a whole course in parables once and the parables were said to be very common stories. A sower goes out to sow seed that happens all the time. So they're very common things that happen all the time. I think one of the things missing in that discussion that I think is that the parables actually a lot of times are hyperbolic. They're exaggerated stories and you need to understand that these things are exaggerated. They're stories. When people tell stories are stories always historically accurate? Well you're not always telling the story to be historically accurate. Sometimes you're trying to make a point so you purposely exaggerate certain things in the story to make the point of why you're telling this to the audience. So you've got an audience and you've got a story teller. The story teller then crafts his story according to the audience.

We've got a guy here at Gordon College, that talks about Dr. Graeme Bird, who plays jazz. He does jazz piano. He's a phenomenal pianist as well as a phenomenal linguist and many other things, computer expert and many other things and he talks about that. When he plays jazz he'll do something like the Amazing Grace and he'll play then all of a sudden he'll say okay watch this. If he's got an audience that's classical and Gordon College people are more classical, highbrow types. All of a sudden Graeme will play Amazing Grace in a classical style, Beethoven or something like that and you can recognize it. It's totally different way of playing it but yet it's still Amazing Grace. You can hear the tune and then he comes into more gospel church setting and all of a sudden then he'll play Amazing Grace in a gospel setting. So you get that kind of flavor like

you'd hear it in church. Then he also specializes in jazz so all of a sudden you get this, this jazz version of Amazing Grace going almost like you're down in Louisiana. So it's kind of an amazing thing. And you see it's always Amazing Grace but it's played and so the story gets told in different ways with different audiences. Anybody who's told stories realizes this. Okay, you have one audience it's told one way. So hyperbole is used and you say, "Well, give me an example of what you're actually talking about here." Let me just use the parable of the wicked tenants or actually we can use let me use two parables. One is the guy owes somebody 10 million dollars and I think it says 10 thousand talents. It's like 10 million dollars okay? So this debtor owes this guy 10 million dollars and he comes to his master, "please forgive me, please forgive me." The master says, "Okay, you can go away. I forgive you." Now the guy that was forgiven the 10 million dollars has somebody who owes him 10 bucks and he goes to the guy who owes him 10 bucks or 100 bucks and throws him in prison until he can pay everything. So then the master calls back and says, "Hey, I forgave you 10 million dollars, what'd you do to this person? It just shows, so the 10 million dollars, how many people really have 10 million dollars of debt? It's an exaggeration between the 10 million and the 100 dollars. It's purposely exaggerated and that's called the hyperbolic way of thinking where you over emphasize something to show the separation, to make the point of your story and we all do that kind of a thing. When I say we all do that that itself is a hyperbole, a hyperbole is we say "all" but not every person does this kind of thing.

Q. The Parable of the Wicked Tenants [47:34- 50:52]

Another parable that comes up to mind and this is kind of an exaggeration is the parable of the farmer and the wicked tenants. There is a land owner has a field and he rents it out to tenants. These are the wicked tenants. If you're in the book of Matthew it's in chapter 21. He rents out the property to these tenant farmers. Now, it comes time to the harvest so the owner of the field sends out some of his servants to collect the money from the tenant farmers, from the renters. So these renters are out there renting his land. He sends his servants out, what do they do to his servants? They beat up his servants. So

what does he do? He sends more servants back that are better servants. They go out and when these tenant farmers get a hold of these guys they actually beat them up and kill some of them--these messengers that he sends. So, finally, the farmer who owns the property says, "I will send my son, they will have respect for my son." He sends his son then out to collect the rent from these renters. The renters say, "We've got him now. This is the owner's son. let's kill the son and we'll get the inheritance." Now Jesus asks what will the master do who rents out the land? Well he's going to get an army together and wipe out those guys who killed his son. But you get this thing with Jesus though. Would a farmer who's renting out his property, would he send servants out and have them beat up and then would he send his son alone to face these guys? No, that's an exaggeration. Nobody in their right mind would do that! Nobody in their right mind would send their son to these farmers after they beat up his servants. Nobody would do that. It's a hyperbolic aspect of the parable. It's his exaggeration to make a point. Nobody would be that crazy.

Who was that crazy? God. God sent his servants to the tenants to get the rent. Who are the servants? Who are the servants of the Lord? If you know anything in the Old Testament, you know the servants of the Lord are the prophets. What do they do to the prophets? They beat up the prophets, I've just read in Jeremiah today and Jeremiah was put in a septic tank basically for several days. He almost died in the muck as he sank into it until they hauled him out with rags. So the servants were beat up. Isaiah was probably sawed in two, John the Baptist, we know from the New Testament what happens to John the Baptist, the greatest of the prophet gets his head cut off because of some girl's dance and the mother's jealous requirement of her daughter.

Would you send your son? No, nobody is crazy enough to do that. But God did that because of his compassion. God sends his son who dies on our behalf. So, it is a wonderful showing how the exaggeration fits God himself showing us something a human being would never do. So you have to be careful in the parables there will be exaggerations to make a point.

R. Apocalyptic Parables [50:52-53:38]

Another aspect of the parables that is important is this nature of the apocalyptic. Now what is apocalyptic? We haven't talked about it other than Matthew 24 and 25 we read but we haven't really commented on it. Apocalyptic literature is largely the book of Revelation, if you are in the Old Testament it is the books Daniel and Ezekiel. Apocalyptic literature tells about the end of the world. We've even had movies Apocalypse Now, many Christian people have read this series Left Behind at the end of the tribulation period and the antichrist comes back at the end of the world. Everyone is fascinated by a meteor or something that blows up the whole world and then the cockroaches are the only ones that last.

In the parables of Jesus many are apocalyptic. They are set in the stage of the kingdom of God as the kingdom of God is being inaugurated as a final judgment is happening on humankind. For example, in Matthew 25 we talked about the sheep and the goats. So this is the final judgment what he does is he gathers the sheep and the goats he separates the sheep and the goats. Basically, to the sheep he says come into my kingdom because I was hungry and you fed me and came and visited me when I was in prison, so come into my kingdom. He says to the goats you did not feed me when I was hungry and did not come and visit me in prison so as much as you have done it to the least these you have done it to me. Therefore depart from me you workers of iniquity and he sends them off at the end of the world.

These are parables about the end of the world. So these parables, you get this kind of apocalyptic, binary or dualistic thinking where there's a clear separation between good and evil. In much of our world, good and evil are together and mixed together and that's part of the deception of our world. We think somebody's good and they turn out to be really evil. We think somebody's evil and they turn out to be good. But in apocalyptic thinking there's a clear separation between good and evil. This separation takes place in the context of the end of the world, and so, it is apocalyptic in nature, and you have Jesus giving parables on that. The rich man and Lazarus, as we said, they die. Lazarus goes to Abraham's bosom and the rich man goes to hell. And then they have this discourse across

this huge chasm. So that again is an end times kind of thing. Not all parables are apocalyptic, but many of them are.

S. Jewish Parables—Nathan to David [53:38-57:17]

Now how do you interpret parables? And let me just start back with parables. I need to put it in a little bigger context than what I've done. Parables yes are stories. Parables are based on extended metaphors. This metaphorical thinking is between two different semantic domains or areas of meaning. But the Jews were very much into parables long before Jesus. And, actually, you've got a parable, you guys remember back in 2 Samuel 12, Nathan comes to David, King David has just, in 2 Samuel 11, has just committed immorality with Bathsheba. And not only has he committed immorality with Bathsheba but Uriah the Hittite, whose wife Bathsheba was, is called back. He will not go along with David's ploy to get him to go to his wife so David is caught with his immorality. She's pregnant; he's caught as the father of the child. Uriah will not sleep with his wife. Uriah then goes back to the front lines and David has Uriah killed by the hands of the Ammonites. David does this really nasty thing and he gets away with it, he's the king. In the Old Testament you know how it goes. You've got the king, the king has the power but the prophets of God come to the kings and one of the major roles of the prophets in the Old Testament was the prophets rebuked the king and told them basically one word, "repent." So the prophet comes to the king, he's going to say this but how does Nathan approach King David? He does it through a story and he tells David a story of, there was this rich guy who had many, many, many sheep. He was wealthy and he had all sorts of sheep. There was another guy who was very poor and he had one little lamb and he used to sleep and the lamb used to sleep in his arms. By the way, does David know about attachment to sheep? David was a shepherd so he would know that kind of attachment. The rich man has a visitor come to visit him. So, Nathan the prophet tells the story: the rich man has the visitor come and instead of taking one of his hundreds of sheep and making a meal for the person the rich man goes to the poor man and takes his little lamb and provides that little lamb from this guy had the only one, for the rich man's

friend who came to visit him. David then gets furious and says, “The rich man, that was wicked what he did, and he needs to be punished,” and David goes on and then Nathan does what? Nathan says, “David you’re the man, you’re the man.” Is he really talking about a rich man with many sheep? No, that’s a metaphor. The sheep are over here. What he’s really talking about is David as a king, does David have many wives? David has many wives. David is wealthy. David’s got all these wives from Abigail to all these women. He went and took Bathsheba from Uriah the Hittite. This poor man who only had one wife and David went and took her and has him killed and so “David, you’re the man.”

So he uses the parable as a way of obfuscation, as a way of saying he’s going to rebuke David but rather than just coming up to David and saying “David you sinned God’s going to judge you” he tells the story and by doing the story, what is the benefit of the story? The story engages David and so David says “O that rich man doing that to that poor guy’s little lamb he needs to be punished” and David goes off. See, he’s engaged the story grabs him. So these stories that Jesus tells goes back to the Jewish people.

T. The Allegorical Interpretation—Augustine on the Good Samaritan [57:17-61:15]

The Jewish people to this day are story tellers. You ask, “Who are a lot of the comedians in this world?” They’re Jewish. They’re Jewish comedian. Why are they Jewish comedians? It is because Jewish people love to tell stories. So Nathan tells the story to David and grabs his heart. Jesus tells stories to the people and you see it grabs their heart. Jesus doesn’t come and teach in propositions, in logic saying, “well you can deduce this about God and God is a spirit infinite, eternal, unchangeable, in his being wisdom, power, and holiness...” that’s true. Jesus doesn’t come down and says “I’m defining God for you” he doesn’t do that. He tells stories because stories are richer. When you work with logic you’re working more with black and white pictures. Stories are more like color. There’s depth, there’s warmth, there’s all sorts of connections. So the Jewish people had a history of parables. If you only know the New Testament it’s as if Jesus alone tells parables. No, no, no it’s a long tradition of prophets telling parables,

actually, the Jewish rabbis, afterwards you look in the Talmud and Jewish sources of these things, they're always telling stories. So Jesus is Jewish and he tells stories just like they do so Jewish parables.

Now, the early church interpreted things, and I want to just use Augustine as an example, from around 400 or 500 AD. Augustine takes the parable the Good Samaritan. This is in Luke chapter 10 verses 30 and following. He takes Luke chapter 10 the Good Samaritan and here's how Augustine interprets it. Now he's going to interpret it allegorically. The parable of the Good Samaritan and what he says is, the victim, the man who is beat up by the robbers, was Adam. You think, "Hmm, I wonder where he got that from?" The robbers who beat up the man was the devil. So the devil was the one who beat up this guy, the victim was Adam who was beat up by the robbers who was the devil. The Levite who passed by on the other side was the Old Testament ministry. The Good Samaritan is Jesus. And who is the inn keeper? Jesus brings the poor beat up man to the innkeeper and says, "I'll pay you whatever until he gets back on his feet. Who is the inn keeper? Augustine says the inn keeper is the apostle Paul.

Now when Jesus told that original story was he thinking of the apostle Paul? How do you get to Apostle Paul who is never mentioned? He is the inn keeper in the Good Samaritan parable. Augustine's making these connections that really have no basis in the text. This is an example of allegorical interpretation. So the early church did this kind of allegorical interpretation. They call it making a parable walk on all fours. In other words, it's down and every detail and that's the point I guess that every detail has some sort of hidden meaning. The problem is when you start pushing parables like that allegorically you get too much meaning in, because Paul's not the innkeeper. So you've got to so this taking every detail is not necessarily a significant point. Most scholars today nobody does allegorical interpretation Roman Catholic church does some allegorical. They have like a fourfold method of interpretation so they'll use a more allegorical way of approaching things as one of their methods rooted on top of the historical and philological methods.

U. 19th Century Criticism – A Response [61:15-63:00]

When I took parables, it was working off of a 19th century model that said parables were reacting against the allegorical approach which made the parable walk on all fours. The allegorical made everything in the parable have a little meaning in the 19th century, they said, “that’s not right. What we have actually going on here is there’s one point to the parable.” So each parable has one point and so when you go through you’ve got to look for the big idea. There are even a lot of preachers today, and actually it’s a good methodology given our short attention span currently in the 21st century, but you get the one big idea and you tailor all of your points then to this one big idea. You say this one big idea in three or four different ways you illustrate it with stories, you illustrate it with Scripture, you illustrate it on modern times and you drive this one point home that Scripture is teaching. They take a parable and they say a parable has one point to it and therefore you need to find that one point and that’s how you interpret that parable. Now the problem is that I think that’s a little bit too restrictive I think you get that parable of soil you got four different types of soil there. Now you can turn that into one point but I think actually the real point of the parable is that there are four different types of things and you can learn from those four different types of soils. I think this is reductionistic. The allegorical is kind of fantastic meaning and multiplies it too much, and the 19th century model is too reductionistic to say a parable has only one point. So I think that’s a problem either way.

V. Apocalyptic Parables and Realized Eschatology [63:00-65:39]

Now, on the apocalyptic, I want to just make a distinction between apocalyptic parables, remember we talked about the parable of the sheep and goats, at the end of all time. We talked about the parable of Lazarus and the rich man. Remember the ten bridesmaids. Ten bridesmaids come five of them have oil and the other five don’t and the five that don’t go off and try to get oil and things and while they’re gone guess who comes? The bridegroom comes and the wedding party comes and they go in and the five that didn’t bring oil they’re off searching they’re locked out. This is Matthew 25, the

parable of the ten bridesmaids five were wise and five were foolish. So it is apocalyptic in nature talking about the end times and how that will go down.

Some have talked about realized eschatology. These people that are into realized eschatology that largely came out of the nature of World War II. After World War II there was a kind of thinking that, if we got our act together as human beings and we were finally going to put away evil, and now that Hitler was done and evil had been squashed, now mankind can flourish. So what you have is in realized eschatology is human beings bringing in the end. Human beings becoming good enough and, finally, we are so good and things are working out so well that Christ comes back and he establishes this kingdom over a kingdom that is ready for him and been prepared for him by all these good people doing all these good things. So that's called realized eschatology where human beings, in one sense bring in the *eschaton*, bring in the future, of Christ coming and the end of the world. That's very different than some other apocalyptic approaches and the apocalyptic literature where it's God who brings in the end. So I think that's a difference I want to make between apocalyptic and eschatology. By the way, the word "eschatology" means the end times. "Eschaton" means the last days, the end. So realized eschatology says basically the goodness of humankind brings in the end. Whereas apocalyptic you have God bringing the end and I think most of the Scripture is telling us God brings in the end, the conclusion. So we take this as apocalyptic. So how do you interpret the parables? I guess my thing is parables are rich, parables are rich stories and so you can interpret them using different methods and so I use kind of an eclectic methodology.

W. The Jesus Seminar [65:39-71:05]

Now, one other thing, and I'll just introduce it here, we should talk about the Jesus seminar. The Jesus Seminar, largely this is in my generation 1970's, 80's, 90's and, actually, I think the Jesus Seminar is still going on in the 21st century up to 2011 now. What this Jesus Seminar was basically was a group of "Jesus scholars" would get together. These would be some of the best people in the world studying Jesus that was

their area of expertise. These guys would get together and, what they wanted to do was find out--and they would go through and sort through the New Testament, most of them were critical or liberal scholars who didn't really believe the Bible was totally the word of God like we would. So they're going to determine which words of Jesus that are recorded in the Bible are really Jesus' actual words and which words were added later by the church. They surmised that Jesus never said those but those words were added later by the church and put back into the mouth of Jesus. So, the Jesus Seminar would they would sit around a table and they would color code the New Testament. Now, what did Jesus really say? So basically what they're working here with is this *ipssissima verba*. This is the exact words, *verba*, the exact words of Jesus. And so if they took a passage and they said "these are the exact words of Jesus" then that would be colored red. Did you guys ever use a red letter Bible where the red letters is where Jesus speaks? I actually got paid, once upon a time, to do red letter Old Testament, wherever God spoke. I remember, I was really poor at the time, and the guy paid me a thousand dollars to do it. He was wealthy and I did it and went through and it was okay and we produced a red letter Old Testament. The very words of Jesus what they analyzed, what they said Jesus actually said and, by the way, a lot of times the parables and this is why I bring it up here, the parables they held the parables were from Jesus and so they associated the parables very closely with Jesus.

Now, on a second level here they've got *ipssissima vox*, and what that means is here you can hear the voice of Jesus. In other words, these aren't the very words Jesus said but you can hear the voice of Jesus. Jesus is behind it. The author just gave us Jesus' words in his own words but he put those words in Jesus' mouth, but they're not really Jesus' exact words but they're what he said, they're a summary of what he said. We do this all the time, when we talk about somebody and say "hey, you know what your mother just said? Your mother said this" and we summarize what she said. We don't do it word for word. And that is absolutely fine, we do that all the time when we talk to other people and say "well so and so said" and we summarize it. So this would be the voice of Jesus. You can hear the voice of Jesus not the exact words of Jesus. So this one the voice

of Jesus they would color it as pink. So you would have red, which would be the actual words of Jesus, and pink would be the voice of Jesus.

Then they basically would work with a couple of other categories here, like similar ideas but Jesus didn't say them. Similar ideas but Jesus didn't say these things but they were similar ideas to things that Jesus taught and this would come down to gray then. So they would use red, pink, grey would be the ideas are similar to what Jesus would have said but the words and the ideas are not exactly what Jesus would have said. And then finally the black words, the things they left in black would be the things that Jesus didn't say at all. These would be things that didn't come from Jesus they were added later by the church. So the later church put these words back into the mouth of Jesus and they have nothing to do with the original Jesus from 32 AD, this was put in later say 50 or 100 years after Jesus and put back into his mouth by the early church.

So the Jesus Seminar used to go through and used a methodology of ripping up Scripture. Who decided what Jesus said or not? They were the ones who decided. In other words, what you've got are these people over the words of Scripture using their preconceptions, their ways of thinking, their worldview to determine the Jesus that they liked. They would accept parts of Jesus and reject other parts. A lot of the God and deity claims about Jesus where Jesus is claimed to be God they said was put in by the church. The church took Jesus and turned him into the "Christ." And, so, they were able to do away with the deity of Christ because a lot of these guys were modernists and they don't really believe that God was incarnated in Jesus Christ but Jesus Christ was a good prophet. And so again you're going back to that way of thinking. So this is the Jesus Seminar and it was a big thing the last part of the 20th century and I think still exists but it's not a big issue now. Most people realize today that this is playing games with the text so it's kind of fallen on hard times.

X. Context for the Good Samaritan Parable [71:05-74:27]

Now I want to go back and pick up the parable of the Good Samaritan. And what I want to do is illustrate a little bit about how to interpret parables. This is in Luke chapter

10 verses 25 and following. In order to do this I think, what I want to do is show how you understand the parable. How do you understand anything? Context determines meaning.

So what I want to suggest here is how you really understand a parable is you look at the context in which that parable is given. So, for example, here is the parable of the Good Samaritan Luke chapter 10 verses 25 and following: “on one occasion an expert of the law stood up to test Jesus.” So this is the context of the parable of the Good Samaritan. There’s a legal expert who is trying to test Jesus. “‘Teacher’ he asked, ‘what must I do to inherit eternal life?’” The guy is asking the right question. Jesus turns to him and says “Believe on me and you will be saved.” is that what Jesus said? The guy asked “what must I do to inherit eternal life?” and Jesus says, “Believe on me. Believe and you will be saved.” Jesus didn’t say that. It’s interesting because we would say that would make it much easier. So instead he says “What is written in the law? If you want eternal life see what is written in the law” he replied, “how do you read it?” The guy is a lawyer so how do you read the law. He’s a legal expert in the law. He answered “Love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind and love your neighbor as yourself.” Now where did this lawyer get these things? “Love the Lord your God with all your heart soul and mind and love your neighbor as yourself.” Jesus, in another passage, said the same thing when he was asked what are the two most important things in the law. The most important thing in the law is to love the Lord your God with all your heart, strength, and soul and to love your neighbor as yourself. Jesus himself said these very same things. I think sometimes when you think Jesus is making all of this up out of nothing because he’s God he just makes this up. No, he’s working off the Old Testament text. There were other people who had this very similar understanding to Jesus. Jesus is Jewish and he has a Jewish understanding of things. So this lawyer actually gets it right: love God, love your neighbor.

“You have answered correctly,” Jesus replied. By the way, does Jesus usually reply “you have said correctly”? Not usually. Jesus is usually critiquing something, but here he says “you have answered correctly. Do this and you will live.” The guy asks,

“well what about eternal life?” and Jesus said, “hey, love God, love your neighbor. Do this and you will live.” But the lawyer wanted to justify himself so he asked Jesus “and who is my neighbor?” Love God with all your heart soul and mind and love your neighbor as yourself and the guy says, “Well, I’ve got to show that this is a better question than that,” because he didn’t want to be embarrassed for asking a simplistic question.

Y. The Parable of the Good Samaritan [74:27-77:51]

So then “who is my neighbor?” the lawyer asked. In reply Jesus then tells him a story. Jesus in reply said, “a man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho.” So that is the setting from Jerusalem to Jericho. We will look at that in a second. “And when he fell into the hands of robbers they stripped him of his clothes and beat him and went away leaving him half dead. A priest happened to be going down the same road and when he saw the man he passed by on the other side. So too a Levite”, priest high status, Levite, a teacher of the law, “when he came to the place and saw him he passed by on the other side.

But a Samaritan” Samaritans were despised in that culture they were half-breeds they were left over from the Northern Kingdom. When Assyria came to take away the Northern Kingdom they pulled all of the intelligencia, the people who were of status, away and left these poor scuzzy people there. They had the poor people intermarry with people they brought in from other cultures so Samaritans were half-breeds. The Samaritans did not accept the Old Testament as holy. The Samaritans, as we said before in the first part of the course only revered the Samaritan Pentateuch. They accepted the first five books of the Bible. And as we said even to this day if you go up on Mount Gerizim they still practice the Passover. They were viewed by the Jews as half-breeds, as people that were very looked down upon in that culture.

“So the Samaritan, here, as he travels came to where the man was and when he saw him he took pity on him and bandaged his wounds and pouring on oil and wine. When he had put the man on his own donkey he took him to the inn and took care of him.

The next day he took out two silver coins and gave them to the inn keeper.” Remember who is the inn keeper? The inn keeper is the apostle Paul, according to Augustine. I don’t think so but, anyway the inn keeper. “Look after him, he said, and when I return I will reimburse you for any extra expense you may have. Which of these three do you think was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?” Now Jesus jumps back out of the story. The expert of the law replied--now notice the expert of the law does not say the Samaritan, it’s like he can’t say or admit it was a Samaritan. He can’t say it was the Good Samaritan, the Samaritan was scuzzy so instead what he says is: “the one who had mercy on him” and actually picks up the characteristic of the Samaritan. That’s not a bad thing; he picks up the characteristic the person who had mercy. And Jesus told him “go and do likewise.” What kind of parable is this? This is an example parable. Go and do likewise. Go be like the Samaritan and you will inherit eternal life. That was the question, what must I do to inherit eternal life, go and do likewise. Be like the Good Samaritan, the one who had pity on him. You want to have eternal life? Go and do likewise. Jesus didn’t say “believe on me and you will have eternal life” he didn’t say that. Instead he said, “go and do likewise,” be like the Samaritan and you’ll get eternal life. I think that is an interesting story.

Z. Geography of the Parable of the Good Samaritan [77:51-84:10]

Now there are several things here and I wanted to just have a re-reading of things. Why a lawyer and the initial question? We talked about these things, but I want to focus on the geography a little bit. I teach Greek and other things and a lot of times we use the language of Greek and Hebrew to get to the meaning of the text. There’s another language that people need to learn in order to understand Scripture and that’s geography. The geography of where things took place because where things take place has meaning.

If I said to you what types of things have happened in Orlando, Florida and if you have ever had your family down to Orlando, Florida you know what Orlando, Florida is like. You’ve got Disney World and all sorts of various wonderful places down there. If I say Orlando certain things go on in Orlando. If I said New Orleans what comes to your

mind in New Orleans? Las Vegas what comes to mind? If I say Los Angeles what comes to mind? Is Minneapolis a very different place than New York City? What about Washington DC? Is Washington DC very different than Boston? If I said to you Boston, what is in Boston? Well, Gordon College is just outside Boston. Harvard, MIT, Gordon Colleges are where the best and brightest are in Boston. I say that in sarcasm because I think there is a lot of arrogance in this neighborhood and we think we are the smartest people because we are from Boston. So each area of the country has its features. If you want to do technology, where do you go? Silicon Valley is right up by San Francisco. Geography has a big play in this and so what you've got is this sociology comes to play too. The Samaritan and the class structure between the priest and the Levite and the Samaritan and those types of things. So Jesus is shifting of the question. The lawyer asks, who is my neighbor, and Jesus shifts it.

Now here's the geography and I just want to put this up so you can kind of get a feel for the geography. Jerusalem is located here. Jerusalem, right across west of the top of the Dead Sea that's the Dead Sea up there and you come take the top of the Dead Sea and you just come inward you hit Jerusalem. The Dead Sea is 1270 feet below sea level. Jerusalem is about 2400, 2500, 2600 feet above sea level. So you've got over 3000 almost 4000 foot drop from here to there. So this is the backside of the mountains. Jerusalem is at the top and then it goes down into the Dead Sea. What happens is, all your moisture comes in here drops on the front side of the mountains. Once you get over this ridge here, the Mount of Olives, it's on the backside of the mountains. It's kind of like California where all of the rain falls on the front of the mountains and back of the mountains you get like the Mojave Desert. So this is going to be all desert. This is the desert of Judea. The rain falls out here. From here down to Jericho is where the guy is going. There's only basically this one route down here and as you go down it goes downhill for about 20 miles. I recommend, actually I don't recommend this but, if you ever have a bicycle and you are in Jerusalem and you want a really great ride, ride to the top of the Mount of Olives and you can go downhill about 20 miles here and you don't have to pedal barely at all. Actually it does go up and down so you do have to pedal, but

what I'm saying is it goes down about 4000 feet in this 20-30 mile area way down to Jericho here.

The guy's out here in the desert. Where did the banditos hide? Where did the robbers and thieves hide? Out in the desert. So the desert area, even until this day, last time I was there I took my son out there and there was a monastery out there and we were going to look at it. There were some kind of shady people that just came out of the desert and I thought it was time to get out of here. So this is called the Maale Adummim. Now what does that mean? Maale Adummim means "the way of blood." So this is known to be an area where blood shed happens. This is where you get jumped. There are certain places in even America where you're safe and there are certain places where you are very unsafe. My daughter is living in Philadelphia and there are certain blocks, you go over two blocks and you are in big trouble if you are walking by yourself at night. You go two blocks over and things are a lot better. This is "the way of blood" and this is where they are going down. They actually have a Good Samaritan inn there today. Just to kind of give you a feel for the journey from Jerusalem down to Jericho.

Now Jesus is going to come from Jericho up to Jerusalem and he's going to go to Jericho and, actually, we are going to talk about this. When Jesus is in Jericho, by the way it's New Testament Jericho as opposed to Old Testament Jericho. They are actually separated by a mile or two here between New Testament and Old Testament Jericho. Jesus comes to Jericho and he meets Zacchaeus. That's where the story of Zacchaeus takes place under the sycamore tree down in Jericho, so it's going to be Jericho. It is below sea level so it's going to be down inside this Rift Valley here where the Dead Sea is. I forget how many feet below sea level Jericho is going to be but it is down low below sea level.

Let's look at some other characteristics in the book of Luke. Tell you what, why don't we break right here and when we come back we will pick it up with this theme of Jesus as the savior of all that Luke develops. Let's take a break now and when we get back we will look at that as well as some of the story of Zacchaeus and we will talk about Luke's view of Hell and prayer.

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