

“OUR SAVIOR, THE SON OF MAN”
LUKE 1-9 OVERVIEW

When you think about Christ, how do you characterize Him? What is He like? What does He do? How is He different from everyone else that has walked on earth so that we should believe in and follow Him? John Newton said that Christ is our all-sufficient Shepherd, our Husband, our Prophet, our Priest, our King, our Friend, our Lord, our Life, our Way, our End, our Head, our Root, our Meat, our Drink, our Portion, our Strength, our Hope, our Foundation, our Sun, our Shield, our Lawgiver, our Exemplar, our Forerunner, and our All. He is everything to us — when we have Him we need nothing else.

Similarly, Spurgeon said, “If you take Christ out of Christianity, Christianity is dead...If you leave out Christ, you have left the sun out of the day, and the moon out of the night, you have left the waters out of the sea, and the floods out of the river; you have left the harvest out of the year, the soul out of the body; you have left joy out of heaven, you robbed all of its all. There is no Gospel worth thinking of, much less worth proclaiming, if Jesus is forgotten. We must have Jesus as Alpha and Omega...”

These men and countless others were overwhelmed by the character of Christ. Similarly, we want to be captivated by Christ and conformed to Christ. That’s why we are in the book of Luke. In the first nine chapters, we have seen the revelation of Jesus as the Son of Man. Luke is encouraging us to believe in Christ (if we don’t yet believe) and to delight in Him (if we already believe).

This morning we are going to revisit locations and stories we’ve already seen in these opening chapters and remind ourselves of the themes and purposes — has Luke done what he said he would do? What are primary realities of Christ that should be the foundation of our faith and give us hopefulness in Christ? To that end, we will revisit some of the broad themes in Luke that we talked about in the first sermon in this series, to see how Luke accomplished those in these opening chapters, including the theme of the book...

LUKE TELLS THE STORY OF CHRIST SO THAT WE WILL BE CONFIDENT IN CHRIST AT ALL TIMES.

As we are reminded of our Savior, the Son of Man, remember also that Luke wrote His gospel as something of a travelogue — he recounts the history and theology of Christ as Christ travels around Israel:

- **The introduction** and preparation of Jesus for ministry (1:1–4:13) — primarily Nazareth
- The **Galilean** ministry of Jesus (4:14–9:50)
- Jesus’ journey **to Jerusalem** (9:51–19:44)
- Jesus’ ministry **in Jerusalem** as the crucified and resurrected Son of Man (19:45–24:53)
- **Summary**...that we will be confident in Christ.

1. **The Arrival of the Son of Man (1:1–2:40)**
2. **The Introduction of the Son of Man (2:41–4:13)**
3. **The Galilean Ministry of the Son of Man (4:14–9:50)**
4. **The Purpose of the Account of the Son of Man (1:1-4)**

1. The Arrival of the Son of Man (1:1-2:40)

• The Nature of the Son of Man (He is the promised Christ)

- ✓ Just from the events preceding Jesus' arrival, we know something unusual is about to happen — the appearances of angels (1:11, 26; 2:9ff), unusually-timed pregnancies (1:13, 31ff), and Zacharias' inability to speak (1:22).
- ✓ But the residents of Israel in that day and Luke's readers later *really* know of the uniqueness of the story by the way the participants talk about John and Christ:
 - John is the forerunner prophesied in Mal. 4:6 — the herald of the coming Messiah (1:17).
 - But even more, remember all the ways that Christ is referred to in this section:
 - ... He is the **Lord** (*kurios*, 1:17, 76)
 - ... He is **Jesus** (Yahweh saves, 1:31; 2:27)
 - ... He is the **Son of the Most High** (1:32)
 - ... He will sit on the **throne of David** (Messianic reference, 1:32)
 - ... He is the eternal King of an eternal Kingdom (1:33)
 - ... He is the **holy Child**, the Son of God (1:35)
 - ... He is the **Sunrise from on High** (1:78)
 - ... **Savior, Christ the Lord** (2:11) — role/function, title, position
 - ... **The Lord's Christ** (2:26)
 - ... **The Child** (2:17, 27, 34, 40)
- ✓ While the title "Son of Man" is not used in these verses, the components are — Christ is genuine man ("child" and "Jesus") and He is genuine God ("Lord," "Son of Most High") and able to sit on the Messianic throne. He is everything man needs the Savior to be — divine, righteous, pure, holy, and true man, so that He will be able to stand in the place of man to absorb God's wrath.
- ✓ The benefit of His nature as the God-Man is that "There is nothing in us that was lost that Christ did not save. Therefore, the eternal Son had to take into union with himself a complete human nature so that we might one day know what it really means to be human, completely restored in the image of God without defilement." [Mark Jones] He is our only hope because He is the Son of Man.

• The Purpose of the Son of Man (Redemption/Salvation)

- ✓ The word "salvation" is used 25x in the book and many other parallel words (redemption, forgiveness) are also used. The first hint at Christ's work is given in **1:1** — He **accomplished** (fulfilled) God's plan.
- ✓ The songs in this section particularly emphasize His salvific work (1:47, 50, 54; 1:68-72, 75-79).
- ✓ And this salvation also includes the Gentiles (Simeon, **2:30-32**; Gen. 12:3) — our confident hope.

2. The Introduction of the Son of Man (2:41–4:13)

• The Purpose of the Son of Man (Redemption/Salvation)

- ✓ The first explicit reference to salvation in Christ is referred to by John when he preached **a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins** (3:3, 7-9).
 - John was calling the people to identify (baptism) themselves with repentance.
 - To repent is to “change the mind (inner man/heart)” — about God, Christ, and sin.
 - It is an inward rejection of sinful desires and actions *and* faith in Christ that produces new inward desires for Christ and results in obedience to Him. It’s a change of heart and life.
 - And repentance leads to forgiveness — to say that sin is forgiven means that the penalty of sin is cancelled, the guilt of sin is removed, and there is freedom from the bondage of sin. There is liberty and freedom. We can be confident that Christ provides for our greatest problem.
 - And John emphasizes forgiveness of **sins** (plural). *All* sins can be forgiven. *Any* sin can be forgiven (murder, terrorism, sexual sin, bitterness, hatred...). This was Jesus’ message (4:18).
 - Whatever the trouble, whatever the sin, *it can be forgiven*. You are never beyond forgiveness. John’s simple sermon “be baptized in identifying with repentance for forgiveness” was enough for all the problems and sins of that day. And it is enough today.
 - To receive the gift of forgiveness, you simply need to repent.
 - ... Do you know you are forgiven? That God has taken away the penalty for all your sin?
 - ... If you are here this morning and struggling with your sin — wanting to stop sinning and not able or carrying a weight of guilt that is crushing, I urge you to do what John said to do 2000 years ago — repent. Turn away from sin (“take it from me, Lord”) and turn to Christ in faith and obedience (“I believe that You died for my sin and that you are worth living for today”).
 - ... Just as John called people to repentance and promised forgiveness, so when you repent, you also will be forgiven (24:47; Acts 5:31).
 - The message of repentance was what John’s hearers needed, what we need, and what has always been needed (and anticipated). And it is what Jesus came to provide.
- ✓ While Jesus didn’t preach the message of 3:3, it *did* reveal His purpose in coming; He is about salvation.

• The Spirit and the Son of Man

- ✓ The Holy Spirit is prominent in Luke; there are at least 16 references (cf. 1:15, 35; 3:22; 4:1, 18).
- ✓ He was the source of the Son’s human existence & affirmed the Triune approval of Christ @ baptism.
- ✓ Perhaps most significantly, He was the daily empowerment of wisdom and strength for Christ.
- ✓ Luke reveals how Christ was obedient to the Father, fulfilled the Law, and resisted temptation in 4:1, 14, 18. To say that Christ was **full of the Spirit** means that He was **led by the Spirit**. He is being governed by the Spirit (as all believers are, Rom. 8:14; Eph. 5:18//Col. 3:16).
- ✓ Christ was submissive to the Spirit *and* He also used the Spirit’s means for resisting temptation.

- While Christ is full deity and as God is incapable of sinning, He did not resist temptation because of His deity (He didn't say, "Satan, you can't tempt me because I'm God...").
- He resisted temptation the same way we do — by the ordinary means of grace: the Spirit of God and the Spirit's Word. In that sense, then, He is able to come to our aid (Heb. 2:18; 4:14).
- There is hope for us to also be obedient and please the Lord when we follow the Spirit's Word.

- **The Devotion of the Son of Man** — His relationship with the Father

- ✓ When we talk about the devotion of the Son we mean the Savior's love — a love that is supremely and pre-eminently for the Father. We see the first hint of that love when He was twelve, in the temple — *I had to be in my Father's...* (2:49; there is no direct object), lit., "I had to be in [*the things*] of My Father." There is no direct object.
- ✓ What Jesus is emphasizing is not that He was doing God's work, but that He had a unique relationship with God *the Father*. Mary had just "corrected" Him by reminding him of their relationship of authority over Him; He reminds her that He has a greater relationship — He *must* fulfill His role as Son to the Father before He fulfills His role as Mary's Son.
- ✓ For Jesus to call God His *Father* is astounding — God is rarely called Father in the OT (Deut. 32:6; Ps. 103:13; Is. 63:16; Mal. 2:10) — and virtually never in direct address ("My Father").
- ✓ Yet beginning with this incident, Jesus claims this relationship throughout His life. And it is the beginning of the many times we see the Son in fellowship with the Father through prayer/worship.
- ✓ We also see Him *praying* at His baptism (3:21) — and *while* He is praying, God expressed His pleasure in the Son. The Father's declaration is at least partially as response to Jesus' prayer.
- ✓ The Son delights in the Father, so He prays, and the Father delights in the Son, so He "approves" the Son, affirming that He is *well-pleased with the Son* (the approval by God is for Christ's inherent personal righteousness and because of the union of fellowship that they share).
- ✓ Luke hints at prayer (w/out direct mention) in 4:1, 14. The Triunity is in constant communion.
- ✓ The theme of prayer will grow in the book, but early we see the joy Father and Son have in each other (and it is a reason why the disciples will make their request to be taught to pray, 11:1).

3. **The Galilean Ministry of the Son of Man (4:14–9:50)**

- **The Nature of Christ (He is the Son of Man)**

- ✓ While there have been allusions to Christ as the Son of Man in the first chapters of the book, it is in this section that we really begin to see Luke's revelation of Christ's uniqueness as *Son of Man*.
 - The first time the term shows up in Luke (26x) is in 5:24. This title was used over 100x in the OT; the most significant use was of the King who was given authority by God (Dan. 7:13-14).
 - Jesus is claiming *authority*, both in the coming Kingdom, and authority *on earth* (now; 5:24).
- ✓ As the Son of Man He has authority to forgive (5:24) and has authority to interpret and keep the

Law and correct the Pharisees false teaching (about the Sabbath, 6:5).

- ✓ Most uniquely, He identifies Himself as the Son of Man who will be ridiculed and suffer (7:34; 9:22, 44). And those who follow Him will also suffer (6:22).
- ✓ He is correcting their misperceptions about the Messiah.
- ✓ And He already is anticipating the rejection of the Son of Man. The crowds seem to move quickly from curiosity to apathy to rejection and hatred in Luke's gospel (4:22, 29; 6:22; 8:37; 9:5, 22, 41).
- ✓ Jesus is the only answer for the needs of sinful man. And the nature of man is to not want help; man doesn't want to humble himself to repent; man doesn't want a crucified (and risen) King. Man wants to be king himself.
 - We must not be surprised when people reject Christ; they have always rejected Him.
 - We must not be surprised when people reject us because we follow Christ (Jn. 15:20-21).

• The Purpose of the Son of Man (Redemption/Salvation)

- ✓ Salvation is a key theme in the book and in these chapters it becomes much more clear that His salvation is going to involve suffering and death.
- ✓ He speaks of the provision of forgiveness — beginning in His first sermon (4:18).
- ✓ He offers forgiveness to sinners (5:20ff; 7:47ff) and the crowds take offense — who does He think He is to offer forgiveness? They combine their denial of their need with a denial of His ability.
- ✓ Even more, He begins emphasizing the means by which He will grant forgiveness — the cross on which He will absorb the wrath of God (9:22-25, 44). By 9:50, Jesus is clearly moving to the cross.
- ✓ "The entire Gospel of Luke pictures Jesus as reaching out to the lost in forgiveness." [Liefeld]
- ✓ It is a good reminder to us that when we talk about Christ we speak rightly of His teaching, His grace, His accessibility, and His power (miracles). But the wonder of Christ is bound up in His provision of forgiveness and the means to redeem sinners (4:18, 43-44; 7:22).

• The Work of the Son of Man — His work is divided into two categories: words and works; they both are revelatory of His Messianic position and authority.

- ✓ *His Words* — what did He teach? The longest sermon of Jesus is the Sermon on the Mt. (6:20-45)
 - There is blessing for those who humbly seek salvation (they will be saved; 6:20-23)
 - There is woe and cursing (condemnation) for those who trust themselves for salvation (6:24-26)
 - There are implications of repentance and fruitfulness to follow Him (6:27ff); what we do reflects what we are internally (6:44-45)
 - Everything Jesus taught was revealing His exalted position, the need for all men to acknowledge their sin, and all men to submit to and follow Him in obedience (5:11, 27; 6:46-47; 8:15)
- ✓ *His Works* — what did He do? His most remembered actions were His miracles...
 - His miracles were revelatory of His power and authority. They affirmed not just that He was strong, but that He had a right to compel people to believe in Him (5:12; 7:9; 8:48, 50).

- His miracles of casting out demons demonstrated His authority over Satan and sin and will prepare us to see that Satan will not take His life from Him and He doesn't pay a debt to Satan for sinners, but that He gives His life as a sacrifice to absorb the wrath of God (4:33; 8:30f; 9:42).
- ✓ Don't just be enamored with the fascinating and "wondrous" things Christ does; they are remarkable. But they are also designed to compel us to humble ourselves to Him. He has infinite wisdom and infinite power, and He demonstrates it to show us He is worthy of being followed.

• The Compassion of the Son of Man

- ✓ Christ humbles himself in his interactions with many different people: the disciples (6:20-23), a sinful woman (7:36-50), Mary Magdalene (8:2) and the other women (8:3).
- ✓ Luke emphasizes the role of women in Christ's ministry such that some have called it "The Gospel of Womanhood" (Elizabeth and Mary in chs. 1-2; cf. also 4:38-39; 7:12-15, 37-50; 8:2-3...). And remember that women were not well-regarded in first century Israel.
- ✓ He was compassionate towards the "unclean" and sinners (5:12-13). When a person touched someone unclean, they would become ceremonially unclean; when Christ touched them, the unclean became clean (7:14-15; 8:43ff, 53-55).
- ✓ Jesus not only was willing to interact with the lowest of humanity, but He was drawn to them because of their neediness. He came to uphold and help them (with the gospel supremely).
- ✓ It is a reminder that He doesn't save us because of our strength, but because we need Him. If you are broken and weary, you are just the kind of person He came to save and help.

• The Devotion of the Son of Man

- ✓ In the opening chapters, we saw Christ praying. In these chapters prayer becomes more prominent.
- ✓ "But Jesus Himself would *often* slip away to the wilderness and pray" (5:16).
- ✓ "It was at this time that He went off to the mountain to pray, and He spent the whole night in prayer to God" (6:12) — a night of prayer before choosing the Twelve.
- ✓ "And it happened that while He was praying alone, the disciples were with Him, and He questioned them, saying, 'Who do the people say that I am?'" (9:18).
- ✓ "Some eight days after these sayings, He took along Peter and John and James, and went up on the mountain to pray. And while He was praying, the appearance of His face became different, and His clothing *became white and gleaming*" (9:28-29).
- ✓ And He instructed the disciples to pray (6:28). The disciples saw Him pray. They heard Him pray. They were commanded to pray. And it compelled them to later ask Him to teach them to pray (11:1).
- ✓ If Jesus was so dependent on the priority of prayer and so often in prayer, it reminds us of the **necessity to pray**. We can pray. We need to pray. We must pray.
 - Do my prayers reveal that I delight in His fellowship?
 - Do my prayers reveal that I am joyfully submitting to the Father's will?

- Do my prayers reveal that I am living in dependence on the Father?
- Do my prayers reveal that I believe it really is important?
- “When we are too busy to pray, we are too busy to have true spiritual power.” [Hiebert] Christ prayed, and He had the Spirit of God, the wisdom of God, and the power of God working in Him.

4. The Purpose of the Account of the Son of Man (1:1-4)

• That We Might Know Him

- ✓ Luke’s goal in writing this gospel was quite simple — *to compile an account of the things accomplished* (fulfilled) *among us* (1:1).
- ✓ God made a promise to Abraham to make a nation (Israel) through him and to bless the earth through him; this is that story — Jesus fulfills all God’s redemptive plans (9:31).
- ✓ And the fulfillment is also *among us* — referring to a group of people who were not present at the time of Christ; they were not the eyewitnesses (v. 2), but some who came later (including us).
- ✓ It is a fulfillment given even to us so that we might know the One who fulfilled God’s plan.
- ✓ We see this heart of Jesus to have people come to know Him with all the admonitions to repent, believe, and follow Him. There is no other means of joy.

• That We Might be Confident in Him

- ✓ In 1:4, Luke also says he writes so that we would *know the exact truth...*
- ✓ The word “exact truth” is a legal/financial term that is used for a guarantee or security. So it also has the sense, “to know for certain.” It is a word of confidence: “I want you to know and be confident.”
- ✓ Theophilus might have asked Luke, “Is Christ and salvation what I believed it to be? Is it genuine? Is it really from God?” Because of suffering persecution, because promises have not yet been fulfilled, because Israel has not yet been saved, because some have left the faith, how can we be sure that Christ is really the Savior? Why should we believe that He really is worth following?
- ✓ Why should we be confident and sure in Christ? This book is the answer. Christ is our sure salvation.
- ✓ Even in *this* world, we can be confident in Him. When we lack confidence in so many things, we can be confident in the One who is the Son of Man.

CONCLUSION: The Puritan, Richard Sibbes, wrote —

“...our comfort is that Christ drank the dregs of the cup for us, and will succor us, so that our spirits may not utterly fail under that little taste of his displeasure which we may feel. He became not only a man but a curse, a man of sorrows, for us. He was broken that we should not be broken; he was troubled, that we should not be desperately troubled; he became a curse, that we should not be accursed. **Whatever may be wished** for in an all sufficient comforter is all to be found in Christ...” [Sibbes, *The Bruised Reed.*]

Here is our great Savior, the Son of Man. He is our salvation. He is our comfort. He is our hope. He is all we need...