

Luke

and

Acts

".. since I myself have investigated everything from the beginning, it seemed good also to me to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus, so that you may know the certainty of the things you have been taught."

Luke 1:3-4

INTEGRATED BIBLE STUDY

How to the get best value out of these studies...

This brief series in Luke's two-volume work of Luke-Acts looks at the theme of mission, from Jesus through to his disciples, and then onto us.

Few studies look at how themes are developed across both of Luke's works, which is a pity - for the book of Acts contains important clues about how to apply Jesus' words in Luke's gospel, which can sometimes prove difficult to apply in isolation! Also, we see the continuity between what Jesus accomplished and what the early church proclaimed. And in this, we also see the mighty power of God, who overcame huge obstacles to the gospel reaching the end of the earth. This was not without its cost - persecution is a huge theme in both Luke and Acts. If we had time for a fourth study, it would focus on persecution. If we had time for a fifth, we'd look at the role of national Israel in the evangelism of the world (Luke has much to say about who 'Israel' really is - but that's for another study). Here, we shall have to content ourselves with three topics, which I consider to be the most important, and the most motivating for mission.

In the course of these studies, it will greatly help if you are able to set yourself the task of reading through Luke and Acts over the three weeks. The studies should roughly move in pace with your reading. The first study spends most of its time in Luke, the second looks equally at Luke and then Acts, and then the third study looks almost entirely at the book of Acts.

The first study asks the 'What' question: What is God's big agenda for our world? The answer is the coming of the Kingdom of God. We shall look at what this means for us, and in what sense Jesus brought the Kingdom of God in.

The second study asks the 'Why' question: Why get involved in God's mission in our world? This study tries to get us thinking hard about how Jesus death and resurrection, and ascension, and then his pouring out of his Spirit changes the times in which we live. We are forced to consider the question of urgency.

The third study asks the 'How' question: How can the news of God's kingdom ever hope to overcome the seemingly insurmountable barriers of hard-heartedness, apathy, race, language, and others? The answer is empowering indeed!

If you're using these Guides in a Small Group, it is vital that you have done preparatory work *before* you get to your meeting. This will be of great benefit not only to you, but to the other members of your group.

If you're doing these studies individually, make sure you let someone know you are doing so, and arrange a time to meet with them when you've finished (or even before) to let them know how your life is being changed by God's Word.

If you're after good commentaries or resources to complement your looking into the bible, speak to your Small Group Leader or one of the staff, and we'll try to be as helpful as possible. Most people aren't going to spend lots of dollars on theological works, so we're constantly on the look out for good quality titles that will result in money well spent.

Always surround your time looking into God's Word with **prayer**, asking God to change your heart and life so that you – with God's people – might become more and more like our Lord Jesus Christ.

I have been enormously encouraged and challenged preparing these studies. May God do his mighty work in you too!

Chris Jolliffe

2. **God's Grand Vision: The Coming of the Kingdom of God.**

- a) In Luke 1-3, the Kingdom is heralded. After 400 years of silence from God, between the close of the Old Testament and the beginning of the New, suddenly God floods the pages with sounds of prophecy. Visions, messages from angels, songs, visions of hosts of angels - all point to the fact that God is now about to do something. If you're familiar with the Chronicles of Narnia by CS Lewis you'd say, 'Aslan is on the move'. Looking at the birth narrative of Jesus, what is heralded?
- Luke 1:32-33

 - Luke 1:54-55 (cf Gen 12:1-3)

 - Luke 1:69-75

 - Luke 2:32

 - Luke 3:1, contrasted with Luke 3:23-37

 - Luke 1:77

c) Thy Kingdom Come - but when?

What hints are given as to when the Kingdom would come?

- 9:27
- 10:9-11, 17-18
- 11:20, 12:32
- 17:20-22 (which figure is the Kingdom's coming linked to?)
- 17:24-25
- 21:29-32
- What things? (21:20-24). Jesus speaks of apocalyptic end-times judgment falling on Jerusalem. We know that Jerusalem was destroyed by the Romans in AD70 in a horrible defeat. But was this the final end-times apocalyptic judgment of God falling on Jerusalem when the Son of Man came on the clouds? (21:25-27) Or is this referring to the end of the world? (21:29-32). If not, when will the kingdom come? (the coming of the Kingdom is tied to the coming of the Son of Man in the clouds). Let's read on ...
- 22:14-16 (before Jesus' next drink ...!)
- 23:40-42 (today!)

According to Jesus, when did the Kingdom come?

When was the moment of end-times judgment on Jerusalem?

When does the Son of Man come in the clouds?

The background to this is Daniel 7, in which Daniel has a dream of the beastly kingdoms of the earth, which are supplanted by the Kingdom of God, given to one 'like a son of man' who comes in the clouds to the Ancient of Days.

Read Daniel 9:8-14.

i) In what direction is one like the Son of Man coming?

ii) To what may this refer? (Lk 24:50-51; Acts 1:9-11).

What final word of timing needs to be added? (19:11-15)

2. The Urgency of the times.

a) In Acts 17:16-34, Paul preaches about the resurrection of Jesus to the academic leaders of Athens. Looking closely at the climax of Paul's speech in v29-31, answer these questions:

i) What does Jesus' resurrection prove as undeniably true?

ii) Are things now better off or worse off for the unevangelised since Jesus has risen? Why? Why not? (list your reasons below) What does this mean for mission?

Better off

Worse off

b) Mission and the Plan of God

i) What is God's great mission plan? (Luke 24:46-47, Acts 1:8)

ii) What significance does the Jewish rejection of the gospel mean for God's plan for the gospel to go to the nations?

- Luke 20:9-16

- Acts 13:38-50

- Acts 28:23-31

c) Mission and the Risen Jesus

i) Discussion:

Why didn't Jesus spear-head a world-wide mission during his earthly ministry? List the possible reasons.

ii) Read again Luke 24:44-49.

What had to be fulfilled that was written about Jesus?
What reasons are hinted at in the passage as to why this had to be fulfilled before repentance and forgiveness of sins could be preached to the nations?

- v45

- v46

- v48

- v49

d) Mission and Urgent Times

Peter understood that the outpouring of God's Spirit signalled the advent of the last days. What are the characteristics of the last days?

- Acts 2:17

- Acts 2:20

- Acts 2:21

- Acts 2:40-41 / Exodus 32:28 (on the day the law was given)

- d) Go back to Acts 17:30-31. In what sense are things now better off and more urgent for the unevangelised since Jesus' resurrection?

4. Mission and Us!

Make a list of 3 people whom you know who don't know Christ. Pray for them, and discuss what opportunities there might be to share the news of Christ with them. Pray for each other.

2. The God who overcomes

- a) How is God described?
 - Luke 4:18
 - Luke 20:10-13
 - Luke 11:49
 - Luke 9:1-2
 - Luke 10:1,3
 - Acts 1:8
- b) What difference does the Spirit make?
 - Luke 22:54-62, Acts 4:5-13,
 - Acts 7:54-55,
 - Acts 8:4
- c) What else has life?
 - Acts 6:7
 - Acts 12:24
 - Acts 13:49
 - Acts 19:20

3. Barriers brought down

What barriers does God bring down by:

- the conversion of Saul (Acts 22:3-21)

- mini-Pentecosts (Acts 8, 10, 11)

- Peter's Vision (10:9-15, 44-46)

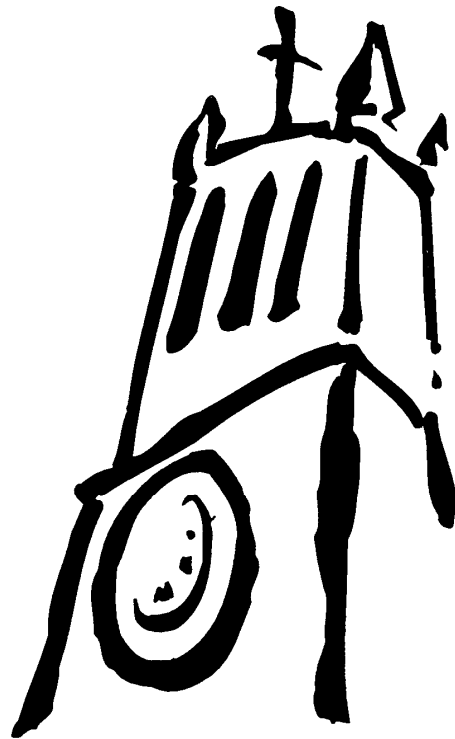
- Paul's imprisonment (9:15, 25:23-26:1)

4. Insurmountable Confidence

- a) How does the book of Acts begin and end (1:8, 28:16,30-31). Is the goal finished? Why or Why not?

- b) What confidence can we have in God?

- c) What confidence can we have in God's plans?



Holy Trinity Adelaide
87 North Terrace
Adelaide SA 5000
t: 8213 7300
f: 8212 3611
office@trinity.asn.au
www.trinityadelaide.org.au