

## Pine Knoll Sabbath School Study Notes

### Second Quarter 2015: *The Book of Luke*

#### Lesson 1 “The Coming of Jesus”

#### Read for this week’s study

Luke 1:2, 3; 2 Tim. 3:16; Luke 1:5–22; Deut. 18:15; Luke 2:9–12, 25–32.

#### Memory Text

“For with God nothing will be impossible” (Luke 1:37, NKJV).

#### Lesson Outline from Adult Sabbath School Study Guide

- I. Introduction
- II. “An Orderly Account” (*Luke 1:1–3, Acts 1:1–3*)
- III. “Call His Name John”
- IV. “Call His Name Jesus”
- V. The Manger of Bethlehem
- VI. The Witnesses to the Savior
- VII. Further Study

#### Questions and Notes for Consideration

##### Moderator: Jon Paulien

1. The author of Luke’s gospel is thought to have been both a Gentile (Colossians 4:10-14, note particularly 4:11) and a physician (Colossians 4:14). Yet there are abundant references to Judaism and its sacred texts. Why would a First-Century Gentile know so much about Judaism? (Introduction to whole Quarter)
2. Using Bible Dictionaries and online sources, find out the meaning of the name Theophilus (Luke 1:3; Acts 1:1) and some ideas about who he probably was. (Introduction to whole Quarter)
3. The following stories are unique to Luke: The Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37), The Prodigal Son (15:11-32), The Rich Man and Lazarus (16:19-31), the Pharisee and the Publican (18:9-14), and the story of Zacchaeus (19:1-10). What common thread would you see in all of these stories? (Introduction to whole Quarter)
4. Read Luke 1:1-4. What do you think Luke means by an “orderly account?” Does he mean order of **time** (the order in which the events occurred)? Does he mean **geographical** order (the events are placed in just the right setting)? Or does he mean **logical** order, that the flow of ideas make sense? Does Ellen White’s answer to this question surprise you (1 SM 20)? (Sunday’s lesson)

5. Read Luke 1:1-4 along with 2 Timothy 3:16. According to Luke 1:1-4, does Luke's inspiration involve revelation or research? What implications does your answer have for our understanding of the way God reveals Himself in the world? (Sunday's lesson)
6. Read Luke, chapters 1 and 2 as a whole first. In light of everything we learn about Zechariah in these chapters, how should we understand Luke describing Zechariah as "blameless" in relation to all of God's commandments? (1:6) What implications does that have for the biblical meaning of Christian perfection? (Monday's lesson)
7. Notice the contrast in the birth stories of Luke (1 and 2) and Matthew (1 and 2). In what ways does Luke portray Jesus' circumstances as poorer and more humble than Matthew does? The birth story of Jesus is referred to in a very different way in Philippians 2:5-11. What does that passage tell us about who Jesus was and why he was born into the kind of poverty that was typical of Nazareth (Luke 2:7)? What does the Philippians passage tell us about God? (Wednesday's lesson)
8. Read Luke 2:25-32. In what sense was Jesus a "light to the Gentiles?" How does that assertion in these texts relate to the following: Isaiah 49; 1 Peter 2? In what way did God intend both Israel and the Church to be lights to the Gentiles? In what ways have both Israel and the Church failed? What implications does all this have for the way we understand "Israel" in New Testament prophecy? (Thursday's lesson)
9. In Luke 2 there is much joy expressed at the coming of Jesus. But then comes the strange statement that a sword will pierce through Mary's soul because of Jesus (2:35). Thursday's lesson draws from this a contrast between salvation as a gift and the high cost of salvation. How do we reconcile those two biblical concepts? What did our salvation cost God and what does that tell us about the Father?

### Thoughts from Graham Maxwell

Luke and Acts are two volumes of an early church history written by this Christian physician. Look at the first paragraph of the gospel according to Luke:

Inasmuch as many have undertaken to compile a narrative of the things which have been accomplished among us, [Many have undertaken? Could you name a few? Who else have undertaken to compile a narrative? Well, we've had Matthew and Mark, assuming they had already done their work. "Many" he says. Who are the others? John writes later. It suggests that there were other records that we no longer have. That doesn't mean they were bad ones. You recall the Old Testament refers to 24 other books, which are not included among the 39, and they are referred to with respect. However, there were some books that were not too reliable, and maybe that's why he says what he does a little later in this paragraph.] Just as they, [that is, the things which have been accomplished,] were delivered to us by those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and ministers of the word, [Remember, Peter says, "We did not follow

cunningly devised myths, but we were eyewitnesses.” And the eyewitnesses passed on the word, and this came on down to Luke] it seemed good to me also, [in addition to all these others who have compiled narratives,] having followed all things closely for some time past, to write an orderly account for you, [as if maybe some had not been entirely orderly,] most excellent Theophilus; [No one knows who that is. The name means “friend of God.” “*Theos*” is God and “*philos*” is friend. Maybe this is just a representative name, “all you friends of God”, or maybe there was a person by that name,] that you may know the truth concerning the things of which you have been informed [suggesting that maybe some of the things passing over the back fence were not true?]

And we have good examples of such narratives in the Apocryphal New Testament. Some of them were written quite early. There were accounts of miracles and events and teachings in the life of Christ which are quite evidently not true, but some early Christians accepted them. Luke says, “I’ve really researched this, that you may know the truth.” {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, *The Picture of God in all 66 – Luke*, recorded April, 1982, Riverside, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct links:* <http://pkp.cc/55MMPOGIA66> (Part 1) <http://pkp.cc/56MMPOGIA66> (Part 2)

But the canonical sixty-six were not by any means the only religious books in circulation that had an appearance of being Biblical. In fact, there were far more books that were judged uncanonical than were accepted as authoritative.

Many of these were written during the period between the Testaments and bore considerable resemblance to books already in the canon. They carried such titles as *The Wisdom of Solomon*, *Ecclesiasticus*, *The Letter of Jeremiah*, *Judith*, *Tobit*, *Bel and the Dragon*, *First and Second Maccabees*, the *Books of Adam and Eve*, the *Martyrdom of Isaiah*, *First and Second Enoch*.

About a dozen of these came to be regarded by Jews living outside Palestine as of sufficient importance to merit inclusion with the other books of the Old Testament. Eventually they became an integral part of the Greek translation of the Old Testament that had been prepared during the third and second centuries before Christ for the Greek-speaking Jews in Egypt. This version of the Old Testament, called the Septuagint, became the widely used Bible of the early Christian church.

Some who still have special regard for these extra books are happy to point out that Timothy was a Greek (Acts 16:1). Naturally, then, he used the Septuagint, and the Septuagint contained the extra books. Consequently, when Paul wrote, “All scripture is given by inspiration of God,” he was including the extra Old Testament books as equally canonical!

It is significant, therefore, to notice that the Greek of 2 Timothy 3:16 may be interpreted, as in the New English Bible and others, “Every inspired Scripture has its use.”

This suggests rather that the apostle was reminding Timothy that, though there were many scriptures in circulation, only that scripture which is inspired of God is profitable.

More conservative Jews, particularly those who were most closely involved in the preservation of the Hebrew Old Testament, never accepted the extra books as canonical. They regarded them rather as “apocryphal,” or “hidden away,” probably implying that they deserved to be withdrawn from circulation as spurious or heretical.

When the Catholic scholar Jerome was learning Hebrew in preparation for his revision of the Latin Bible, he came to agree with this judgment that the extra Old Testament books did not measure up. He urged that all these books not included in the Hebrew canon should be recognized as apocryphal.

Through the centuries many other learned Catholic theologians and church leaders have taken the same position as Jerome. Even Cardinal Cajetan, Luther’s opponent at Augsburg in 1518, stated his agreement with the Hebrew canon and urged that the books recognized by Jerome as apocryphal not be relied upon for points of doctrine. {Maxwell, A. Graham. *You Can Trust the Bible; why, after many translations, it is still the word of God*, 20-22. Mountain View, California: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1967}

### Further Study with Ellen White

But the plan of redemption had a yet broader and deeper purpose than the salvation of man. It was not for this alone that Christ came to the earth; it was not merely that the inhabitants of this little world might regard the law of God as it should be regarded; but it was to vindicate the character of God before the universe. To this result of His great sacrifice—its influence upon the intelligences of other worlds, as well as upon man—the Saviour looked forward when just before His crucifixion He said: “Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all unto Me.” John 12:31, 32. The act of Christ in dying for the salvation of man would not only make heaven accessible to men, but before all the universe it would justify God and His Son in their dealing with the rebellion of Satan. It would establish the perpetuity of the law of God and would reveal the law of God and would reveal the nature and the results of sin. {PP 68.2}

Heaven, looking down, and seeing the delusions into which men were led, knew that a divine Instructor must come to earth. Men in ignorance and moral darkness must have light, spiritual light; for the world knew not God, and he must be revealed to their understanding. Truth looked down from heaven, and saw not the reflection of her image; for dense clouds of moral

darkness and gloom enveloped the world, and the Lord Jesus alone was able to roll back the clouds; for he was the light of the world. By his presence he could dissipate the gloomy shadow that Satan had cast between man and God. Darkness covered the earth, and gross darkness the people. Through the accumulated misrepresentations of the enemy, many were so deceived that they worshiped a false god, clothed with the attributes of the satanic character.

{RH, November 17, 1891 par. 6}

Had God the Father come to our world and dwelt among us, humbling Himself, veiling His glory, that humanity might look upon Him, the history that we have of the life of Christ would not have been changed. . . . In every act of Jesus, in every lesson of His instruction, we are to see and hear and recognize God. In sight, in hearing, in effect, it is the voice and movements of the Father. {TMK 338.4}

God saw that a clearer revelation than nature was needed to portray both His personality and His character. He sent His Son into the world to reveal, so far as could be endured by human sight, the nature and the attributes of the invisible God. . . . {8T 265.5}

Christ revealed all of God that sinful human beings could bear without being destroyed. He is the divine Teacher, the Enlightener. Had God thought us in need of revelations other than those made through Christ and in His written word, He would have given them. {8T 266.1}

The earth was dark through misapprehension of God. That the gloomy shadows might be lightened, that the world might be brought back to God, Satan's deceptive power was to be broken. This could not be done by force. The exercise of force is contrary to the principles of God's government; He desires only the service of love; and love cannot be commanded; it cannot be won by force or authority. Only by love is love awakened. To know God is to love Him; His character must be manifested in contrast to the character of Satan. This work only one Being in all the universe could do. Only He who knew the height and depth of the love of God could make it known. Upon the world's dark night the Sun of Righteousness must rise, "with healing in His wings." Malachi 4:2. {DA 22.1}

Sin had become a science, and vice was consecrated as a part of religion. Rebellion had struck its roots deep into the heart, and the hostility of man was most violent against heaven. It was demonstrated before the universe that, apart from God, humanity could not be uplifted. A new element of life and power must be imparted by Him who made the world. {DA 37.1}

With intense interest the unfallen worlds had watched to see Jehovah arise, and sweep away the inhabitants of the earth. And if God should do this, Satan was ready to carry out his plan for securing to himself the allegiance of heavenly beings. He had declared that the principles of God's government make forgiveness impossible. Had the world been destroyed, he would have claimed that his accusations were proved true. He was ready to cast blame upon God, and to spread his rebellion to the worlds above. But instead of destroying the world, God sent His Son

to save it. Though corruption and defiance might be seen in every part of the alien province, a way for its recovery was provided. At the very crisis, when Satan seemed about to triumph, the Son of God came with the embassy of divine grace. Through every age, through every hour, the love of God had been exercised toward the fallen race. Notwithstanding the perversity of men, the signals of mercy had been continually exhibited. And when the fullness of the time had come, the Deity was glorified by pouring upon the world a flood of healing grace that was never to be obstructed or withdrawn till the plan of salvation should be fulfilled. {DA 37.2}

Satan was exulting that he had succeeded in debasing the image of God in humanity. Then Jesus came to restore in man the image of his Maker. None but Christ can fashion anew the character that has been ruined by sin. He came to expel the demons that had controlled the will. He came to lift us up from the dust, to reshape the marred character after the pattern of His divine character, and to make it beautiful with His own glory. {DA 37.3}

Angels from the courts above will attend the steps of those who come and go at God's command. {DA 48.4}

Satan in heaven had hated Christ for His position in the courts of God. He hated Him the more when he himself was dethroned. He hated Him who pledged Himself to redeem a race of sinners. Yet into the world where Satan claimed dominion God permitted His Son to come, a helpless babe, subject to the weakness of humanity. He permitted Him to meet life's peril in common with every human soul, to fight the battle as every child of humanity must fight it, at the risk of failure and eternal loss. {DA 49.1}

At the time of Christ's first advent darkness had covered the earth, and gross darkness the people. Truth looked down from heaven, and nowhere could discern the reflection of her image. Spiritual darkness had settled down over the religious world, and this darkness was almost universal and complete. . . . {RC 16.2}

All things proclaimed the urgent necessity on the earth of a Teacher sent from God—a Teacher in whom divinity and humanity would be united. It was essential that Christ should appear in human form, and stand at the head of the human race, to uplift fallen human beings. Thus only could God be revealed to the world. {RC 16.3}

Before Christ's first advent, the sin of refusing to conform to God's law had become widespread. Apparently Satan's power was growing; his warfare against heaven was becoming more and more determined. A crisis had been reached. With an intense interest God's movements were watched by the heavenly angels. Would He come forth from His place to punish the inhabitants of the world for their iniquity? Would He send fire or flood to destroy them? All heaven waited the bidding of their Commander to pour out the vials of wrath upon a rebellious world. One word from Him, one sign, and the world would have been destroyed. The

worlds unfallen would have said, "Amen. Thou art righteous, O God, because Thou hast exterminated rebellion." {RC 58.4}

But "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." God might have sent His Son to condemn, but He sent Him to save. Christ came as a Redeemer. No words can describe the effect of this movement on the heavenly angels. With wonder and admiration they could only exclaim, "Herein is love!" {RC 58.5}

Christ entered upon His mission of mercy, and from the manger to the cross was beset by the enemy. Satan contested every inch of ground, exerting his utmost power to overcome Him. Like a tempest temptation after temptation beat upon Him. But the more mercilessly they fell, the more firmly did the Son of God cling to the hand of His Father, and press on in the bloodstained path. {RC 58.6}

The severity of the conflict through which Christ passed was proportionate to the vastness of the interests involved in His success or failure. . . . Satan sought to overthrow Christ, in order that he himself might continue to reign in this world as supreme....The Father, the Son, and Lucifer have been revealed in their true relation to one another. God has given unmistakable evidence of His justice and His love.—*Signs of the Times*, Aug. 27, 1902. {RC 58.7}

Up to the time of Christ's first advent, men worshiped cruel, despotic gods. Even the Jewish mind was reached through fear and not love. Christ's mission on the earth was to reveal to men that God was not a despot but a heavenly Father, full of love and mercy for His children.—MS 132, 1902. {1MCP 183.1}

From all eternity Christ was united with the Father, and when He took upon Himself human nature, He was still one with God. He is the link that unites God with humanity [Hebrews 2:14 quoted] (ST Aug. 2, 1905). {5BC 1115.1}

Human minds vary. The minds of different education and thought receive different impressions of the same words, and it is difficult for one mind to give to one of a different temperament, education, and habits of thought by language exactly the same idea as that which is clear and distinct in his own mind. Yet to honest men, right-minded men, he can be so simple and plain as to convey his meaning for all practical purposes. If the man he communicates with is not honest and will not want to see and understand the truth, he will turn his words and language in everything to suit his own purposes. He will misconstrue his words, play upon his imagination, wrest them from their true meaning, and then entrench himself in unbelief, claiming that the sentiments are all wrong. {1SM 19.1}

The writers of the Bible had to express their ideas in human language. It was written by human men. These men were inspired of the Holy Spirit. Because of the imperfections of human understanding of language, or the perversity of the human mind, ingenious in evading truth,

many read and understand the Bible to please themselves. It is not that the difficulty is in the Bible. Opposing politicians argue points of law in the statute book, and take opposite views in their application and in these laws. {1SM 19.3}

The Scriptures were given to men, not in a continuous chain of unbroken utterances, but piece by piece through successive generations, as God in His providence saw a fitting opportunity to impress man at sundry times and divers places. Men wrote as they were moved upon by the Holy Ghost. There is “first the bud, then the blossom, and next the fruit,” “first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear.” This is exactly what the Bible utterances are to us. {1SM 19.4}

There is not always perfect order or apparent unity in the Scriptures. The miracles of Christ are not given in exact order, but are given just as the circumstances occurred, which called for this divine revealing of the power of Christ. The truths of the Bible are as pearls hidden. They must be searched, dug out by painstaking effort. Those who take only a surface view of the Scriptures will, with their superficial knowledge, which they think is very deep, talk of the contradictions of the Bible, and question the authority of the Scriptures. But those whose hearts are in harmony with truth and duty will search the Scriptures with a heart prepared to receive divine impressions. The illuminated soul sees a spiritual unity, one grand golden thread running through the whole, but it requires patience, thought, and prayer to trace out the precious golden thread. Sharp contentions over the Bible have led to investigation and revealed the precious jewels of truth. Many tears have been shed, many prayers offered, that the Lord would open the understanding to His Word. {1SM 20.1}

The Bible is not given to us in grand superhuman language. Jesus, in order to reach man where he is, took humanity. The Bible must be given in the language of men. Everything that is human is imperfect. Different meanings are expressed by the same word; there is not one word for each distinct idea. The Bible was given for practical purposes. {1SM 20.2}

The stamps of minds are different. All do not understand expressions and statements alike. Some understand the statements of the Scriptures to suit their own particular minds and cases. Prepossessions, prejudices, and passions have a strong influence to darken the understanding and confuse the mind even in reading the words of Holy Writ. {1SM 20.3}

The disciples traveling to Emmaus needed to be disentangled in their interpretation of the Scriptures. Jesus walked with them disguised, and as a man He talked with them. Beginning at Moses and the prophets He taught them in all things concerning Himself, that His life, His mission, His sufferings, His death were just as the Word of God had foretold. He opened their understanding that they might understand the Scriptures. How quickly He straightened out the tangled ends and showed the unity and divine verity of the Scriptures. How much men in these times need their understanding opened. {1SM 20.4}



The Bible is written by inspired men, but it is not God's mode of thought and expression. It is that of humanity. God, as a writer, is not represented. Men will often say such an expression is not like God. But God has not put Himself in words, in logic, in rhetoric, on trial in the Bible. The writers of the Bible were God's penmen, not His pen. Look at the different writers. {1SM 21.1}

It is not the words of the Bible that are inspired, but the men that were inspired. Inspiration acts not on the man's words or his expressions but on the man himself, who, under the influence of the Holy Ghost, is imbued with thoughts. But the words receive the impress of the individual mind. The divine mind is diffused. The divine mind and will is combined with the human mind and will; thus the utterances of the man are the word of God.—Manuscript 24, 1886 (written in Europe in 1886). {1SM 21.2}