**The Gospel of Luke**

**Lesson 2** Luke 4:14-9:62 Jesus turns toward Jerusalem and the Cross!

**Questions:**

1. Read Luke 4. Jesus Rejected in Hometown!

A new section of Luke’s Gospel begins here. A chapter division at this point would have been very proper. Luke does not indicate any chronological connection between 4:14, 15   
and the preceding material: the account of Jesus’ baptism and temptation (in this Gospel separated by a genealogy).

Between Luke 4:13 and 4:14,15, there may well have been an interval of about a year, during which the events relating in John 1:19-4:42 occurred. If so, the date when Jesus returned to Galilee, to begin his Great Galilean Ministry (Luke 4:14-9:17), was probably about December of the year A.D. 27 or a little later. See on 3:1, 2, 19, 20.

But though thus separated in time from the preceding events, yet what Luke is about to tell us is in material substance closely connected with that which precedes. The preparation for and inauguration of the work which the Father gave Jesus to do is ended. The beginning has been accomplished:

After an appropriate introduction (1:1-4) Luke, has described (a) Jesus’ forerunner, and   
(b) Jesus’ birth. Luke’s account, in both cases, is far more detailed than can be found anywhere else. He has even reproduced the accompanying “songs.” He has related an incident that occurred when Jesus was 12 years of age, and has summarized his life in Nazareth. He has shown that by means of his baptism the Savior reaffirmed his decision to take upon himself the sin of the world. He has described Jesus’ triumph over Satan in the desert of temptation. Nothing can now prevent the Christ from carrying forward his task as the Great Prophet, Eternal King, and Sympathetic High Priest (with emphasis, in Luke, on the latter). He will reveal his sympathy not only to Jews but also to Gentiles, as is implied in Luke 4:16-30; for he is related, as the genealogy has shown, not only to David and Abraham but also to Adam, that is, to mankind in general. Nevertheless, as has been indicated, gospel work in Gentile *territory* is by Luke largely reserved for the book of Acts.

For the return to Galilee, mentioned here in 4:14, there were at least two reasons: (a) to avoid a premature crisis, and (b) to fulfil prophecy by meeting Galilee’s dire need (Isaiah 9:1,2; Matthew 4:15, 16).

As Luke here briefly summarizes the Great Galilean Ministry, particularly the teaching in which Jesus was then engaged, it had the following characteristics. It was:

1. *Spirit endowed:* Jesus performed his task as One who was filled with the Holy Spirit, who had descended upon him in connection with his baptism and had been his Guide in the wilderness (3:22; 4:1);
2. *widely advertised:* the news about it and about him was spreading throughout the entire surrounding region;
3. *synagogue-centered:* see Matt. 4:23a, and for the history and importance of the synagogue see N.T.C. on Mark, pp. 74-76; and
4. *popular:* Note the words, “and he was praised by everybody.” For further confirming evidence showing how the people flocked to hear Jesus’ teaching (both in the synagogue and elsewhere) see Luke 4:22a, 32; 5:1; cf. Matt. 7:28, 29; 9:35, 36;   
   13:1, 2,54; Mark 1:21,22;2:13;4:1; etc. It should be borne in mind, however, that   
   this popularity was by no means unqualified. At times those who at first were filled with enthusiasm became adversely critical and even antagonistic as soon as they began to realize that Christ’s teaching conflicted with their prejudices, as this very chapter shows.[[1]](#footnote-1)
5. Read Luke 19:37-38 along with Mark 11:1-10.

* Why do you think everyone praised Jesus at this point in His ministry?
* Read John 6:53-66. What changed in Jesus’ message causing many to turn away from Him (Matthew 10:34-39; Luke 14:25-33; John 15:18-25)?

1. Focus now on verses 17-30. Jesus’ rejection.

* Most importantly, who was Jesus claiming to be when he read Isaiah 61:1-2 and said, “Today this Scripture is fulfilled in your hearing.”?
* Why did the people question him about who he was claiming to be (verse 22)?   
  Would you have had similar questions and concerns?

J. Vernon McGee writes,

After the temptation the Lord returned to Galilee and taught in the synagogues. He was glorified by the people; He was praised and complimented. This verse sounds like a doxology. You know, it is possible to praise Him and still reject Him. It is possible to sing the doxology and turn down His claims. The same crowd that sang “Hosanna” and wanted to crown Him, the next day joined the mob to crucify Him. I think of a picture of the Crucifixion with the empty cross in the foreground and in the background is the donkey feeding on withered palm branches. That is the way it was. One day the Lord was praised, and the next day He was crucified.

Now we come to one of the most beautiful incidents recorded in God’s Word. It is a scintillating story that flashes with light. It is fragrant with meaning. It is lovely to look at, and this is the way Dr. Luke tells it:[[2]](#footnote-2)

1. Focus on verses 31-41. Jesus heals and drives out demons!

* Read Isaiah 35:1-6 along with Matthew 11:4-5. How did Jesus prove his claims in Nazareth (John 10:38)?
* Who did the demons claim Jesus was? What does this tell you about the forces of evil, Satan and his demonic beings, in the world (See James 2:19)? What is the irony of this?

1. Read Luke 5 and 6. The Calling of the Twelve; Jesus Heals; Lord of the Sabbath!
2. In chapter 5, Jesus performs several miracles: the miraculous catch of fish, the healing of the leper, and the paralytic.
3. What lesson/truth/purpose was Jesus trying to teach or demonstrate in each?

* The miraculous catch (consider this from the view of the disciples)
* The healing of the leper (consider this from the view of the man with leprosy)
* The healing of the paralytic (consider this from the view of the Pharisees)

1. What lessons or truths do you learn about Jesus from these miracles, and how   
   do miracles serve the purposes of God (John 2:11; 14:11; 20:30-31; Acts 2:22)? How do these miracles change the way you view Jesus?
2. In verses 27-32, Jesus is dining with Levi (Matthew) and his many friends invited to Levi’s house to meet him. The Pharisees on the outside and question his disciples:   
   “Why do you eat and drink with tax collectors and sinners?” Jesus answered them,   
   “It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.”

Explain.

Does this give you hope?

1. In chapter 6, Jesus claims to be Lord of the Sabbath, appoints the Twelve, and offers several blessings and woes.
2. In claiming to be Lord of the Sabbath, who was Jesus claiming to be (John 8:58; 10:29-30; 14:6-7)? Who do you say Jesus is?
3. What blessing or woe comforts or challenges you the most and why?
4. Read Luke 7-8. The centurion’s faith; Jesus raises a widow’s son; the anointing of Jesus;   
   the parable of the Sower
5. The gospels record many miracles that Jesus performed: healing the sick, casting out demons, enabling the lame to walk, giving sight to the blind, etc. In chapter 7, Jesus performs perhaps the greatest miracle of all—raising the dead back to life. All these physical miracles point to some spiritual reality/truth.
6. To what key spiritual reality/truth about Jesus does this incredible miracle point (John 5:21; 6:33; 14:6; Ephesians 2:1-9; Colossians 2:13; 2 Corinthians 5:17)?
7. Have you experienced this new resurrection life in Christ Jesus? Will you share your experience?
8. Read Luke 8:1-15 regarding the parable of the Sower or the soils. In this parable, Jesus teaches about the four different kinds of hearts:

* The hard heart!
* The shallow heart!
* The worldly heart!
* The fertile, soft heart!

1. Which heart do you believe represents your heart? Explain.
2. What is most people’s response when they hear God’s word?   
   Explain your answer.
3. What is the only hope for those with hard, shallow, or worldly hearts?
4. Read Luke 9. Jesus sends out the Twelve; Feeds the 5,000; Peter’s Confession of Christ;   
   The Transfiguration!

The great question Luke has set before his readers is: Who is Jesus? And he has done it with remarkable premeditation and skill. The first phrasing of the question came from Herod the tetrarch in response to the people’s speculations: “Herod said, ‘John I beheaded, but who is this about whom I hear such things?’“ (9:9). This was implicitly answered by Christ’s feeding of the five thousand with five loaves and two fish. Literally tons of barley cakes and fish came from his hands (cf. v. 16). Who is Jesus? Lord of creation!

Luke then skips over seven important events in Christ’s life (recorded in Mark’s Gospel,   
6:45-8:26) before presenting the question a second time, thus eliciting the disciples’ famous confession of who Jesus is. The question will be further answered by the subsequent section, which records Jesus’ transfiguration.

Why is there such a pronounced emphasis as to who Jesus is in Luke? Because Jesus’ Galilean ministry was over, and he now resolutely set his sights on Jerusalem, where he would be betrayed and flogged and would endure the bloody cross (cf. 9:51). In sum, because of the coming crises it was imperative that the apostles understand and confess who Jesus is.

Jesus clearly saw their confession as vitally important because he preceded it with prayer. Jesus had prayed at his baptism and before choosing the Twelve, and he would do so as a prelude to his transfiguration, and he prayed now as well (cf. Mark 3:12-15; 9:28).   
Very likely he prayed for guidance in asking just the right question, so his disciples’ dense minds would be enlightened, and their weakness would turn to steadfastness.[[3]](#footnote-3)

1. The first three years of Jesus’ public ministry primarily prepared the Twelve for his departure. Once he ascends back into heaven, the Twelve will have been charged with carrying the gospel to the ends of the earth. Thus, the church’s future hinges upon their obedience and commitment to this task. As Jesus prepares to end his Galilean ministry and head back to Jerusalem, he knows there is still much work to do in the hearts and minds of his disciples. Thus, he hits them with a series of questions.
2. “Who do the crowds say I am?” What was their response?
3. “But what about you? Who do you say I am?” What was Peter’s response, and what does he mean by his response? What is the significance of him saying, “You are the Christ (Messiah) of God!”?
4. What about you? Who do you say Jesus is?
5. In verses 28-36, Luke describes the Transfiguration in which Christ reveals his glory   
   and God the Father testifies that Jesus is His Son. What is the significance of the Transfiguration and why do you think Jesus chose this time to reveal his glorious deity   
   to the Twelve?
6. What is the most important truth you have learned in this lesson, and how will it change how you live?

1. William Hendriksen, *New Testament Commentary: Exposition of the Gospel According to Luke* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1978), 247-248. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. J. Vernon McGee, THRU THE BIBLE COMMENTARY SERIES: LUKE, (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1991), 67. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Kent Hughes *Luke: That You May Know the Truth* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2015), 345. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)